Chinese Public Education and Global Social Justice: The Organizational Challenges of Initiating an Access Scholarship in a Chinese Public School

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Chinese Public Education and Global Social Justice: The Organizational Challenges of Initiating an Access Scholarship in a Chinese Public School

By
Spencer Aaron Matthew Fowler

AN ORGANIZATIONAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE AND POSTDOCTORAL STUDIES IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

LONDON, ONTARIO

August, 2019
Abstract

This OIP aims to support ABC Academy in its efforts to enable Middle Eastern refugees and other economically and politically marginalized youth to complete their final year of high school in Beijing, China. Transformative leadership, grounded in notions of social justice and democracy, provide a guide for an institution that seeks to bridge the divide between classroom education and social context. A robust framework for implementing change within an insular organization is proposed wherein transformative leadership’s key tenets are augmented by Kotter’s eight-step change model (1996). Capacity building and empowerment provide faculty with the tools necessary to improve student learning and postsecondary preparedness. Institutional leaders can create lasting change by cultivating an environment with shared purpose, frequent dialogue, and detailed frameworks for assessing change effectiveness. The change plan hopes to create holistic learning opportunities in the Chinese education system that aid local and foreign students, leading to improvements within the classroom and beyond it.

KEYWORDS: Refugees, transformative leadership, democracy, Chinese education
Executive Summary

This Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP) concerns a small international high school in China and its challenges in fostering a holistic learning environment. The problem of practice (PoP) focuses on the absence of an institution-wide commitment to balanced instruction and cross-cultural understanding that leaves students ill-prepared for the rigors and realities of global citizenry. The insular school culture runs counter to the institution’s stated mission, promoting a sense of complacency and underscoring a resistance to change on the part of key institutional actors—including department heads, teachers, and support staff. This is having a detrimental impact on the growth and strategic direction of ABC Academy. The central hurdle facing this small international Chinese school is the implementation of an innovative academic program that challenges traditional thinking and allows the institution to more fully realize its mission, vision, and core values.

The aforementioned challenges became apparent when ABC Academy introduced the Access Scholarship initiative that enables Middle Eastern refugees and other economically and politically marginalized youth to complete their high school education in Beijing, China. This initiative provides refugees with the necessary resources and support to reach matriculation at world-class institutions overseas. Much divide has been created amongst the foreign and local Chinese faculty as a result of the initiative. This document serves as a guide to help facilitate the change required in institutional culture among ABC Academy’s constituents in order to actualize this initiative.

Chapter 1 provides relevant contextual information regarding ABC Academy, including its values, organizational structure, leadership approaches, and history. Transformative leadership, as espoused by the likes of Shields (2010), Caldwell (2012), and Fullan (2001), creates the theoretical underpinnings to motivate change in organizational actors. Leading
change, informed by transformative ideas of capacity building, focuses on social justice and democratic principles within an educational setting. When transformative leadership is explained in the context of foundational research regarding culture and change (Schein, 1990; Schein, 2010; Morgan 1986), a clearer picture emerges regarding both the capacity to change and the difficulties of navigating through complex cultural forces. The PoP is framed on the basis of relevant external data regarding the growing refugee crisis in the Middle East, which remains a strong impetus in the creation of the Access Scholarship. The work of Kotter (1996; 2012; 2014) provides a sound foundation in the pursuit of a methodical change process. Kotter’s eight-step model is leveraged as a means of structuring the process, with certain stages being revisited as progress is made with the overall initiative. Criticisms regarding the model’s linearity and lack of specificity necessitates a robust framework for monitoring change.

Chapter 2 concerns planning and development, and references important transformative leadership theorists as a means to better understand the theory’s relevance to ABC Academy. The framework for leading change is understood based on the work of Nadler and Tushman (1990) which identifies three pertinent types of change at issue within the institution: incremental, strategic, and reactive. The framework is further augmented by identifying the similarities between the lenses of transformative leadership (Shields, 2010; Cooper 2009; Sayani 2011) and social justice (Zajda, Majhanovich, & Rust, 2010). Addressing inequities through dialogue and novel pedagogical approaches—such as student-centric and experiential learning—creates a more conscientious learning environment that resists the pitfalls of regimentation. Five possible solutions to the PoP are identified, and the rationale for the selected solution is elucidated. The ethical framework to guide the selected solutions is based on The Ontario
Teachers College’s *Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession*, which is built on four pillars: care, respect, trust, and integrity (Ontario College of Teachers, 2019).

Chapter 3 addresses the specific plan for implementing the previously selected solution. The work of Ireland (2017) is instrumental in the development of a more meticulous monitoring and evaluation framework because it builds off the work of Kotter (1996) by supplementing it with additional scholarship directly tied to a robust PDSA cycle. This approach, with its stratified objectives or phases, is used for the purposes of this OIP to address the complex priorities that have developed throughout the course of change path implementation. Four goals are identified that will aid in the creation of an experiential learning environment at ABC Academy: revised Access Scholarship structure, curriculum building and instruction, greater accountability, and student improvement. These central goals are aligned with four PDSA cycles representing four distinct phases of system change: development, refinement, implementation, and spread. Robust communication plans involving institutional actors at all levels are created to motivate and further propel change into the future.

This OIP underscores the importance of the Access Scholarship initiative and provides ABC Academy with a continuous opportunity to remain resilient in the face of complacency. Institutional change is never easy, particularly when the goals involve addressing complex socio-economic, political, and cultural differences. This is not to say, however, that it is insurmountable. As the institution grows and changes, there will be new challenges that emerge which force educational leaders to embrace differences and rely on them as a means to shatter barriers that hamper development—locally and globally.
Acknowledgements

This doctoral journey began without me fully recognizing that dreams can be realized and that life is literally what you make of it. The only limits are those that you impose on yourself. As my great uncle Bob shared with me, “Be your own quarterback in life.”

This would not have happened without my aunt Linda, who believed in me when others did not, and who showed me that I was more than an ice hockey player. During a time when I was lost and unsure about my future and what life had in store for me, she opened my eyes and my heart to learning. If not for her, I would not have applied to Queen’s University and began a journey that continues today.

My mother Charmaine and late father Al have always made me feel proud. Their love, kindness, and support have enabled me to pursue all of life’s challenges with optimism, vigor, commitment, and insatiable stamina.

This doctoral journey would not be possible without the incredible mentorship, guidance, and commitment of Dr. John Scott Lowrey. He raised the bar for what it means to be a caring educator, one who not only provides the knowledge and skills to be successful, but inspires and motivates the doctoral candidates through the OIP writing process and the most difficult times in life.

I have learned a great deal from those in my cohort. Your passion, experience, and willingness to support one another have been truly awe-inspiring. I am humbled to be in your company, and feel a profound sense of love and unity among our group.

I am forever grateful to my board chair and the colleagues I work with every day. I have seen for the first time that education truly changes and inspires lives. Thank you to all those involved in and supportive of the Access Scholarship. It has been such a beautiful experience to witness your love for others and commitment to those who need it the most.
To the first Access Scholarship recipient: You have changed my life. I am inspired to do more daily thanks to your unflinching optimism, gratitude, and effort to succeed. You are a beacon of light and hope for others who have endured similar hardships. Furthermore, your story and success will open doors for others. I have no doubt that the story and impact of the Access Scholarship will continue to grow and be heard around the world. Thank you for taking a chance on a school in China, and making us your launching pad towards a better life. The tools and resources you have been exposed to will improve the life of others.

My family has always been there to support me in the pursuit my dreams. My son Jaylon, daughter Layla, Angel in heaven Ayla, and my youngest, Drayton: Thank you for your cuddles, your smiles and forgiveness when I needed at times to focus on research and writing. An OIP comes as a major sacrifice, and the time I will never get back is now the motivation and fuel to never allow anything in the future to pull me away from my precious time with all of you. You are my everything. I hope this work demonstrates what can be accomplished and how beautiful the journey of learning truly is, one that has the potential to improve the world.

Finally, and most importantly, to my loving wife and soulmate. Before I met you, I did not take life or myself very seriously. You have inspired me to be better. You have been selfless, and you dedicated yourself to me and our family. Your sacrifices as a mother and wife are unparalleled. You have joined me and traveled the world, supporting me as I have climbed the ranks in my career and pursued my educational endeavours. I am forever indebted to you and look forward to our future together where your passions, life, and career goals will take center stage.
I hope this work inspires others to focus their efforts on making a positive impact that will better our world. Teachers and students are capable of leading that change—if they are supported, loved, and given a chance to succeed.
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Chapter 1: Introduction and Purpose

This OIP aims to support ABC Academy in its efforts to enable Middle Eastern refugees and other economically and politically marginalized youth to complete their final year of high school in Beijing, China. The creation of the Access Scholarship provides refugees with the necessary resources and support to reach matriculation at world-class institutions overseas. Much divide has been created amongst the foreign and local Chinese faculty as a result of the initiative. It has increased staff workload, challenged traditional Chinese teaching practices, and caused xenophobic sentiments to surface, creating program scalability challenges within the organization. This document serves as a guide to help facilitate the change required in institutional culture among ABC Academy’s constituents in order to actualize this initiative.

One of the major political impediments facing the institution is the restrictive framework that dictates the material being taught and the approach in teaching said material. The Chinese government, through the Education Commission of Beijing, wields a great deal of control over curricula development, thereby allowing it to implement or quell any new and novel approaches to teaching. The gaps between the foreign and local faculty members have in recent years been mitigated by the harmonized application of rules concerning allowances and stipends. This improves output and promotes long-term commitment. Diversity continues to inform the institution’s growing social fabric. Deputy heads are a mix of local and foreign, and this extends to the general faculty as well. Local Chinese staff are encouraged to find as many opportunities to participate in overseas conferences and exchanges, which promote engagement and understanding. In a cultural context, every effort is made to embrace Chinese norms and customs while augmenting them with Western ideals. Based on internal surveys, traditionalist sentiments continue to inform the views of local staff and guardians, creating trepidation internally to accept a more balanced approach to learning.
Change is necessary within ABC Academy’s culture in order to properly support foreign students who have faced enormous hurdles—be they political, economic, social, cultural, or other. The effects of displacement and war continue to impact countless teenage students, confounding their ability to complete their secondary education. A tremendous amount of buy-in and effort will be required by all constituents to support such a vulnerable group. A cultural shift needs to take place, one that will empower key faculty members to lead and support others through this transitional period.

Vision, Mission, Values, Purpose, and Goals

ABC Academy’s mission is to spark in students the willingness to explore all the mind’s faculties. A combination of creative projects, rational thinking, athletics, and off-site learning create a holistic experience, giving growing minds versatile skills that can be applied outside of academia. The support provided by staff and administrators guides students to become more responsible towards themselves, their cities, and the larger global community. The institution’s foundation is built on five core values: creative thinking, obligation to self and others, principled behaviour, inquisitiveness, and growth. These inform our guiding philosophies, which are focused on creating curricula and culture that is student-centric, diverse in language and culture, experience driven, cross-disciplinary, research intensive, and service oriented.

Organizational Structure

Figure 1 provides a visual breakdown of the structure at ABC Academy. This organizational chart is relevant as it details precisely the reporting hierarchy that is followed within the institution.
As the chief executive officer (CEO) and superintendent of ABC Academy, I oversee three deputy heads of school—dean of faculty, dean of students, and dean of strategic management and operations—as well as the executive assistant, who in turn serves as the human-resources director and is responsible for managing all the institution’s administrative assistants. The deans of faculty and students share the responsibility of working and supporting traditional curricula courses. The dean of strategic management and operations coordinates experiential learning, college counselling, admissions, communications, and alumni relations.

**Established Leadership Approaches**

Three key leadership approaches have helped develop a sense of team, unity, and shared commitment within our institution: (1) distributed leadership, (2) transformational leadership, and (3) transformative leadership. My leadership approach, strongly influenced by a coaching and mentorship background, derives from my previous careers as a professional ice hockey player and, later, as a firefighter. These jobs cultivated my sense of care, commitment, and sacrifice. By establishing a team culture that embraces the unique qualities of each team
member, faculty morale heightens and so does the level of emotional investment into the program.

**Distributed leadership.** My integrated leadership approach hinges on leadership as an influence process, as opposed to positional authority. Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, and Wahlstrom (2004) suggest that “distributed leadership assumes a set of practices that are enacted by people at all levels rather than a set of personal characteristics and attributes located in people at the top” (p. 28). The distributive leadership model has contributed to the faculty thinking on their feet, responding to opportunities, and supporting their peers. Leithwood et al. (2004) note that the organization can see beneficial results by harnessing the capacities of as many members as possible, while the members themselves can focus on their respective strengths. What results is “a fuller appreciation of interdependence and how one’s behavior affects the organization as a whole” (Leithwood et al., 2004, pp. 28–29). Fostering this sense of interdependence entails a recognition of diverse skill sets within the organization itself.

**Transformational leadership.** Lentz (2012) asserts that “transformational leadership in learning organizations ensured the continuing presence of beliefs of the learning culture. Leadership exhibited organizational concern for people in the form of equal opportunity of all stakeholders” (p. 12). Faculty members facilitate weekly meetings and internal professional development. Such an approach is very much in line with transformational thinking, which suggests that “transformational leaders enabled employees to find meaning and fulfillment transforming fundamental attitudes, values, and commitments” (Lentz, 2012, p. 9). As Shields (2010) puts it, “transformational leadership focuses on improving organizational qualities, dimensions, and effectiveness” (Shields, 2010, p. 564). Expanding the range and scope
of opportunities allows teaching and non-teaching faculty to pursue areas in which their interests and capabilities are highest.

**Transformative leadership.** Hallinger and Lee (2012) mention three distinct concertive actions that are a beneficial by-product of transformative leadership, and which include “spontaneous collaboration, intuitive working relations, and institutionalized practices” (p. 482). The three actions have enabled ABC Academy to create and support original initiatives that promote social-service projects. Shields (2012) suggests that transformative leadership “focuses on preparing students to be both individually successful as well as thoughtful, successful, caring, and engaged citizens of the global community” (p. 21). Transformative leadership at its core espouses “notions of promise, liberation, hope, empowerment, activism, risk, social justice, courage and revolution” (Shields, 2010, p. 559). By using questions concerning justice and democracy as a guide, practices that are inequitable can be properly identified and assessed, leading to higher achievement in individuals and greater harmony in the group. In that sense, “transformative leadership, therefore, inextricably links education and educational leadership with the wider social context within which it is embedded” (Shields, 2010, p. 559). This is an important dynamic because it imparts wisdom that links classroom activities with the real-world context, creating important linkages and meaning.

The aforementioned theories have some overlap, and Shields (2010) identifies the axiom: leading change should be predicated on “liberty, justice and equality” (p. 564). Democratic principles inform the very foundations of the distributed, transformational, and transformative leadership theories. Institutions should not be defined and led by a solitary actor, but instead guided and supported by all stakeholders. In order for this to happen, equal opportunity needs to be afforded to said stakeholders, with sufficient latitude to pursue endeavours that further
cultivate individual and in-group agency. While individuals continue to strive higher and the group continues to grow more unified, it is important to remain vigilant; new information, externally imposed policies, or potentially toxic cultural forces have the potential of stifling progress and creating discord. It is important to always use democratic principles as a guide, wherein questions concerning policies, customs, and culture are always couched in collective understanding and collective effort. Rather than being a continuum, these theories operate together in a circular fashion, with strong democratic foundations acting as both the underpinning and the central driver for continued improvement.

**Organizational History**

In 1960, one of China’s most prestigious universities opened an affiliated high school. Over the years, the high school earned a reputation as being one of the country’s elite academic institutions. In 2010, the board of directors, the Communist Party secretary, and the head of the university’s high school decided to open an international division. The program, designed to support students who desired to pursue higher education abroad, was housed on the same campus as the Zhongkao- and Gaokao-track programs. The Zhongkao is the senior high school entrance examination held annually in mainland People’s Republic of China for students in the final year of junior high school. This exam is a requirement for all students and must be taken as a prerequisite for admittance into virtually every senior high school. The Gaokao is the national college entrance examination held in the People’s Republic of China on a yearly basis. Acceptance into undergraduate-level institutions is conditional upon completion of this examination. It is used to distinguish students and is customarily taken in a student’s final year of senior high school. To be considered for the main school, students must be from Beijing, hold Hukou residency status, and meet the minimum Zhongkao exam score requirements imposed by the Ministry of Education. The Hukou is the household registration system in mainland People’s
Republic of China and in Taiwan. This system is a means for identifying an individual as a resident of a particular region, and includes information concerning members of a family within a household. Developments in the form of marriages, divorces, movement in and out of the region, births, and deaths are included. For ABC Academy consideration, 60 percent of students must come from Beijing and hold Hukou status, while the remaining 40 percent can come from any city or province in China, or overseas. The former group must meet the government-imposed Zhongkao exam standard, reach an appropriate level of written and oral English fluency, and pay tuition.

The two programs, while housed on the same campus, are programmatically different. The main school is subsidized by the government, upholds traditional Chinese values, and follows traditional lecture-style teaching, rote-memorization, and exam preparation. ABC Academy straddles the private education sector with its tuition fees and curricular freedom, but it is also part of a public school system that holds Communist Party principles. This hybrid model enables ABC Academy to leverage resources and promote its program based off of the brand, ranking, and relationship with its main-school counterpart.

Table 1 identifies key categorical facets for each respective institution. The differences between the programs are noteworthy as they highlight the constraints and opportunities related to ABC Academy, particularly when considering the scope of change to be proposed.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Main School</th>
<th>ABC Academy</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Admissions</td>
<td>550 Zhongkao score</td>
<td>Demographic (male/female balance); 60% admittance of Beijing residents (550 Zhongkao score); 40% admittance of non-Beijing</td>
</tr>
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</table>
As evidenced by the Table 1, there are substantial differences between the main school and ABC Academy. Students in the main school are influenced wholly by the government, which means any freedom afforded to them is done so under the auspices of the Communist Party. From the standpoint of curriculum, there are clearly stark differences that speak to the divergent instructional practices, alluding to the cultural divide that exists between the schools.
themselves. There is also a radical difference in the types of instructors and the level of compensation provided to teachers.

The initial impetus for the scholarship program came as the direct result of a course developed by a faculty member two years ago focusing on the refugee crisis in the Middle East. Students were exposed to the key issues and context of the crisis in the classroom environment, while the most meaningful portion of the course took place during a two-week experiential learning trip to Jordan. Students were able to meet with the Chinese Ambassador to Jordan, UN officials, NGO representatives, journalists, and writers. Traveling to the center of the crisis, students experienced the living conditions of tens of thousands of refugees who sought safety in one of the UN-administered camps in Jordan.

Students and faculty created a refugee scholarship program to do more for marginalized youth. As of September 2018, the scholarship program will support one or two refugees annually to complete their final year of high school at the Beijing campus. The college counseling staff will help recipients secure fully funded scholarships to institutions overseas upon graduation.

Leadership approaches, programmatic differences between ABC Academy and its affiliated institution, and the history of the organization have been addressed in great detail, providing a solid underpinning of the organization’s context. This scholarship initiative is extremely important to the school as it attempts to actualize the change required within the institution. The change is intimately connected to the problem of practice, which will be elaborated on in subsequent sections. Prior to that, it is important to address the author’s role within the organization and the necessity of transformative leadership ideas.
Leadership Position

When joining ABC Academy, leaders have been encouraged to push the limits of teaching and learning, with little to no interference from above. For example, the board of directors, the main public high school counterpart, its famous affiliated university, and the Ministry of Education have given substantial flexibility to ABC Academy, allowing the organization to pursue endeavours that otherwise would not be permitted. Significant authority and decision-making control has been devolved to the author, who serves as CEO and superintendent of all international programs under the umbrella of the main public high school. The newfound freedom and support have been extended to staff and personnel within the institution. An ambitious endeavour like experiential learning requires influential-stakeholder involvement inside and outside of the organization.

While the power and agency afforded are immense, particularly in relation to the board of directors and external entities such as the Department of Education, perhaps the most important aspect applies within the organization—including faculty, students, and parents. During the initial visit to ABC Academy, it became apparent that high school students and their teachers were capable of making real-world impact in real time. When conventional restrictions that are imposed on most institutions are removed, such as accreditation standards and baseline competencies, a great deal of progress can be made. ABC Academy has been able to identify, support, and nurture ideas and initiatives from faculty and students that further our mission, vision, and core values. By empowering personnel to create initiatives that improve our program, the institution adds life to its foundations, and promotes itself in China and overseas. Leading by example is a central pillar, and in order to provide the best learning environment for our students and faculty, those within our institution need to have their voices heard. While the
case for change has been set from the top of the organizational hierarchy, others have been empowered to become the focal point for leading the change.

As CEO and superintendent, my role is to expand the Beijing campus to other satellite campuses within China and overseas. Currently, there are four building projects on the horizon: Haikou, Sanya, Toujou, and an additional campus in Beijing. This expansion represents just the start of ABC Academy’s program scaling. Although our existing Beijing campus only serves 300 students from grades 10 through 12, the other campuses will be kindergarten to grade 12 and, at a minimum, will be twice the size. In the context of China, ABC Academy leaders host meetings with mayors and Communist Party secretaries who wish to partner with the institution and open up a campus in their city, particularly since many people seek out top-tier cities to have access to top-tier education. Outside of China, meetings are held with heads from the most prestigious independent schools in order to assess possible partnerships, design programs, and oversee school management.

The traditional international-school world serves predominately expatriate students with state-of-the-art facilities and resources while espousing Western idealism. At ABC Academy, the goal was to strike a balance between foreign faculty and local Chinese faculty. This extends to gender, age, sexual orientation, and the like. The institution has sought to have the most diverse teaching and non-teaching faculty possible, continually searching for new and innovative ways for our community to share its story. Our recent addition of a research grant is an opportunity for students and faculty to investigate a topic that improves the lives of others. Another project ABC Academy has begun supporting is led by the Colombian Ministry of Education and focuses on re-engineering an education system that better supports former child soldiers. We continually seek out ways to inform others, both internally and externally, about
development at the school, by frequenting speaking engagements and other events around the world. This is done to inspire others to do more than merely prepare their students for standardized exams, and ultimately fall into the assembly-line trap of teaching and learning.

**Lens Statement**

Transformative leadership hinges on “the ability of the leader to reach the souls of others in a fashion which raises human consciousness, builds meaning, and inspires human intent that is the source of power” (Shields, 2010, p. 567). Upon joining ABC Academy, it was evident to me that the program was in difficult place, as the former head of school departed mid-year to start their own school in Southern China. It was during this time of crisis that the institution required all the help it could get to keep the school once again operational, and the distributive leadership approach served as a valuable tool. However, distributive leadership on its own was not sufficient in fostering the sort of lasting impact our vision allowed; through a transformative leadership approach, we were able to connect teaching and learning to a deep and profound contribution.

In elucidating key principles of culture change, Schein (2010) notes that “new cultural elements can only be learned if the new behavior leads to success and satisfaction” (p. 312). However, it must be noted that “culture change is always transformative change that requires a period of unlearning that is psychologically painful” (Schein, 2010, p. 312). Prior to assessing cultural elements and their relationship to the central problem, Schein (2010) underscores the need to: identify specific changes, understand how the new approaches will address particular issues, and appreciate the level of difficulty in learning these new approaches for organizational actors (p. 307). While the link between transformative change and culture is important, a more detailed examination of what precisely constitutes culture is needed before any legitimate attempts are made to identify and address any perceived problems.
Morgan (1986) describes culture as “shared values, shared beliefs, shared meaning, shared understanding, and shared sense making” (p. 132). Culture can be thought of as “a process of reality construction that allows people to see and understand particular events, actions, objects, utterances, or situations in distinctive ways” (Morgan, 1986, p. 132). However, there is a fluidity to culture that may make some elements easier to identify than others. As a consequence, culture should not be viewed merely as a minor characteristic that can be quickly possessed or imparted. Instead, culture “must be understood as an active, living phenomenon through which people jointly create and re-create the worlds in which they live” (Morgan, 1986, pp. 134-135). Any noticeable departures from prevailing patterns of practice may indicate a shift in collective sentiments, particularly as a group attempts to navigate changes externally with shifts in cohesion internally (Schein, 1990, p. 111).

ABC Academy did experience noticeable departures from a cultural standpoint, as those who previously may have questioned additional duties and tasks beyond their job description were now receptive to taking on responsibilities to ensure the continuation of the program. Much of the dilemma surrounded the nineteen faculty members who needed to be replaced because they joined the Southern China school start-up. As ABC Academy was unlike any other school that I had worked at, it was important to learn and trust those who had built this organic program. This would yield a better understanding of its strengths and provide an opportunity to identify areas that required improvement. By leading in an open, honest, transparent, and humble manner, faculty and staff began to communicate more freely than they once did. Prior to me joining the school, there was not much that kept the community together; there were no weekly meetings, communication was rare and vague, and little to no accountability existed. By simply recognizing each other’s efforts and opening up to feedback,
staff began to share more with others in their department. Barriers between the faculty and the head of school were removed, as was the internal barrier between faculty members. It made the most sense to empower staff to not only identify areas of weakness, but to determine the most appropriate ways to rectify these vulnerabilities.

Hallinger and Lee (2012) note how successful approaches during early phases of development can become normalized, creating residual behaviours that exist even after groups are recomposed. When interdependency is the focus, the emphasis is on activities that are done in concert. By fostering common understanding, “this interdependency can trigger the development of distributed leadership practices among members in order to achieve shared goals” (Hallinger & Lee, 2012, p. 482). Customary behaviours can become institutionalized through formal policies, namely “working structures (e.g., a curriculum framework), and organizational structures (e.g., grade-level teams or a school management committee)” (Hallinger & Lee, 2012, p. 482). At ABC Academy, a formal foundation that would anchor and secure the program—including policies, procedures, and department chairs—was lacking. Establishing this foundation became a shared mission to strengthen the program and ensure its longevity. Leaders from within emerged as the program formalized, and the institution was strategic and selective with those who earned official department-chair and deputy-head promotions. This hiring strategy was also viewed as an opportunity to balance the foreign to local ratio, including diversity among age, experience, and credentials, amongst other criteria.

Once the health and sustainability of the school began to regenerate, the focus shifted to making an impact locally and globally. Shields (2010) notes that:

we believe that the value ends of leadership should be to enhance equity, social justice, and the quality of life; to expand access and opportunity; to encourage respect for difference and diversity; to strengthen democracy, civic life, and civic responsibility; and to promote culture enrichment, creative expression, intellectual honesty, the advancement
of knowledge, and personal freedom coupled with responsibility. (p. 571)

From crisis to audit, and through a continual cycle of improvement, reflection, and yearning to connect our knowledge, skills, and resources to improve the world, the idea of our Access Scholarship began to take form. Other humbler, local initiatives were first created; they included working at a hospice, designing and building migrant-worker living spaces, and providing education on mental and emotional wellness to combat the high numbers of suicide among youth in China. By starting with micro-level changes, ABC Academy staff grew more confident with every new project and every new success. The desire for learning and growth also grew. As Austin and Harkins (2008) posit, there is a strong connection between the performance of an organization and its capacity to constantly learn. It is noted that “in order to innovate and meet marketplace demands, companies must become more transparent, reduce hierarchy, distribute power, and integrate new knowledge from employees and customers into their core business process” (Austin and Harkins, 2008, p. 105). The fear of penalty or dismissal, in those who have differing opinions than the prevailing sentiments, has been removed; a recent initiative awarded all faculty and staff an annual as well as a performance-based bonus, which is in stark contrast to the traditional system wherein teachers battle amongst themselves for a bonus granted to 25 percent of faculty. The need for competition has been removed as the institution continually pushes for collaboration and sharing. This has been extended to include students, since their input is invaluable in the creation of new facilities and courses. As typified by the research grant, there are more incentives to investigate, experiment, and include others in purposeful endeavours.
The transformative lens has informed the organization and allowed it to make significant strides. While progress has been made, deep-seated issues remain with ABC Academy. The challenge’s complexity requires thorough examination before fundamental change can occur.

**Leadership Problem of Practice**

The problem of practice that will be addressed in this Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP) is the absence of an institution-wide commitment to balanced instruction and cross-cultural understanding that leaves students ill-prepared for the rigors and realities of global citizenry. The insular school culture runs counter to the institution’s stated mission, promoting a sense of complacency and underscoring a resistance to change on the part of key institutional actors—including department heads, teachers, and support staff. This is having a detrimental impact on the growth and strategic direction of ABC Academy. Students lack a truly holistic learning experience that imparts necessary insight and wisdom to confront postsecondary opportunities and challenges. The central hurdle facing this small international Chinese school is the implementation of an innovative academic program that challenges traditional thinking and allows the institution to more fully realize its mission, vision, and core values.

The institutional shortcomings—from onboarding to matriculation—became readily apparent as a result of our internal audit, despite the evidence indicating that few faculty members and students shared our beliefs. For example, many instructors in the past have focused on traditional teaching methods and standardized exam preparation. Due to the level of openness and change required to institute this program, the initiative has been met with resistance. Segments of the faculty recognize that this initiative will indeed increase workload and add pressure to change teaching practices, including more courses being taught in English. The Access Scholarship appears to have provoked some individuals within our community to express xenophobic viewpoints, most of which focus on the region and religion of those we are
seeking to help. For example, individuals have suggested that there are security concerns associated with admitting applicants from overseas, and some have insinuated that certain religions are incompatible with domestic norms.

The differing cultures and expectations between ABC Academy and its main public school counterpart pose significant challenges, and even constraints, that have the potential to create a divide amongst community members. There have been occasions when local faculty at ABC Academy have felt torn between multiple worlds, and felt that ABC Academy is more conservative and controlling than its counterpart.

Examples of divergent cultural customs and expectations are numerous. Certain teacher-student interactions that are considered acceptable in the main school—namely having meals together and communicating through social media—are not permitted at ABC Academy. Standards differ regarding attendance and participation during faculty meetings; faculty at ABC Academy need to be present and free from distractions like phones and laptops, while their counterparts in the main school can choose to attend meetings and freely use devices. The level of freedom that ABC Academy students enjoy also differs from their cohorts in the main school, as the former are permitted in the evenings to engage in group activities and extracurricular experiences, whereas the latter are expected to be indoors and studying independently for their Gaokao exam. When attempting to push boundaries and augment the existing learning environment, these examples crystallize how divergent policies, informed by cultural differences, create viable hurdles to the implementation of new initiatives.

The Access Scholarship is an opportunity to authentically represent our desired self in a manner that is consistent with the image we have been communicating to the greater world, actualizing our values and allowing us to stand out among our peers for our commitment to
social justice. Expanding beyond a standardized curriculum allows us to develop organic content based on the expertise and resources of our teachers, as well as refine and build skills that will tackle real-world problems. The problem of practice needs to be addressed in order to create a program that favours holistic teaching and learning over insularity and regimentation.

**Framing the Problem of Practice**

**Relevant External Data**

According to the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) “1 person is forcibly displaced every two seconds” (n.d.). Betts and Collier (2017) note that “among the global population of 7 billion, only one person in seven lives in a honeypot country” (p. 30). To further underscore the problem, “half of the world’s 3.5 million refugee children of primary-school age attend classes, but less than a quarter of the 1.95 million secondary-school-aged children do” (Khawaja, Martínez, & Van Esveld, 2017, para. 4). We intend to focus our attention on displaced individuals—including refugees—who have minimal documentation, which prevents them from continuing their education and employment. (See Appendix B titled “Contemporary Global Refugee Crisis” for more details on the global problem.)

ABC Academy has begun the process of supporting a Syrian refugee’s efforts to continue their education and improve their chance for resettlement. Elements of the transformative worldview, including justice, collaboration, and change-oriented ideas, have informed our approach. While people and resources outside of our borders need to be mobilized to actualize this initiative, particular attention is paid to the internal challenges facing the implementation of this OIP. Consideration needs to be made for the academic program, course instructors, required resources, dorm allocation, academic calendar, and any other non-academic challenges this initiative imposes. Additional challenges include orienting community members to be culturally
sensitive to the scholarship recipient. Considering the scope of this initiative, the institution needs to garner the greater community’s support, which includes students and parents.

As an institution, we should no longer sit back while so many displaced people are prevented from gaining access to education and living a meaningful life. We have been fortunate that an expert on the Middle Eastern refugee crisis, Dr. M, has joined our teaching faculty. By leveraging his course and utilizing the resources in China and overseas, we are able to lend a modest helping hand that will support those who are most desperate. China is not known for being a country that opens its borders to outsiders. This is an opportunity to give voice to the voiceless and learn from their perspectives. In turn, this will add diversity to our community.

Multiple factors have shaped the problem of practice. Students and faculty have been studying the growing refugee crisis in the Middle East—specifically Jordan—over the past two years, and have spent a considerable amount of time in the region meeting with representatives from the UN, several NGOs, the Chinese Embassy to Jordan, educators, students, journalists, and writers. They visited Baqaa and Irbid camps for Palestinian refugees, and Zaatari camp for Syrian refugees. Unsurprisingly, education and employment are not possible for many refugees and displaced people. More than one-third of school-aged Syrians did not receive formal education in 2015 (Van Esveld, 2016, p. 7). The key findings in UNICEF’s Joint Education Needs Assessment Report (2015) highlighted the common reasons for non-attendance by children. These include “never having attended school…not having the resources to pay for school materials; and having to work to earn money for the household. Lack of appropriate documentation and safety was also raised as a barrier” (pp. 2–3). Syrians have the largest population of forcibly displaced people with 12 million (UNHCR, 2016, p. 6), while the refugee population at the end of 2016 had risen to 22.5 million (UNHCR, 2016, p. 13). This data is
being used as a means to galvanize support and convince reluctant parties to contribute to this initiative.

Theory

We are an institution currently lacking a neat or easily compartmentalized definition, meaning that an opportunity exists to design as the process unfolds. The eight steps of organizational change detailed in Kotter (1996) will be the exclusive model to support the ABC Academy’s change process. However, for the purpose of this proposal, I have included two other change models that complement Kotter (1996): Cawsey, Deszca, & Ingols (2016), and Gentile’s (2012) *Giving Voice to Values*. They are less prescriptive, which is necessary for our current foundational stage.

The model found in Kotter (1996) offers a linear, highly structured, step-by-step process with a prescriptive approach to organizational change. This makes it clear for ABC Academy constituents to understand and concisely move through each stage of the process. This model adds structure that will help navigate unfamiliar territory, while clearly defining the process to support current and future scholarship recipients. As attempts are made to institute fundamental change, it is important to have a strong structural framework from the outset that lays out expectations and provides a pathway to success. When organizational actors see benchmarks, their anticipation and growth can work in conjunction, allowing the organization to steadily progress forward. It is up to institutional leaders to understand the climate for change and be responsive to developments.

Cawsey et al. (2016) offers both a descriptive and prescriptive framework for developing organizational change. Of note is the need for leaders “to scan continuously both their external and internal environments and understand the forces for and against any particular organizational
shift. The most powerful drivers for change tend to originate outside organizations” (Cawsey et al., 2016, p. 53). However, schools operating in this manner change for the wrong reasons, and only change structurally and superficially to stay competitive within their context and market (Fullan, 2002, p. 18). This model gives us a strategic roadmap with room for variation, something ABC Academy constituents would appreciate and value.

Gentile’s (2012) model, like Kotter’s, is prescriptive in nature. A benefit of this model is its focus on equitability, namely providing constituents with a voice and platform to make meaningful change in-line with their values. Working among a community that is comprised of Chinese nationals and ‘foreigners’ from many countries, predominantly the English-speaking West, poses several challenges related to cultural norms and diversity-based initiatives. Perhaps due to cultural differences, most initiatives developed at ABC Academy during the present have come from the foreign faculty. Gentile’s (2012) model accommodates communities, which helps cultivate teacher and student outcomes that better the lives of others, therefore underscoring the value of the Access Scholarship.

Based on the current stage of this initiative and the position of ABC Academy, Kotter’s eight steps of organizational change is most appropriate for building the framework. Hughes (2016) identifies several issues with Kotter’s eight steps, including contradictions in prescribed ethical conduct, lack of malleability in a linear model, and an apparent inability to reconcile transformation with continuity. These are important critiques that need to be considered based on ABC Academy’s history and its present trajectory towards instituting lasting change. The organizational change process, therefore, would in the future benefit from elements of Cawsey et al. (2016) and Gentile (2012). The three models together can work in cohesion, as the eight steps of Kotter provide foundational structure, Cawsey et al. (2016) allows for variation and flexibility,
and Gentile (2012) is inclusive of diversity and equity. Each serves a separate purpose but can be applied at differing stages to create lasting change.

**Critical Dimensions: Political, Economic, and Social**

There are three important dimensions that need to be explored to better understand the complexity of the problem at hand: political dimension, economic dimension, and social dimension. Each of these have specific considerations of which institutional leaders should be made aware prior to the development of any possible remedies.

**Political dimension.** From the outset, political factors needed to be considered in order to secure the student’s entrance into China. Involvement from international political organizations, including the United Nations, was necessary, as was the support from the Chinese government. The head of the affiliated university serves as a Communist Party secretary, which automatically necessitates that individual’s involvement. The Chinese Ambassador to Jordan, the Entry-Exit Bureau, and the Beijing District Bureau were all involved as well.

Outside of securing the initial entry, the student’s exam requirements require travel internationally. This is complicated by visa conditions, particularly in this context since the student is from Syria and subject to substantial oversight on the part of international border officials. The Jordanian government and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCR) also played a role, as the student’s exit and re-entry needed to be ensured prior to the program’s initialization. Under normal conditions, refugees that return would have to pay money upon re-entry, however these fees needed to be negotiated due to the unique context of the Access Scholarship. Due to the skills and knowledge that would be imparted to the student, it was ultimately agreed that the fees for re-entry would be waived.
Economic dimension. It has become clear that the initial costs to support this initiative have extended far beyond the initial expectation. The initial budget was approximately $40,000 (CAD), which included the recipient’s visas, flights, accommodation, studies and living allowances; however, this did not take into account significant expenses that have since been recognized as paramount.

The unforeseen costs extend to several areas of the institution. This initiative compels the institution to devote more financial resources for the purposes of English instruction since the recipient does not speak Chinese. The local Chinese teachers have had to make changes to their teaching instruction, leading to fewer resources being available for other purposes. Much of our administrative resources have been allocated to supporting this one student as preliminary assessments did not forecast the personal attention and level of support this student would require. Other unexpected costs to support the student have emerged, such as sending the recipient to take required standardized tests that are only available overseas. Chaperoning costs also need to be factored into the analysis, especially since they are compounded because of the need for more than one chaperone at a time as per institution policy. In order to ensure the recipient’s admittance into a prestigious postsecondary institution overseas on a full scholarship, ABC Academy also requires individuals to travel internationally and promote the student.

Social dimension. Numerous factors are involved that complicate the student’s socialization amongst peers. Finding appropriate locations and times for prayer were a challenge, although the nearby presence of the student’s place of worship has alleviated some of the difficulties. Dietary requirements have also forced the individual to eat separately on occasion or to find alternative arrangements that do not contain prohibited ingredients. Being the only foreigner amidst a student population composed of Chinese nationals immediately creates
social division, one that is compounded by cultural customs that do not permit the student to readily engage in intergender relations. The unwillingness on the part of senior students to share rooms compelled the recipient to room with students at a lower-grade level. Living on campus year-round means that the student lacks companionship during long weekends and other Chinese statutory holidays. In addition, the student’s limited allowance forces him to hold fewer possessions, including shoes and clothes, which creates an added layer of social division.

The aforementioned dimensions act as obstacles in the creation of a conscientious teaching and learning environment. International organizations, unforeseen budgetary constraints, and social customs all factor into the Access Scholarship’s success. These dimensions also have the propensity to shift and change as developments occur domestically and internationally. That said, in order to address the problem of practice, it is imperative to ask central questions about the challenges the institution faces.

**Guiding Questions Emerging from Problem of Practice**

Some of the strategic initiatives—including opportunities to co-design courses and to make grant funding available for research initiatives—further inspire ABC Academy’s teaching faculty to collaborate with those within and outside the institution. Furthermore, department chairs and deputy heads are accountable for demonstrating, coaching, and supporting the desired change in teaching and learning practices, offering more instruction in English and connecting disciplines. Department chairs and deputy heads receive a sizable bonus, which will henceforth be subject to their support of the Access Scholarship initiative and improvement of our program. Department chairs must reapply annually for their position as a means to inspire middle managers to lead their departments and meet the goals of our institution. Despite these measures, the degree of success has varied from department to department, and this difference appears to be stratified between foreign and local faculty members. That is, there remains
trepidation on the part of local faculty to fully embrace new initiatives and teaching methods because of their traditional, Chinese teaching background, which focuses on student self-study and standardized exam results. Strictly mandating conduct related to initiatives and teaching methods goes against the spirit of what the institution is attempting to develop, creating challenges grounded in cultural customs that are impossible to change overnight.

A formal meeting is required with our school psychologist for teachers and non-teaching faculty to better understand their role in supporting the Access Scholarship student, regardless of whether they have that individual as a student or not. The Access Scholarship student endures a great deal of hardship, and a better job needs to be done collectively while that individual is under our care. The belief is that staff members are reluctant to get involved or are unsure how to approach this student because the culture to which this individual belongs is foreign to them. The faculty need to feel a sense of ownership for his happiness and overall success, and this for the time being is lacking. If ABC Academy provides the staff with more education and support, the expectation is that more faculty members will be willing to forge a relationship and contribute positively to the student’s experience at our school and in China.

Many of our efforts to find scholarship and resettlement opportunities for our Access Scholarship recipient have been met with discouraging feedback from institutions around the world. We have approached some of the largest and most prestigious postsecondary institutions in North America and Europe, only to continually be discouraged by the unavailability of scholarships or financial awards for international students. Some have claimed that the Syrian passport poses a significant hurdle for visa approval and therefore not worth the time to pursue, especially with other refugees holding passports that are easier to navigate. But it is not just an institution for which we are in search, but also a country that will permit resettlement. Canada
and Germany come to mind, but very few scholarships exist in those countries, and those that do are extremely competitive. Based on conversations with the University of Toronto’s international admissions department, the institution—despite its size and international reputation—designates just thirty-seven Lester B. Pearson scholars per year (University of Toronto, 2015, para. 7). Other schools informed ABC Academy that they could only take a refugee of a particular gender. Our list is decreasing in size and we recognize the number competing for those scholarships is immense. Questions arise about the candidate’s credentials in comparison to other students, and there is some concern about what additional measures can be taken in order to fulfill our mandate.

Culture, resource mobilization, and resettlement challenges need to be addressed for the Access Scholarship to succeed. Creating a robust model that tackles these areas is contingent on answering important questions about ABC Academy and its capabilities. These questions are:

- How can a group of individuals be motivated to work in concert with one another when the central challenges tend to be in a cultural realm that is foreign and radically different than that which they have grown accustomed to throughout their lives?
- What additional resources or approaches could be mobilized in order to ensure that staff understand the gravity of their role in this initiative?
- How will the changing political situation in Syria impact the institution’s ability to place the Access Scholarship student in a particular country for the purposes of obtaining a scholarship and resettlement?
- Are there alternative approaches that can be taken in order to convince institutions about the value of this initiative?
• Is there a more sustainable model that permits less variability of cost on a year-to-year basis, and that can create a reliable structure for future refugee students to gain a full scholarship and resettlement?

**Leadership-Focused Vision for Change**

**Gap Between Present and Envisioned Future State**

Walters (2012) advises that “we must take care to strike a balance between change for progress and the need to consolidate and stabilize” (p. 119). The gap that I seek to fill includes mobilizing staff to better stabilize our program while advancing the teaching and learning to better our students’ experiences, the outcomes of which extend beyond the campus. Schon (1971) suggests diffusion of power structures that emphasize spread as opposed to consolidation. It is suggested that “diffusion of innovation is a dominant model for the transformation of societies according to which novelty moves out from one or more points to permeate the society as a whole” (Schon, 1971, p. 80). According to Walters (2012), this environment prevails when “clusters of professionals emerge as experts, role models, or experienced depending upon the nature of the issue being addressed” (p. 121). Black, Harrison, Lee, Marshall, and William (2003) and Walters (2012) contend that “middle leaders (Heads of Department or Heads of Year/House) tend to be key in the change process” (Walters, 2012, p. 121). In this sense, the diffusion of traditional power structures is intimately connected to capacity building.

Although some department heads have enabled their constituents to remain insulated from high ranking admin, neglecting to teach in alignment with our school policy and philosophy, many have made significant progress. The envisioned future state of ABC Academy will have more middle leaders modeling and supporting the teaching and learning we strive to accomplish. It is expected that more faculty members, regardless of their position in the hierarchy, recognize the opportunities to initiate or support their peers. In this vein, we will
improve our internal and external impact. The ultimate goal is to cultivate an ecosystem that is nimble and actively connects teaching to real-world issues, utilizing our network and the resources at our disposal to better the world. As a consequence of teacher-student experiences in Jordanian refugee camps, our faculty created something intentional and unique with our Access Scholarship initiative. It reinforces our commitment to empowering our faculty and supporting them with issues and topics that matter—those that make us better educators and enable service to others from outside of our school, city, country, and culture. This notion is closely aligned to transformative leadership tenets, namely the focus on issues like social justice and citizen engagement that promote the betterment of the global community (Shields, 2012, p. 21). The internal ABC Academy culture is changing, and faculty members recognize that those who have sought to further realize our school’s mission, philosophy, and core values have received tremendous support from the upper administration. This support extends to additional financial resources for initiatives that further the goals of the institution.

**Priorities for Change, Balancing Stakeholder and Organizational Interests**

**HR challenges.** Last summer, the institution was forced to move a department chair from our partner university, for being overtly obstructionist in the efforts to improve our teaching practices, grossly attacking our Access Scholarship and anything else that was deemed to challenge Chinese culture. An additional faculty member was moved from a deputy role to that of teaching faculty, for a number of reasons that included allowing teachers to be void of any supervision and audits, culturally defending inappropriate behavior, and fostering division among local and expatriate counterparts. These recent changes have allowed us to advance the career for those more motivated to bring our school together, improve our shortcomings, and strive to provide outcomes that are in line with our mission.
Regarding the Access Scholarship, further meetings are required whereby all department chairs, deputy heads, and counselors are present. The department chairs will be better positioned to monitor their team in improving the recipient’s experience and outcomes. We have also begun working with the school psychologist to better understand the scholarship recipient’s transition to life and academia in China. This is an important way to more holistically understand the emotional struggles of being away from home and family, potentially shining light on viable solutions. There is reluctance, from those who do not teach or interact with the individual, to make any changes to their approach and general practices. More accountability is required, and therefore the department chairs will need to model expectations.

**Balancing stakeholder interests.** The board of directors will need to be included in the communication channel to better understand the magnitude of our institutional change, with the catalyst being the Access Scholarship. The major focus deals with the recipient’s admittance into a top-ranking university, and paving the way for future students’ matriculation. The board of directors require a more thorough understanding of the recipient’s internal impact on our institution, and how their presence pressures us to be more forward thinking, inclusive, and worldly by offering a multi-disciplinary, student-centric educational experience. It is important that the board of directors feel personally connected to the initiative because the Access Scholarship’s longevity is contingent on their ongoing approval. A dialogue needs to commence with directors that appropriately frames the Access Scholarship initiative as a long-standing commitment, and not a solitary experiment that seeks to gain the attention of top universities to better leverage more acceptances for future domestic applicants to ABC Academy.

**Organizational interests.** The students at ABC Academy require further education, with an emphasis on improving their support and care for the Access Scholarship recipient. Each
week, students meet in groups of a maximum of ten with their mentorship leader (an ABC faculty member). Themes focus on academic success, such as note-taking and time management. However, there is a gap pertaining to helping and supporting one another, and it includes the Access Scholarship recipient who is lost within the language and culture of both the ABC Academy and Beijing. More training will help our students show sensitivity to the needs of our guest, which will also help them better understand the nature of their own future experience when they attend university overseas. This shift in focus will provide additional support to the group of exchange students we welcome each year, in addition to the varying communities we work alongside during our experiential courses and trips.

**Change Drivers**

Creating meaningful change starts with identifying drivers that properly contextualize the challenge and motivate stakeholders towards action. For ABC Academy, there are four major change drivers that can assist the institution in its efforts to combat cultural insularity and traditional teaching methods: political impetus; furtherance of mission, vision, and core values; operational alignment through funding, promotion, and professional development; and public relations, marketing, and branding.

**Political Impetus**

The political environment is intrinsically linked to this initiative. As a means for self-actualization, it is noted in Fowler (2018) that for refugee applicants, “education has become their only route to better their condition and their social mobility” (p. 118). In significant respects, teaching and learning operate within the political sphere itself. This is echoed in Shields (2010), when the focus shifts to transformative intellectuals and complex power relations. Forward-thinking educational institutions are informed by “intellectual practices” that “are necessarily grounded in forms of moral and ethical discourse exhibiting a preferential
concern for the suffering and struggles of the disadvantaged and oppressed” (Shields, 2010, pp. 567–568). Many of the overseers within the university and government view the scholarship as an opportunity for China to demonstrate to the world their commitment to others—in particular the most desperate.

Furtherance of Mission, Vision, and Core Values

Leithwood et al. (2004) note the importance of “empowering others to make significant decisions: this is a key goal for leaders when accountability mechanisms include giving a greater voice to community stakeholders” (p. 12). Through continued communication with staff, the institution is better positioned to support internally those who have ideas about growing the program based on keystone principles. As a school leader, I have taken charge by continually communicating our mission, vision, and core values, highlighting initiatives that faculty and students have instituted both internally and externally. Furthermore, I have sought to support students and faculty by connecting them to resources that will enable the actualization of their respective initiatives. I utilize weekly updates via email and WeChat to reach the ABC Community. In addition, I post relevant articles and updates on Facebook and LinkedIn, write articles for blogs and other publications, as well as speak at educational and non-educational events around the world. The mission, vision, and core values provide us with a foundation to build our curriculum, promote what we do, and hold our students and faculty accountable.

Operational Alignment: Funding, Promotion, PD

Transformational leadership underscores the need for “action to redress wrongs and to ensure that all members of the organization are provided with as level a playing field as possible” (Shields, 2010, p. 572). Since the latter portion of the 2017–2018 academic year, I have put policies into place that highlight performance indicators for department chairs in addition to all
teaching and non-teaching faculty. The department chairs are required to model and support the practices we expect all faculty to uphold. Department chairs will be scored based on their personal efforts and the performance of those within their department. This scoring system provides quantifiable data that can determine the growth of individuals, departments, and the institution as a whole. Department chairs are expected to research, write or publish papers, and attend and offer workshops for internal and external audiences. Department chairs are also expected to lead peer-development sessions and collaboration meetings each month for all faculty and staff, in addition to weekly meetings within their departments. The expectation for this new academic year is that department chairs will provide intercultural-awareness workshops for faculty within and outside of our school. Performance is linked to promotions and contract renewals for foreign faculty, and continuing contracts with local faculty. To that end, we have made the appropriate adjustments to all job descriptions and expectations, so that they reflect the particular ethos we are striving to achieve. Professional-development funding has been made available for all faculty. In fact, applying for grants is strongly encouraged and, depending on the initiative, could involve multiple teachers and the participation of students, thus creating a shared purpose among constituents.

**PR, Marketing, and Branding**

This initiative has created an opportunity for capacity building, and fostered a sense of ownership from the faculty and students, demonstrating that they are capable of a consequential undertaking. Further, it provides an opportunity to build and enhance our institutional brand on the global stage. I have empowered Dr. M, students, and other lower-level admin to push for a change in mindset within our institution. This mindset change will bring us in closer alignment with our institutional mission. The board of directors and university representatives see the
ability for us to market the distinguishing experiences of our students to universities in the West. This will underscore how ABC Academy is reaching its progressive vision for the future. It is a rare feature in China to promote anything other than standardized exam results and matriculation. ABC Academy is the “first public high school in China to open its doors and provide full scholarships for disadvantaged youth in Jordan” (Fowler, 2018, p. 118).

**Leading Change: Tools and Practices**

Moving the scholarship initiative forward requires an incredible amount of buy-in and support from the entire community. Since the initiative encompasses many complex attributes—some more ambiguous than others—it is paramount that we utilize an organizational change framework that clearly delineates each step of the process. At future stages, we will be at liberty to take more risks and utilize differing organizational-change models that are less prescriptive and vague.

**Change Readiness Dimensions**

Figure 2 is a set of guidelines that assist an organization in auditing its practices and assessing its present state prior to systematic change implementation. Four pillars of readiness are identified: cultural, technical, process, and people. As the assessment process unfolds, change pillars and the change management work thread provide important details as to the relevant stakeholders and managerial tasks.
The readiness pillars are particularly relevant for the purposes of this OIP as they provide a guide to understanding ABC Academy’s readiness to undertake large scale initiatives. What follows is a discussion concerning each readiness pillar and its relationship to ABC Academy.
**Cultural readiness.** Culture is complex and multifaceted, with many unseen or hidden aspects that demand critical enquiry. In the seminal work entitled *Images of Organization* by Morgan (1986), the author approaches culture through a symbolic lens. “When we talk about culture we are usually referring to the pattern of development reflected in a society’s system of knowledge, ideology, values, laws, and day-to-day rituals” (Morgan, 1986, p. 112). Culture, then, “is a metaphor that has considerable relevance for our understanding of organizations” (Morgan, 1986, p. 112).

The culture of the school can be characterized by the hybrid mixture comprising local Chinese nationals and foreign expatriates. From both a theoretical and practical standpoint, these are the subcultures that operate according to their own shared customs and understandings. Some of the Chinese faculty have been reluctant to accept ideas and practices from non-Chinese perspectives. This initiative has made some uncomfortable, questioning the rationale for supporting non-Chinese students. Gaging the cultural readiness, then, is predicated largely on the understanding of culture as a whole but also understanding its constituent parts and the interplay between them. The rationale or impetus for change, being already detailed in the development of the Access Scholarship, alludes to the importance of managing subcultures in order to create lasting change. However, as the majority are in favor of the scholarship, including the board of directors and high-ranking university officials, the environment is one accepting of the challenges associated with change implementation and the establishment of refined patterns.

**Technical readiness.** Currently, we have utilized technology as a means of communicating from our Beijing base to our contacts in Jordan. There are no plans to enhance or change our technical resources for the current cycle of the Access Scholarship.
Process readiness. ABC Academy has the resources to support the scholarship student, including: finances, human resources, lodging, teachers, students, counselors, administrators, board or directors, and legal guardians.

People readiness. Approximately 75 percent of the faculty have demonstrated their support for the scholarship initiative as evidenced by our internal survey. The data indicates that our faculty require more training around social programs and global change programs, with an emphasis on how we can better align the school, its teaching, and learning to these initiatives. More communication will be provided that explains why this scholarship is beneficial for our students and teachers, while also connecting to the three main change drivers.

Leading Change Using Kotter’s Eight Steps of Change

Table 2 provides a comparison of Kotter’s (1996) eight steps of organizational change along with the steps that we will take to implement the refugee program. As mentioned previously, Kotter’s eight steps will be the main model from which to build, which will later be augmented by other models that strengthen the main model. Under each step, Cawsey et al. (2016) is used to provide additional theoretical guidance, followed by an explanation of the ABC Academy context. This ensures that each step is grounded and understood in relation to the institution.

Table 2

Organizational Alignment between Kotter (1996) and Cawsey et al. (2016)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kotter’s eight steps</th>
<th>OIP proposed steps</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 1. Establish a sense of urgency</td>
<td>Kotter suggests establishing a sense of urgency which will require school leaders to understand the internal and external forces working against the institution. Leaders need to “illustrate the threats to the system and move enough organizational members from a sense of invulnerability to vulnerability” (Cawsey et al., 2016, p. 48). It was at this stage that Dr. M presented the idea of the scholarship, and I recognized the value of this opportunity. Our program was designed to better the world, however</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2. Create a guiding coalition</td>
<td>Kotter suggests creating a guiding coalition. During this stage, I sought the support of influential stakeholders. Within their scope and level of agency, I requested mobilization support and resources to better enable our school to establish the scholarship. The individuals chosen had varying titles and came from different divisions within and outside of the organization. They were selected for their relevant knowledge and for their abilities to motivate their peers and address the challenges with which we were confronted (Cawsey et al., 2016, p. 48).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Step 3. Develop a vision and strategy</td>
<td>Kotter states the importance of developing a vision and strategy. Cawsey et al. (2016) calls this step mobilization. “People need an overarching dream of an inspiring future. From this vision comes the implementation plans and steps” (Cawsey et al., 2016, p. 48). Those within the access scholarship committee, along with those whom we sought for their expertise, mapped out a strategic plan to get the scholarship recipient to ABC Academy. Much work was required to develop the necessary systems to support our guest while in our care. We brainstormed additional ways of obtaining improved and expanded community support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 4. Communicate</td>
<td>Kotter emphasizes the need to communicate. At this stage, we felt more confident with the initiative. Dr. M, a delegation of his students, faculty, counselors/admissions, and administration began to share more openly the plan that was underway, beginning with one remarkable Syrian boy who dreams of one day studying computer science. The story of this initiative made its way into keynote speeches, workshops, emails, newsletters, articles, and even a book chapter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 5. Empower employees</td>
<td>Kotter states the need to empower employees. With more forces pushing in favor of the scholarship than those in resistance, we sought to further define our program to be more inclusive, and support this project. It is possible that those who opposed this initiative took their concerns further underground since the masses supported the endeavor and were vocal of its alignment with our mission. At this stage, faculty including the Human Resources department were empowered to re-engineer the “internal organizational mechanisms” to ensure that they supported, rather than blocked, the change (Cawsey et al., 2016, p. 48).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 6. Generate short-term wins</td>
<td>Kotter refers to this as generating short-term wins. Organizational change takes time. In fact, Kotter suggests it takes “three to five years yet employees need to see evidence of successful change within 18 months” (Cawsey et al., 2016, p. 48). He believes these short-term gains will keep faculty motivated (Cawsey et al., 2016, p. 48). Cawsey et al. (2016) call this step acceleration and notes that “small wins and the achievement of milestones along the way need to be celebrated” (Cawsey et al., 2016, p. 54). We shared the small, incremental success and continue to do so. This includes small victories along the way, such as the W202 visa application acceptance, and finding two faculty members who would act as guardians.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 7. Consolidate gains and produce more change</td>
<td>I am cognizant that many leaders prematurely stop before the organizational change has become a part of the organizational DNA (Cawsey et al., 2016, p. 48). Keeping in mind that the change will take...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
years before it is an organic component of the ABC make-up, I have sought to continually coach, motivate, and inspire our community.

### Step 8. Anchor new approaches

Kotter concludes with anchoring the new approaches. Cawsey et al. (2016) regard this final stage as institutionalization. Kotter reiterates the importance of embedding the change in the “organization’s cultural norms and values” (Cawsey et al., 2016, p. 48). We have not currently come to the conclusion stage of our organizational-change initiative. The organizational change hinges a great deal on getting the young Syrian to our school, to test how much we have changed internally and what policies and procedures need adjustment. This ensures the sustainability of our commitment to those displaced and with little hope in the Middle East.

*Note. Kotter’s eight stages of organizational change and its alignment to Cawsey et al. (2016). Adapted from Organizational change: an action oriented toolkit, by T.F. Cawsey, G. Deszca, C. Ingols, 2016, Ed. 3e, Los Angeles, California: Sage, p. 48, 54.*

As shown, Table 2 highlights the alignment between two organizational-change theories. Of course, there is some overlap where the Cawsey et al. (2016) change model is concerned. Kotter’s (1996) eight steps of organizational change provide a clear and succinct approach that is prescribed and incremental—both paramount for ABC Academy to actualize this initiative. Outside of the final step, there may be a need to revisit earlier steps since the process of change can be influx. Different objectives and goals, when identified, will also force change leaders to revisit earlier steps, albeit for different purposes. This roadmap is pertinent as ABC Academy attempts to forge uncharted territory and could easily get derailed if change-model adoption does not adequately meet our needs.

**Chapter 1 Conclusion**

This chapter has addressed ABC Academy’s organizational context, including its vision, mission, values, purpose, and goals. Context-specific information—including organizational structure, established leadership approaches, and organizational history—provides necessary foundational information. The leadership position and lens statement segued into a larger discussion concerning the leadership problem of practice, namely its framing and associated guiding questions. The chapter concluded with sections exploring the leadership-focused vision.
for change, important drivers of change, as well as tools and practices that will aid in the creation of a more robust framework for ABC Academy’s growth.

Chapter 2 will address the planning and development phase of this OIP. Specifically, the chapter will identify the key theoretical tenets of transformative leadership before segueing into the framework for leading change, which includes a discussion of the three types organizational change and contexts for leading change. This will provide a basis to appropriately identify possible solutions to the PoP, one of which will be selected. Ethical considerations will also be detailed in order to provide a sound foundation for conscientious growth.
Chapter 2: Planning and Development

Chapter 1 of this OIP provided relevant contextual information concerning ABC Academy by detailing its values, organizational structure, leadership approaches and history. Discussions regarding transformative leadership and culture, augmented by relevant scholarship, provided appropriate context to understand the complexities and challenges of instituting change. The work Kotter (1996), specifically the eight-step model for change, was also explained in order to understand its relevance to the change process.

The problem of practice that will be addressed in this OIP is the absence of an institution-wide commitment to balanced instruction and cross-cultural understanding that leaves students ill-prepared for the rigors and realities of global citizenry. The insular school culture creates challenges in regards to the implementation of the new Access Scholarship initiative for refugees. A key question that links the insular school culture and the Access Scholarship is: How can ABC Academy use the Access Scholarship as a vehicle for implementing organizational change as a process, in order to close the gap between the current and desired state of the institution, and ensure the institution is able to achieve its strategic mission?

The focus of this chapter is on the change process, namely its capability of addressing the problem of practice as identified above, the framework for leading the change process, organization analysis, solutions that address the problem of practice itself, and controlling for possible ethical dilemmas. Important pillars of transformative leadership, discussed below, explain in greater detail the chosen leadership approach and its value to ABC Academy.

Key Tenets of Transformative Leadership

Bennis and Nanus (2007, pp. 30–31) suggest that the key indicator of a successful leader is an ability to create close relationships—achieved by the leader’s skill at paying attention, inspiring hearts, touching souls, and affirming the best in others. Charismatic leaders create a
change in people’s hearts and minds that empowers people to become passionately committed to a great ideal, thereby helping their organizations to also fulfill their potential (Anding, 2005). The creation of the Access Scholarship represents an opportunity to bring the community together, empowering teachers and students to model and implement an initiative that would inspire others around them to make tangible changes to their teaching and learning. Upon joining the institution, a great deal of time was spent familiarizing myself with those within the organization, including students and parents. Furthermore, actions were taken to promote teachers and staff within the school in recognition of their hard work and dedication, which addressed previously existing gaps in mid- and senior-level administration.

According to Caldwell and Karri (2005), transformative leadership is about integrating ethical standards, behavioral presuppositions, and levels of excellence, all of which are integral components in effectively managing organizations. Caldwell et al. (2012), in summarizing Caldwell et al. (2008; 2011), further suggest that “transformative leadership rises to the level of ethical stewardship when leaders create integrated organizational systems that add value, enhance lives, benefit society, and honor duties owed to stakeholders” (Caldwell et al., 2012, p. 177). Bass and Steidlmeier (1999) note that the moral foundations of transformational leadership are comprised of four areas: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (pp. 187-190). Caldwell et al. (2012) mention that “each of these four components inspires followers to raise the bar for their own personal development while also improving the performance of their organization” (p. 177). By pursuing excellence and motivating individuals and the organization as a whole, the institution can foster trust and optimal performance in order to increase returns and ensure program viability into the future (Pfeffer, 1998).
Faculty and students alike have a profound ability to inspire their peers. Bennis and Nanus (2007) suggest that “transformative leadership is the capacity to translate intention into reality and sustain it” (p. 16). While certain staff members have avoided embracing the added responsibilities, others have done remarkable things that have indeed changed the lives of organization members. For example, Dr. M has shown initiative by creating courses that have provided a global context for students. This has sparked a belief among our community that our teaching and learning can connect to real-world problems.

**Underlying Theory**

This OIP is not only a concept but a living, breathing document that accounts for real-time development within ABC Academy. Changes are being implemented daily that seek to actualize the goals of this initiative within one cycle. Organizational leaders have seen progress but have also experienced challenges in their efforts to alter the teaching and learning dynamics at the institution. According to Fullan (2001), “we are not only dealing with a moving and changing target; we are also playing this out in social settings” (p. 6). As it pertains to solutions, there must be a focus on cultivating a deep sense of meaning that is shared amongst staff and students alike. “The interface between individual and collective meaning and action in everyday situations is where change stands or falls” (Fullan, 2001, p. 6). By focusing on that interface, ABC Academy can bridge the divide between thought and action, fostering a program where meaningful curricular change is not merely an idea but a realized outcome. It is noted that “teachers and parents observe democracy deteriorating every time the gap between the privileged and the underprivileged learner widens” (Hargreaves & Fullan, 1998, p. 15). Considering the need to address this gap, Fullan (2001) aligns critiques to that of Coleman (1990), wherein schools need to:
develop what Coleman (1990) termed “social capital”—to help produce citizens who have the commitment, skills, and disposition to foster norms of civility, compassion, fairness, trust, collaborative engagement, and constructive critiques under conditions of great social diversity. Schools also need to develop intellectual capital—problem-solving skills in a technological world—so that all students can learn. (Fullan, 2001, p. 11)

This idea of social capital addresses a higher goal of educational leaders, one that emphasizes the relationship between in-class education and worldly impact. Galbraith (1996) makes the connection between education and democracy, underscoring the essential link between the two: “Education not only brings into existence a population with an understanding of the public tasks; it also creates their demand to be heard” (p. 17). This interplay between education and democracy, when managed appropriately, has the propensity to lead to lasting benefits for the institution and its members.

By highlighting the key tenets of transformative leadership and its underlying theory, ABC Academy is better positioned to address the problem of practice. The institution can move from theory to action, using the theoretical foundations as a guide for growth. In an attempt to bridge the gap that exists within ABC Academy while the system is in motion, broaching into unknown territory, it will be important to assess the framework for leading change, focusing specifically on the types of organizational change.

Framework for Leading Change

Types of Organizational Change

Organizational changes are necessary in order to address the insular school culture—predicated on traditional teaching methods and absence of student-led initiatives—and provide the Access Scholarship recipient with the support necessary to improve the outcomes of both the student and the institution. Kreitner (2004) delves into important management theories and approaches, noting specific types of organizational change, referencing the work of Nadler and
Tushman (1990). Of note for the purposes of this OIP are: incremental changes that improve organizational effectiveness within existing systems; strategic changes that have systemic implications and redefine key aspects of the organization; and reactive changes which are those imposed on an organization (Nadler & Tushman, 1990, p. 79). These three types of organizational change will be used to explain the changes proposed at ABC Academy, each with its own specific rationale. The organizational changes will then be linked directly to transformative leadership in order to properly contextualize the leadership approach to change.

**Incremental changes.** The Access Scholarship initiative has provided a pathway for other measures of accountability that keep the teaching faculty and students attuned to the change the institution seeks to actualize. In the fall of each year, the institution surveys the faculty to determine the interest level in remaining with the institution for the following academic year. This past year, 75 faculty and staff were included in the intent questionnaire, which allowed ABC Academy to survey the retention level. By and large, the results suggested that faculty and staff were interested in remaining at ABC Academy, with eight faculty members indicating they wished to be considered for placement at the new satellite campus, one faculty member was moving to the United States, and another whose contract was not extended due to concerns regarding teaching practices, assessment deficiencies, and the inability to collaborate with others. The strong desire to remain with the institution suggests that faculty and staff have been receptive to the changes instituted as a consequence of the Access Scholarship. The program’s sustainability is contingent on the majority of staff embracing institutional changes.

In its implementation, this active process entails deputy heads visiting classes on a regular basis, documenting their findings, and discussing their observations with the department chairs. The department chairs are auditing courses and inviting their teachers to observe
beneficial teaching practices, sharing resources and suggestions pertaining to lessons, units, assessment, evaluation, and feedback. These changes seek to empower lower- and mid-level school leaders with more ownership, allowing them to develop, run, and refine their respective departments. During year-end evaluations, faculty will be reviewed on their efforts and outcomes in these areas. For example, faculty will be reviewed based on the extent to which they embrace new resources and support channels, whether or not their goals were reached, and what corrective measures they can identify that would improve teaching and learning. Senior leadership, including the head of school, have modeled this initiative by contributing to publications, providing consulting services, delivering keynote addresses, and administering workshops around the world. Similarly, any evaluation of faculty will look at contributions in these areas as well.

**Strategic changes.** A research grant valued at ¥30,000 RMB ($5,800 CAD) was implemented in an effort to inspire more academic research, and collaboration among faculty and students. This grant came from institutional budgeting that earmarked funds for the purposes of ongoing faculty-led research. Part of the requirements are that a minimum of one student join the project in a significant role, namely that of a research assistant. The chosen student also must teach a course in second semester within the defined area of research. This grant was created to inspire more faculty to stay current in their field, participate in research, and connect students and fellow faculty in the endeavor. There is also an added benefit as it aids in the exposure and validity of our program. The expectation is that students, inspired by this new avenue for learning, continue in the research area and perhaps connect outside academics with our institution. It also elevates the expectation of high school students as it exceeds the responsibilities of a more traditional curriculum based on faculty-led teaching.
This year, ABC Academy received three applications to the research grant and looks to allocate additional financial resources in the future. This initiative builds on the concept that students and faculty are valued for their knowledge of recent scholarship and contribution to programmatic improvement. It also emphasizes a collaborative approach to research. Being that the outcomes are open-ended, the institution expects to see academic publications and patents, not to mention additional research grants from outside organizations wishing to share resources. From a local Chinese standpoint, collaboration and interest beyond standardized tests are an anomaly, making the research grant unique in the region. One major strategic goal has been to encourage faculty to stay current in their area, and it was becoming apparent within the last few years that less than a handful of faculty members were pursuing academic endeavors. Department chairs are now encouraged to model this initiative and support their teachers in an attempt to explore academic and industry research.

**Reactive changes.** After the Access Scholarship recipient joined the community, it became apparent that no supervision and support was provided in the dormitories for the full seven days in the week. Supervision was provided from Monday through Thursday night; however, because of the low number of boarders from Friday through Sunday, there was a dearth of staff to care for approximately ten pupils. There has yet to be a complaint regarding this oversight, possibly due to the other students being local and thereby having the ability to navigate their Mandarin/Chinese surroundings. In response to this gap, an audit is presently being conducted that focuses on assessing staffing, outcomes of supervision, and financial capacity. The results will determine whether it is institutionally feasible to increase capacity.

In the interim, Dr. M—who initially led the development of experiential learning—has supervised the Access Scholarship recipient on weekends and holidays. Furthermore, Dr. M has
also agreed to travel to and chaperone the Access Scholarship recipient in Malaysia, as this was the nearest location where the student could write the SAT examination. The leadership team had not anticipated that the scholarship student would need to take these exams, nor did they appreciate the difficulty in finding a country that would allow Syrian refugees to enter. Based on the responses of faculty, the previous Chinese-national deputy head of school was demoted into a teaching role, and a department chair was removed from our program as a result of not modeling the expected behaviors and supporting the Access Scholarship initiative. These two faculty members allowed others to be complacent while supporting traditional modes of thinking and teaching. Efforts had been made over two academic years to move these two forward along a continuum of growth; however, it now became apparent that a reactionary change was needed.

**Contexts for Leading Change**

In considering the aforementioned changes and the problem of practice as a whole, it is integral to articulate how transformative leadership addresses the particular contexts at ABC Academy. According to Shields (2010), “transformative educational leadership not only works for the good of every individual in the school system; at its heart, it has the potential to work for the common good of society as well” (p. 580). As a consequence, “leadership is often concerned with the re-examination of conceived ideas and conditions of social life” wherein “leaders are inevitably concerned with what ought to be done” (van Oord, 2013, p. 422). In this sense, leaders play an integral role in helping to foster an environment in which barriers are understood and subsequently broken.

The central challenge facing our small international Chinese school is the implementation of an innovative academic program that challenges traditional thinking and allows the institution to fully realize its mission, vision, and core values. A key element of transformative leadership
is that it effectively captures the challenge—and opportunity—at hand. Shields (2010) explains that:

transformative leadership begins with questions of justice and democracy; it critiques inequitable practices and offers the promise not only of greater individual achievement but of a better life lived in common with others. Transformative leadership, therefore, inextricably links education and educational leadership with the wider social context within which it is embedded. (p. 559)

In that vein, ABC Academy has sought to respond to injustice—even on a micro level within the institution—and improve the circumstances faced by students overseas. ABC Academy recognizes that its mission, vision, and core values lack fuller realization as the institution exclusively serves Chinese nationals. Having an international student compels ABC Academy to improve its teaching and learning, thereby demonstrating commitment to the disadvantaged—be they Chinese or not. Instead of exclusively targeting deficit thinking, then, transformative leaders such as myself should actively oppose “inequitable educational practices that are widely implemented and underscrutinized” in order to advance “equity-oriented aims” (Cooper, 2009, p. 697). To do so effectively, dialogue needs to be a central component as “no individual can ever see the entire picture or understand the totality of any situation” (Sayani, 2011, p. 74). Shields (2010) contends that while it is effectively impossible to address on a global scale the conditions that create poverty, it is still important for institutional leaders to recognize the conditions. In doing so, leaders can appreciate the effect of the conditions and “make policies in schools that redistribute resources to correct inequitable outcomes” (Shields, 2010, p. 580). Leaders, mindful of their own respective “blind spots”, can identify shortcomings to “then inspire and mobilize others to cross or deconstruct borders that keep school community members divided” (Cooper, 2009, p. 719). Perhaps ABC Academy’s efforts in regards to bringing one or even two Access Scholarship students annually will not have a large-scale impact on the global refugee crisis
itself. However, the community’s approach to pedagogy, methodology, resource allocation, and the like will be impacted greatly, a reality that has already been felt since the first Access Scholarship student joined the program.

Shields (2010) argues that “transformative leadership goes beyond working within the status quo to improve existing structures, practices, and procedures” (2010, p. 567). Although attention is paid to the present state of the educational institution, transformative leaders need to expand their line of thinking, making themselves aware of factors that may compromise the organization’s ability to offer high-quality learning in a competitive market. Specific attention should be paid to structural or cultural forces that could develop into inequitable outcomes. Foster (1986) echoes Shields’s belief that transformative leadership “must be critically educative; it cannot only look at the conditions in which we live, but it must also decide how to change them” (p. 567). ABC Academy has prided itself as an institution that has cared about others including those outside or beyond a Chinese context. The realization of this initiative has empowered faculty and non-faculty alike, thereby building the capacity of teachers, students, and the board towards continual improvement.

While transformative leadership remains the primary lens from which this OIP is produced, the linkages to the social justice lens are noteworthy. Defining social justice can be a challenge since it does not have a defined structure. Rather, it is an ethical ideal, much like democracy, that “is never fully realized” (Turhan, 2010, p. 1358). Broadly speaking, social justice can be defined as “the overall fairness of a society in its divisions and distributions of rewards and burdens” (Zajda, Majhanovich, & Rust, 2006, p. 4). This process-oriented outlook is similar to transformative leadership’s focus on justice and equity. Issues that are plainly
visible may be addressed within a particular group, however ones that are dormant or salient can manifest themselves into unjust and inequitable practices.

Zajda et al. (2006) allude to several factors within the social justice ideal that compromise student and teacher growth, namely the inequality in the school system on the basis of race and class. More salient, however, is the movement towards exam and curricula standardization that impacts student engagement, and leads to teachers lacking the necessary skills to provide comprehensive and conscientious learning (Zajda et al., 2006, p. 7). These interconnected factors may be difficult to address because, in significant respects, the social justice ideals themselves are already embedded into formal organizational or societal codes; how these ideals are practiced in vibrant social settings is the concern for administrators and policymakers alike, since invariably there are gaps between the theory which underpins the ideal and the practice of social justice (Turhan, 2010, p. 1358).

Educational leadership within the social justice lens involves the “facilitation of moral dialogue that strives for high academic achievement and affirming relationships with students from all backgrounds and abilities” (Turhan, 2010, p. 1359). Transformative leadership in much the same way attempts to address inequity and injustice within social contexts in order to create a welcoming and efficacious environment for students. The relationship and similarities between the two lenses are strong, providing guidance and a moral impetus for administrators.

**Framework for Leading Change**

Identifying types of change and the transformative context related to ABC Academy is not enough. The institution is seeking to fundamentally alter its teaching and learning framework by empowering leaders, communicating transparently, and establishing a coherent strategy guided by the input of faculty and staff. Based on the change-readiness findings, organizational analysis, and pertinent research into the transformative leadership, this
organizational improvement plan can begin to identify needed changes through the specific change path model. Kotter’s Eight Step Process (1996) will be explained below.

According to Kotter’s Eight Step Process (1996), the first step involves establishing a sense of urgency. This was not particularly difficult given that the Access Scholarship was approved and supported by members of the board and the appropriate individuals within the affiliated university who yield the greatest power and authority. Beyond the formalities of gaining approval, there was a challenge to pool the appropriate resources from both within and outside of the organization to ensure that our Access Scholarship recipient could gain entrance into China based on limited documentation. On a practical level, my initiative risked being compromised at this stage, with the bureaucratic hurdles conceivably mounting and the program indefinitely in limbo until potentially losing its zeal. The school’s connection to a larger system—including the government—allowed initiators like myself to accomplish what would otherwise be considered impossible. After garnering the approval of the Access Scholarship and successfully navigating the bureaucratic process to bring the recipient to ABC Academy, the work and required change were only beginning. This was the first time that the leadership team could emphasize the shared commitment to this scholarship and the recipient, while accepting the required work and commitment from all those within the community.

Cawsey et al. (2016) note that “leaders need to illustrate the threats to the system and move enough organizational members from a sense of invulnerability to vulnerability” (p. 48). Since this initiative involved many crucial and influential stakeholders, the motivation for constituents to be onboard with and support the Access Scholarship was immense. At this stage, only a few staff members expressed their concerns and reluctance to support the project, and therefore were either moved away from their post or reassigned to a different position within the
larger organization. If people were not already motivated with the humanitarian aspect of the initiative, the movement of the initiative compelled individuals to act with a sense of urgency.

Step two deals with creating a guiding coalition as referred to by Cawsey et al. (2016), and includes the utilization of a group within the organization who are supportive of the initiative and who carry significant clout among their peers (p. 48). It is also suggested that these individuals hold some title and power from different tiers within the organization. The response has come in the form of support from and modeling by the three deputy heads of school and all department chairs. This connects further by utilizing key teaching faculty who are major advocates of the Access Scholarship, as well as key students who previously took the Refugee Crisis course or were chosen for their international-minded nature. These individuals are extremely important as they showcase that change is coming from the faculty and students, and not through some external or top-level imposition. Furthermore, peers respond in a more positive and meaningful way when led by a team member. This stage also reassures the community that the initiative is still in the hands of those that developed the idea in the first instance.

Step three concerns a process to develop a vision and strategy (Kotter, 1996) which Cawsey et al. (2016) refers to as “an overarching dream of an inspiring future” (p. 48). Cawsey et al. (2016) also suggest it is within this stage that action plans are formed to articulate the steps of implementation (p. 48). The Access Scholarship is the driving force to generate change and cultivate an educational ecosystem that is progressive and transformative. This was an opportunity to empower the faculty and students to be at the forefront of the initiative, and to remain in a supportive role. It was also an opportunity to pool resources at multiple levels of the organization, and develop a strategy for bringing over and educating a refugee. This strategy
included the explicit change required within the institution. Failure to do so would ultimately mean an inability to meet the needs of the Access Scholarship recipient.

Closely related, step four at its heart is about the need to communicate the change (Kotter, 1996). This is an opportunity for the school leader to “capture the hearts and minds of most employees by communicating through multiple channels and multiple times the vision for change” (Cawsey et al., 2016, p. 48). The leader should be strategic with their approach, and utilize varying platforms for sharing and promoting the vision for change. At ABC Academy, this included brief motivational speeches during faculty meetings, weekly updates via email, WeChat-account messages, administration meetings, department chair meetings, board meetings, and casual conversations with community members. This became part of the mantra of the institution and was infused through every platform possible, including brochures and promotional material.

Step five calls for leaders to empower employees for broad-based action (Kotter, 1996). This stage of the process was natural as the initiative originated from faculty and students. Furthermore, others within the organization believed so much in the cause that faculty, staff, students, board members, and others from outside of the organization collaborated to realize this initiative. The goal of further inspiring other transformative actions and cultivating transformative leaders was achieved, allowing ABC Academy to connect to a cause and purpose.

Step six instructs leaders to generate short-term wins (Kotter, 1996). According to Cawsey et al. (2016), “large-scale organizational change may take three to five years and yet employees need to see evidence of successful change within 18 months” (p. 48). Short-term wins keep the motivation intact, boost the confidence of staff, and reignite passion. ABC Academy has experienced these short-term wins within a very short amount of time, including
the approval of the Access Scholarship, securing the entrance of the student into China, the successful adjustment of the recipient to life in China in a matter of weeks, and the recipient being acknowledged as being one of the top students at the institution.

Step seven allows leaders to consolidate gains and produce more change (Kotter, 1996). According to Cawsey et al. (2016), “it takes years for the organizational change to become a part of an organization’s DNA, and many leaders stop too soon. Keep pressing forward until the change seeps into the deepest recesses of an organization” (p. 48). This phase and the next will take years for ABC Academy to accomplish. However, the institution is in a place whereby ABC Academy over the past three years has had minimal turnover, which will aid in the continuity of change drivers who are focused on the Access Scholarship and its transformative qualities.

Step eight enables actors to anchor new approaches in the culture (Kotter, 1996). At this stage, Cawsey et al. (2016) stress “that the change is embedded in the organization’s cultural norms and values” (p. 48). This is a work in progress and has exceedingly become more widespread across the organization. Future generations that move through the three-year program will reap the benefits of the transformative educational system that has afforded students and faculty opportunities to extend teaching and learning to change lives. Ongoing progress at this stage will also continue to remove traits latent to the insular school culture, which is a major goal of this OIP. As meaningful change in behaviour is repeated over the years, this holistic and conscientious school culture will become a norm as opposed to a goal.

While steps seven and eight will largely be addressed in subsequent cycles, it will be important in this current cycle to communicate developments and underscore the importance of the initiative on an ongoing basis. As time passes, the reputation of the institution will spread
throughout China and internationally. This could provide more opportunities for growth as information transparency and possible avenues for collaboration emerge. By continuing to accrue short-term wins, ABC Academy can continue along its trajectory and improve its internal processes for the betterment of staff, students, and the institution.

Staff Composition and Opportunities for Change

Galloway (2017) identifies five core groups of organizational actors who, to varying degrees, contribute or hinder the process of change within an institution: pioneers, yes people, crowd followers, skeptics, and cave people. This framework provides a means to demarcate staff for the purposes of analysis, allowing the OIP to assess how specific groups of actors are impacting the cultural change needed at the institution. In applying these five categories to ABC Academy, leaders can better identify opportunities for growth and potential avenues in need of attention. These opportunities and avenues are based on daily observations of teaching and learning, auditing long- and short-range plans, units, lessons, departmental meetings, faculty meetings, student and faculty outcomes, and a dialogue that includes all constituents. By combining this data with the aforementioned framework, leaders can gain a better understanding of how best to lead staff towards stated goals.

The work of Galloway (2017) can be complemented with transformative leadership tenets as it helps to clarify how certain dynamics, like inequitable power distribution, may impact one’s ability to effectively lead change. That is, transformative leaders have the responsibility to ensure that every individual staff member has the same opportunity to contribute, correcting for any issues by redistributing power where necessary (Shields et al., 2018). All staff must be given the chance to “participate fully in the cultures and structures of the educational organization” (Shields et al., 2018, p. 4). Understanding the change resistance level and the
perspective of resistors may shed light on the most conscientious solution—one that is predicated on capacity building.

Based on pre-OIP established practices and protocols, observations and surveys indicate that approximately 30 percent of faculty are “pioneers” driving the transformative change within ABC Academy. An additional 30 percent of faculty members are “yes people” who follow closely behind the leaders and work intently to find their own equivalent to the Access Scholarship. The next 20 percent represents the “crowd followers” who are on a transformative continuum and are not opposed to the Access Scholarship or other initiatives that advance the program at the behest of making meaningful impact. However, their support of other initiatives or personalized change has been minimal. Despite this, there is movement and a willingness to grow. The remaining 20 percent is comprised of two groups, of which 10 percent include “skeptics” who yield a significant amount of influence, and the final 10 percent being “cave people” whose obdurate mindset does not allow them to change their behavior regardless of the data or outcomes. While all the groups mentioned have varying degrees of receptivity towards institutional change, it is important to engage all stakeholders. Each group has their own preferences and motivations, and by better understanding their concerns, the desired change can be representative of the staff leading it.

The “skeptics” have displayed a reluctance to change; however, the “cave people” counterparts have yet to make any change to their teaching practices and interactions. In fact, there is little to no significant contribution beyond the courses they teach to their students. Their courses, instruction style, and resources are exactly the kind our institution wishes to move away from—those that are traditional and utilize lecture-style teaching, quizzes, exams, and papers as primary evaluation tools. Meetings have been held for this 20 percent of faculty, all of whom
would like to remain at ABC Academy for a variety of reasons, one of which being the flexibility and autonomy afforded to our students and teachers.

Department chairs, the deputy heads of schools, as well as the CEO/superintendent have worked tirelessly to motivate and support these individuals to further their commitment. Outside of meetings, institutional leaders have provided workshops and created a grant that supports the ongoing progress of staff. At this stage, the latter 10 percent (“cave people”) will require a concerted effort from a capacity-building standpoint. It would be worthwhile to emphasize the need for dialogue and candor in order to understand the reasons for resistance. Should these individuals decide not to return in the coming semesters, most will need to be replaced. This process will need to be strategic and staggered, and not an immediate overhaul. Department chairs use hiring databases to recruit capable staff internationally and domestically. International recruits are initially given two-year contracts which can be extended for one and two-year periods based on performance. Domestic recruits who originate outside of Beijing have contracts similar to international recruits, while domestic Beijing recruits have an initial probationary period of three to six months prior to a decision being made on their future suitability at the institution. Fullan (2002) advises that “to accomplish lasting reform we need fundamental transformation in the learning cultures of schools and of the teaching profession itself” (p. 2). Fullan (2002) goes on to suggest that such changes cannot simply be the result of top-level managers as their scope tends to be too narrow for the types of widespread institutional modifications necessary (p. 2). Recent scholarship by Fullan and Pinchot (2018) underscore this point when it is noted that a coherent culture reflects a “shared depth of understanding about the purpose and nature of the work” which cannot be achieved “by a few people, a strategic plan, or ‘alignment’ of core elements” (p. 53). Rather, leaders need to cultivate shared depth “through
specific, purposeful interaction day after day by all members of the school. In short, coherence and culture are intimately related” (Fullan & Pinchot, 2018, p. 53).

In terms of expanding capabilities, a case study from the UK could provide some clairvoyance: “In England, Hay Management Consultants (2000) compared 200 highly effective principals, with 200 senior executives in business. They found that both groups were equally impressive and that ‘role of the headteacher is stretching, by comparison, to business’” (Fullan, 2002, pp. 2–3). The five domains of leadership identified are: teamwork and developing others; drive and confidence; vision and accountability; influencing tactics and politics; and thinking styles (conceptual and analytical) (Fullan, 2002, pp. 2–3). Fullan (2002) elaborates by stating that the educational leaders of tomorrow have to consider long-term strategic implications, and focus on institutional transformation through the mobilization of individuals and teams (p. 3). As Fullan and Quinn (2015) explain, developing culture means understanding that “coherence, then, is what is in the minds and actions of people individually and especially collectively” (pp. 1–2). Leaders need to “co-create shared goals” that provide staff “with the structures to support their learning, and the resources to enable progress, ensuring that student learning, and success is maintained as the supreme focus of all stakeholders” (Dudar et al., 2017, pp. 69-70). Therefore, a concentrated focus will be on the 10 percent of “skeptics” that are the middle ground (influential group) because that clearly is the gap that can be addressed.

Holding individuals accountable will be of paramount importance, and as knowledge is disseminated amongst faculty, accountability as a concept should be understood as “less about some test result and more about accepting ownership of the moral imperative of having every student learn” (Fullan & Quinn, 2015, pp. 117–118). Bonuses, professional development, and other responsive initiatives provide the grounding for staff to meet defined targets. Dialogue and
out-of-classroom activities remain the pivot for department heads. Foresight and progression are the two key focal points that change initiators should be mindful of as progression is made through the latter stages of Kotter’s model. Learning outcomes, as opposed to merely the results of education/test results, should be the desired by-product. Additionally, the focus will be on empowering teachers to write collaborative works, particularly because there are outsiders willing to produce stories regarding this powerful initiative, which henceforth allows all change initiators to feel agency in the project. Flexibility remains for staff to spearhead initiatives and not merely be cogs in the system, which in turn motivates the group that may lack the willingness today to embrace the spirit of the initiatives in the future.

The demarcation of staff provides a strong understanding of the options available to the institution. Capacity building will continue to inform the accountability strategy, which provides a pathway to faculty empowerment and growth. While consequential, this is merely one potential solution amongst many that can create the necessary change at ABC Academy. Relying on transformative processes as a guide, provides a thorough understanding of possible solutions as well as the best means of implementation.

**Possible Solutions to Address PoP**

In order to address the problem of practice, five solutions have been identified in Table 3 below. The purpose of Table 3 is to more easily compartmentalize the solutions and their respective rationales. The brief explanations provided are then expanded upon in the subsequent section with reference to relevant academic literature that appropriately contextualize the solutions.

Table 3

*Solutions that address the complexity of the Problem of Practice*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possible solutions</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Solution 1: Status quo</td>
<td>The status quo will neglect to meet the needs of the Access Scholarship recipient. Morale for new and novel educational initiatives will be low, as will the propensity for risk-taking amongst faculty members. The institution will likely revert to traditional approaches to teaching and learning, compromising the ambitious vision set forth by ABC Academy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solution 2: Curriculum development</td>
<td>The need for curriculum standardization has become apparent after the auditing of course content and the differential level of quality in teaching. The implementation of core class requirements will ensure limited variability in outcomes, and provide a metric for the development of unique courses based on instructor expertise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solution 3: Coaching</td>
<td>Coaching and professional development continue to inform the growth strategy for ABC Academy. Department chairs will lead a process that will provide time and resources for coaching. This process will also involve teachers who will take an active approach to team-building and professional development, both internally and externally.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solution 4: Hiring and support</td>
<td>There remains a staff cohort of approximately 10 percent who are reluctant to embrace the proposed vision for change. A conscientious effort will be made to provide feedback and support prior to commencing with any dismissal actions, which in themselves will be conducted strategically to avoid undue harm to the organization and its members. Hiring will be conducted through a rigorous approach that emphasizes the recruitment of transformative leaders into the organization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solution 5: Integration of best</td>
<td>By integrating solutions 2 through 5, the organization will be ideally positioned to achieve its objectives within one cycle. Resource allocation and staff empowerment will be central to this solution. While a full cultural shift will be difficult to attain, there will be considerable progress made once the cycle is complete, thereby addressing the main tenets of the problem of practice.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* This table highlights the key details of each proposed solution. These summaries are elaborated upon in greater detail in the subsequent section, complete with relevant scholarship and context.
Of the five solutions noted in Table 3, four of them relate directly to the problem of practice and address different dimensions. The problem itself is complex, requiring multiple approaches that help ensure balance in instruction and the fostering of cross-cultural understanding. While each solution taken individually is important, there is value in also viewing them collectively as an integrated solution. The following section will explain each of the aforementioned solutions found in Table 3 in greater depth.

**Leadership Approach to Change**

Five key solutions have been identified to address the complexity inherent to the Problem of Practice. A deeper understanding of these solutions, and their links to contemporary scholarship, will help make substantial inroads in ABC Academy’s attempts to create a more holistic teaching and learning experience.

**Solution 1: Status quo.** If the organizational changes contained within this section are not implemented, ABC Academy will neglect to meet the needs of the Access Scholarship student, further perpetuating a mediocre educational program that falls short of reaching its true potential. Leaders at all levels within ABC Academy who drive forth initiatives that advance the teaching and learning outcomes will inevitably lose their motivation in pioneering change initiatives, which in turn would compromise other leaders who would otherwise join them in executing their vision; those that take risks and advance teaching and learning through a transformative mindset will slip back into the cycle of traditional teaching methodologies and the use of traditional resources. It was imperative that the solutions outlined in this section were implemented, in part or in whole, within the cycle of the 2018-2019 academic year. By neglecting these solutions and maintaining the status quo, our Access Scholarship student would
have ultimately borne the brunt of this neglect and not had their needs met, potentially damaging the academic and social growth of the student’s future.

**Solution 2: Curriculum development.** ABC Academy previously allowed its teachers to develop and offer courses with little to no oversight and interference. The concept was centered on teachers teaching what they were passionate about, playing to their strengths and taking risks in the process. This has made teacher recruitment easier in some sense, as it spoke to the autonomy and freedom afforded to teachers, something that was vastly different from schools inside and outside of the region. In the 2018-2019 academic year, the administration has sought to better understand the curriculum, including the courses that are offered and the depths in which topics are covered.

Lauridsen (2003) identifies a critical duality in the curriculum development process: “first, its contents are based upon developers’ value judgments, and second, its delivery and reception is based upon the values of the teachers, students, and community in question” (p. 5). While some courses in the past—such as *The Growing Refugee Crisis, Madness and Civilization*, and *Patterns of Human Violence*—have proven effective, they brought to light some legitimate concerns. Are some teachers providing courses that lack robust values? Is ABC Academy complacent in allowing underperforming teachers to provide instruction in lower quality courses that do not convey the communal values of the institution? While some teachers have produced incredible courses, experiences, and outcomes, others have taken advantage of a system that does not promote adherence to a particular framework and standard based on strong values.

Department chairs have been empowered to audit the courses offered in their section, which includes teacher observations. The three deputy heads of school join departmental meetings, and visit classes to gage the caliber of instruction and to better understand the course content being
covered. ABC Academy needs to develop a curricular framework for all of its subjects, beginning with its compulsory core classes and extending to the elective courses. The department chairs will be needed for their expertise in their discipline, which enables a more thorough understanding of the concepts, knowledge, and skills they believe students should be exposed to and master by the time the program finishes. Currently, courses are ad hoc and have no connection to one another, making it difficult to build on antecedent knowledge and skills. Another issue arises when teachers offer courses for which they do not possess the knowledge and skills to teach with any meaningful substance.

A system must be in place that supports teachers with appropriate skills, empowering them to cultivate their own curriculum based on their proven abilities. This prudent curriculum development process actively involves teachers, since they remain nearest to the problems of implementation and are ideally positioned to address any observed deficiencies (Little, 1985, p. 3). Perhaps teachers begin with core classes when they join ABC Academy, and subsequent to review and observations, they can strive towards offering their own unique elective(s). However, teachers must first demonstrate a high degree of competence for teaching and learning. Greater autonomy can be afforded once this level has been reached, which will allow a more concerted and robust curriculum to be in place that underscores the value of experiential learning—a major prerogative of this OIP.

**Solution 3: Coaching.** While a dichotomy exists between inexperienced teaching faculty and those that are seasoned, both groups are entrusted to teach to a high standard. Despite this standard, a major discrepancy exists as a consequence of the dichotomy since the quality of courses and instruction vary greatly from group to group. In order to bridge this gap, department chairs, who are experts in their area in addition to their skills as instructors, should be more
involved in the coaching of faculty, thereby raising the standards of instruction and improving outcomes. Crowell (2016) notes that “for instructional coaching to be effective, it is important for all the players in the coaching relationship to understand the purpose and possibilities of coaching” (p. 6). The expansive nature of coaching suggests that sufficient time should be given to department chairs to fully appreciate their scope and agency in the process. In order to accomplish this, department chairs need to have their teaching instruction commitments limited to a maximum of three classes per week. This should provide adequate time for department chairs to design, plan, team teach, support, and allocate resources to their teachers. Department chairs will be better positioned to identify areas that need attention, and to work towards improvement of learning outcomes. This will also reinforce ABC Academy’s vertical and horizontal alignments of curricular frameworks.

The allocation of resources is an important element to coaching. ABC Academy has a healthy professional development allowance for its faculty members; however, many do not take advantage of the opportunity. In fact, only about 40 percent of the teaching and non-teaching faculty utilize their allowance. For those that demonstrate a keen interest in professional development, ABC Academy to date has approved every request, including ones that exceed the individual allocated amount. Teaching and non-teaching faculty that engage in professional development tend to be the most innovative and risk-taking members of the institution. These individuals routinely volunteer to lead Teachers Teaching Teachers, wellness recharges, and other collaboration sessions with their peers. They also publish papers, articles, and journals, and offer workshops at external conferences. The value of this cannot be overstated, as “teachers who spend more time in ‘targeted’ professional development become more apt to transfer new knowledge” (McCrary, 2011, p. 29). The coaching dimension for department chairs includes
their direct efforts, but also extends to their ability to find complementary avenues that augment the coaching already done at the institutional level. By providing different outlets for professional development, coaching can come through organizations that are suited to provide support in novel and engaging ways. Molle (2013) highlights the importance of this approach, noting that “any professional development initiative should have multiple foci and should provide teachers with a variety of ways to participate and learn” (p. 25). Department chairs can use some of the time that has been saved from maximum course instruction on securing outside experts to work with faculty. These experts will strengthen the institution’s commitment to professional development and underscore the value of coaching.

**Solution 4: Hiring and support.** There is a tendency on the part of educational leaders to focus inordinately on the “what” at the expense of the “who”, which hurts the organization’s ability to reach the level of desired improvement (Atha, 2009, p. 17). In the midst of rapid changes to pedagogy in the digital age, equipping students with the necessary knowledge and skills acquires renewed attention. Specifically, the focus of educational institutions “must be on teacher quality as a critical component of school reform” (Atha, 2009, p. 18). Presently, at ABC Academy, approximately 10 percent of faculty members seem to lack the willingness to improve their practices, which leads to a lack of meaningful contribution to the program as a whole. The absence of value for counterparts and ABC Academy priorities means that this cohort may have to be strategically transitioned out of the institution. Some teachers can be moved to schools in Beijing that take a traditional approach to teaching, which would be more attuned to their present practices and beliefs. Whatever dismissal action is taken needs to be done strategically to avoid suffocating the very change ABC Academy seeks to inspire across its community. It will be crucial to work in collaboration with the deputy heads of school and the department chairs to
determine the order and sequence of dismissal. Prior to this, administrators and department chairs should pursue alternative options that involve coaching and inspiring. Removing faculty from the program is the result of the institution’s inability to transform behaviors and beliefs, which is a failure on the part of the organization, alluding to the institution’s need to improve its internal capacity building. Granting that, and considering the impasse, it would not be prudent to move the entire 10 percent at once. Actions must be calculated to avoid creating unnecessary chaos for community members, including parents and students.

Moving forward, the hiring process becomes all the more crucial to the progressive agenda of the institution. As ABC Academy expands and opens more satellite campuses, existing faculty members may be promoted to leadership roles. Faculty members who exemplify the values and mission of the institution need to be selected. If the institution is successful, the incoming cohort should be leaders of the transformative change that the organization seeks to inspire schoolwide. As Atha (2009) advises, “teachers must not only be good teachers; they must be good faculty members who work together to improve their instructional skills” (p. 19). The emphasis here is on collaboration and the capacity to grow constantly. Through the vacancy advertisement, interviewing process, and background checks, it is vital that ABC Academy identifies transformative leaders who have demonstrated their capacity as change initiators and principled leaders; that any successful candidate has experience empowering students, collaborating with others internal and external to their educational setting, leading to significant change in the lives of others. The hiring process is a chance to pursue candidates that will push institutional initiatives with a renewed sense of purpose, vision, and enthusiasm. This has been the case in previous years, as incoming faculty have taken on initiatives and worked more conscientiously compared to their more senior counterparts. ABC Academy is fortunate to gain
the interest of educators, academics, and industry experts from around the world, which is a facet that will be leveraged to acquire and acclimate a talented pool of applicants.

**Solution 5: Integration of best.** The main leveraging force to foster the desired transformative change within ABC Academy should be derived from the deputy heads of school and the department chairs. They will model, coach, team-teach, and provide support, allowing ABC Academy to offer a nimble and innovative educational experience that connects learning with purpose. More involvement and accountability from department chairs and deputy heads will further improve processes and address weaknesses, many of which have yet to be discovered. With more guidance from the chairs and deputy heads, curriculum development and teaching practices will be audited and improved. Non-curricular programs also need be included within the audit and improvement plan led by the department chairs and deputy heads. Included in the main focus of our mid- and top-level administrators will be the supervision and safety of our student population, as well as the renewed priority on advanced coaching.

The prescribed solutions are in-line with transformative leadership which espouses elements of shared/distributive, transformational, and servant leadership. Furthermore, these solutions are appropriate and achievable within one cycle or academic year. While each solution addresses at least one critical dimension of the problem of practice, the combination of all aforementioned solutions provides the most comprehensive framework for addressing the entirety of the problem of practice. The selected solution will be implemented based on the eight steps of Kotter (1996), which creates a pathway to properly implement and assess proposed organizational changes. While a standard PDSA cycle also strives to do the same, the aforementioned eight steps provide a transformative lens that is far more relevant to this organizational improvement plan. In-depth analysis of the cycle will be conducted in Chapter 3.
Leadership Ethics and Organizational Change

Ethical Considerations and Challenges

The Ontario College of Teachers uses the Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession as its guide to inform ethical best practices in the industry. My education and training is grounded in four pillars and continues to guide my decision-making and capacity-building efforts. Any solution that is either considered or in development has its own ethical implications, and the pillars provide guidance as to how best a leader in my position should handle them. These ethical standards are built upon the four following pillars: care, respect, trust, and integrity. Care is informed by “compassion, acceptance, interest and insight for developing students’ potential,” and educational leaders should show sound judgement and empathy (Ontario College of Teachers, 2019, para. 4). Respect entails creating a trusting environment and treating peers and students with fairness. In practice, those in the profession should show “respect for spiritual and cultural values, social justice, confidentiality, freedom, democracy and the environment” (Ontario College of Teachers, 2019, para. 5). Transparency and forthrightness characterize the trust pillar, and these should be applied to various stakeholders including “students, colleagues, parents, guardians and the public” (Ontario College of Teachers, 2019, para. 6). Integrity is deeply imbued with morality, and highlights the centrality of honesty. Reflection on an ongoing basis “assists members in exercising integrity in their professional commitments and responsibilities” (Ontario College of Teachers, 2019, para. 7).

The solutions contained in the preceding section are not without their own respective ethical dilemmas. By identifying the complexities, including the pertinent institutional actors, this organizational improvement plan can determine the stage in the change process where these ethical concerns emerge and how best they can be addressed. In considering the eight steps of Kotter (1996), it is important to remember that the process is a fluid one that requires
adaptability and responsiveness. Specifically, it is noted “that earlier stages may have to be revisited, suggesting the possibility of some break in the sequence” (Pollack & Pollack, 2015, p. 61). While leaders must remain cognizant of linear versus cyclic change, or top-down versus bottom-up, these characteristics should not be dogmatically observed, nor should they be the primary differentiators. In fact, the major distinction is “between viewing change as one cohesive Process or the sum of many coordinated Processes” (Pollack & Pollack, 2015, p. 61). It is evident that the latter assessment applies directly to this organizational improvement plan, especially considering that the chosen solution is an integration of best, where multiple different sub-solutions are implemented to address the complexity of the problem of practice. The combination of best is therefore broken down into its three main parts, each of which is dissected independently for its ethical underpinnings and relationship to the change process.

Curriculum development. Curriculum standardization, be it in the areas of teaching, resources, or practices, is in stark contrast to the organic and avant-garde program that has prevailed at ABC Academy to date. Standardization could stifle teaching faculty, both in terms of pushing the boundaries of teaching and learning, and on a personal level related to one’s growth and appetite for risk-taking. This new curricular system may inadvertently deter faculty from going beyond their initial contract, which could lead to ABC Academy’s experience resembling that of an IB or AP school that adheres to traditional instructional systems.

Storytelling is a relatable way to contextualize program progress, and is highlighted by Kotter as a means to influence positive behaviours over time (Pollack & Pollack, 2015, p. 59). Stories that speak to collaboration and a shared vision can help cultivate change in a more straightforward manner. Instead of focusing on how information is taught and retained, assessment activities should emphasize “the added benefit of promoting faculty collegiality and
collaboration” (Libby, 2017, p. 22). By assessing the curriculum differently, the process has “the ability to enhance departmental collaboration and increase faculty communication and scholarly collaboration” (Libby, 2017, p. 22).

The department chairs at ABC Academy have been empowered to lead and work with their team of teachers in order to develop a robust curriculum that stretches across our grades 10 through 12 high school program. This is an opportunity for teachers that have a unique subject area expertise to disseminate their knowledge and skills, thereby allowing their courses to continue even after they have moved on. As a team, instructors will decide on the topics, themes, and outcomes that are the most crucial for ABC Academy’s students to master. In addition, instructors will determine how students are assessed, and what types of teaching will be emphasized—team taught, experiential, problem-based, research-based, and interdisciplinary. The individual opportunity and the dialogue amongst colleagues give instructors an idea of personal and collective goals. This cultivates a shared sense of purpose and provides an opportunity to acquire resources to enhance teaching, learning and its intended outcomes. In a meaningful sense, departments can develop a curriculum that allows for growth, change and refinement. As opposed to championing only their courses, instructors will be empowered with the ability to improve the overall program through shared ownership. Dialogue can and should extend to student teaching-assistants and exceptional academics who will be considered for roles as student-teachers, offering courses within the discipline for the betterment of the curriculum.

Coaching. The added responsibilities and oversight duties for department chairs may convey to teachers that they are being policed and undermined, which could lead to demotivation. Since its inception, ABC Academy has been a free-thinking environment, similar to an academic setting in the West. The concept of coaching could be deemed as just another
means of judgement and evaluation, with the overly structured approach ultimately leading to a loss of freedom. Even when the coaching framework is accepted, it may become just another rudimentary exercise that is done with the bare minimum effort, as opposed to it allowing teachers and non-teaching faculty to authentically improve their teaching practices for the betterment of student outcomes. If faculty members feel pressured to participate in professional development but are not intrinsically motivated to do so, the value added from such an initiative will be minimal at best. Implicit to this initiative is the added expectations for department chairs and teachers to drive more of the internal professional development at ABC Academy.

Once again, there is a cultural element that needs to be addressed. Hurd (2007) is explicit when suggesting that “resistance to change never disappears completely and leaders need to be wary of relaxing their focus on the change effort” (p. 66). Successful cases of coaching entail involvement from staff, like department heads and coordinators, who are ideally positioned to identify their shortcomings and pinpoint experts, both internal and external to the organization, who may be able to provide clairvoyance (Hackman, 2017, p. 12). In this sense, coalition building continues through the direct involvement of pertinent parties, and these individuals become central to development of the change vision and strategy that will help institute cultural changes. Coaching through professional development can be fruitful in addressing cultural changes “because there is a sense that faculty do assessment work out of ownership” and not merely out of requirement (Libby, 2017, pp. 34-35). Training should not be limited merely to academics, but also extend to elements such as emotional intelligence: “Attitude training was often just as important as developing technical skills and pointed out that education had the potential to contribute to objectives, such as promoting teamwork and interdepartmental cooperation” (Speck, 2002, pp. 24–25).
Coaching is a way to better support our teachers in delivering a holistic academic experience, and this applies as much to existing staff as it does to new ones. There is a learning curve that requires time to navigate; China, as a region, can be a culture shock to many, but so can the absence of educational programs and curricula, which can impact even more senior educators. This allows department chairs to have a more direct relationship that emphasizes understanding of the teachers’ knowledge, skills, and goals for their courses. By leveraging outside resources and augmenting them with effective tools used in previous years, there is a greater opportunity for growth and contribution. When department chairs model a team-teach philosophy, there will be tangible improvements to the ABC Academy program. This further reinforces a sense of team, of commitment, and a non-prejudiced support network focused on student and teacher success.

It is important to extend coaching outside the confines of the institution’s walls, which in addition to the benefits of external expertise will help dispel the notion that it is a means of indoctrination on the part of administrators or department heads. With a school faculty made of academics, traditional certified teachers, and individuals with an industry background, it is integral to foster a community of people willing to share, inspire, and help others grow. The diversity within the faculty is incredible and something that needs to be leveraged. Revised expectations include teachers offering workshops called Teachers Teaching Teachers (TTT) or Teachers Learning Together (TLT), collaboration sessions, and wellness recharges as a means to share knowledge and further connect with those around us. Department chairs who captain each discipline authorize their team’s professional development requests, in addition to seeking and sharing resources that might benefit some or all within their team. Underscoring the open-ended nature of professional development and encouraging department chairs to be open-minded will
provide teachers with a greater level of comfort in pursuing professional development as it is being guided based on their preferences and interests.

**Hiring and support.** One ethical consideration is the effect possible dismissal could have on faculty morale throughout ABC Academy. Although the rationale for dismissal of particular teachers and staff is reasonable for the betterment and growth of the organization, this could cause anxiety, stress, and fear among those who remain. In effect, this could prevent faculty from taking risks and making themselves vulnerable due to the fear of similar consequences if they divert from the status quo. It may also appear heavy-handed, since the institution functions from a bottom-up approach that is student and faculty oriented. Confusion may also ensue because ABC Academy encourages individuals to be their true and authentic selves, and the result of dismissals could lead to staff being overly cautious about adhering to a particular guideline, framework, or mold.

Ingratiating staff into a revised framework can be complex, particularly at a time when instructional media continue to develop, making it difficult to gain a fixed perspective on a constantly changing landscape. That said, “teachers need to have a true understanding of what 21st-century learning means, and schools should enable teachers to shift teaching pedagogies through active learning experiences” (Roberts, 2018, p. 21). Of relevance in this area are both the action of expertly communicating the change vision, and that of empowering employees for broad-based action. Roberts (2018) goes on to advise that “school leaders must strive to model the types of innovative learning environments they want to see in the classrooms, and let people know that they can fail” (pp. 23–24). Leaders need to simultaneously accept the input of resistors while also rearticulating a vision for change. In doing so, leaders can underscore the value of failure in the process, provided that sufficient latitude is given to staff prior to the
commencement of any dismissal activities. “All voices in the change process have value and need to be heard, even if they deviate from the original desired outcome” (Fiori, 2017, pp. 10–11). By remaining responsive and transparent, the continual communication of the change vision “can be instrumental in reducing resistance to change” as the sense of urgency imparted can help ameliorate deleterious effects on staff (Fiori, 2017, pp. 51–52).

This initiative further reiterates our commitment to entrust and empower those at all levels of ABC Academy. Department chairs, deputy heads, and the human resources department are heavily involved in the process. The institution is not only seeking to fill a particular expertise, but also wants to ensure that the incoming staff member has a personality that will complement the dynamics of the department and community. The hiring process is methodical and lengthy, as we want to make sure that interested applicants have an accurate understanding of what life is like in Beijing, and the type of work they would be doing. As departments have a great deal of autonomy, they generally focus on technical aspects of the job and an individual’s background qualifications, as well as knowledge and skills pertaining to the duties of the role. Teachers, in particular those who are moving on, will be invaluable in helping the institution find and even train replacements, which highlights team-oriented efforts. The human resources department mainly focuses their attention on contract obligations including regulations by the district, city, state, and country. The deputy heads, and at times the superintendent and CEO, primarily address matters through a holistic bird’s eye view to ensure that any incoming faculty will understand the expectations beyond their department, that background checks have been completed, and that the individual or individuals have the appropriate character to thrive in this environment. Dismissal activities are initially brought forth at the behest of the department chair, subsequent to several rounds and iterations of intervention. As deputy heads have been
more involved in the teaching and learning, it is no surprise that deputies themselves have also been involved in supporting the chairs and individual teachers themselves. However, there does come a time when a line has to be drawn for the sake of the program. Thankfully, only a small percentage have been reluctant to respond positively to the attempted interventions.

**Chapter 2 Conclusion**

The presence of the Access Scholarship recipient required ABC Academy to conduct a comprehensive internal audit of its program. Through an in-depth investigation, it has become apparent that many deficiencies exist, and that they pose significant risks to the success of our students, faculty, staff, and administration. These deficiencies have the propensity to compromise the ABC Academy brand and reputation, as well as that of its affiliated school network. Concerted effort is required to remedy any current and potential malfeasance in real-time, but only through a process that empowers faculty and staff throughout the organization. Kotter’s (1996) eight steps of organizational change will serve as a beacon to guide ABC Academy throughout the process. Students, faculty, and the institution’s community will have opportunities to lead and support one another through a transformative leadership framework, equipped with initiatives that address the aforementioned areas of concern.

Chapter 3 of this OIP will address the plan for implementing the selected solution identified earlier in Chapter 2. A meticulous monitoring and evaluation framework, with stratified objectives or phases, will be used to address the complex priorities that have developed throughout the change path implementation process. Goals and communication plans will also be addressed in some detail in order to properly propel change into the future.
Chapter 3: Implementation, Evaluation, and Communication

Chapter 2 addressed planning and development, referencing important transformative leadership scholars to better understand the theory’s relevance to ABC Academy. The framework for leading change, based in part on the work of Nadler and Tushman (1990), identified three types of change in the institution: incremental, strategic, and reactive. The framework was supported by identifying the similarities between transformative and social justice lenses. Five possible solutions to the PoP were identified and one was selected. The Ontario Teachers College’s Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession (Ontario College of Teachers, 2019) was also selected as the overall ethical framework for conduct.

Chapter 3 will address the change implementation plan for the institution, the identification of goals, the selection of measurement tools that aid in monitoring and evaluation efforts, and the development of robust communication plans that will support continued change. (See Appendix C titled “Summary of Change Implementation Plan for ABC Academy” for stages of change and summary of planned change. This provides an accessible and organized outlet to easily understand each individual change and its specific details.)

Stakeholder Reactions and Plan Adjustment

Throughout the change process, institutional leaders have sought to keep all communication channels open by meeting with individual staff members, small groups, and the larger ABC Academy community. Key individuals—including students, faculty, administration, parents, and alumni—have contributed a great deal to the dialogue by conducting their own conversations about our change process. This is consequential because the “reciprocal flow of ideas involving actions and reactions of group members may lead to new understandings not held by any group member in advance of the discussion” (Mangrum, 2004, p. 9). The surveying and
dialogue throughout all levels of our organization have been helpful in understanding the progress made with the initiative, and where additional support and resources are required. While it is nearly impossible to garner feedback from every single person during weekly faculty meetings, we have gained a significant amount of feedback during these larger-scale meetings in addition to smaller group meetings. Those that have demonstrated a profound interest in supporting this initiative, including Dr. M and his students, have been empowered to survey and gage the change process. Weekly meetings are held with the entire community as well as department chairs individually. The school leadership team meets daily to calibrate strategies and remain responsive to fluid circumstances. Surveys are also taken which sample particular groups in addition to all constituents within ABC Academy. With any initiative, concerns do arise that need to be voiced and addressed, and it is important to do so in ways that are honest, accurate, timely, and transparent.

An explanation of issues that have arisen thus far, and the manner in which they have developed, merits some discussion as it may help to elucidate strategies that could be beneficial in the future. The structure of the Access Scholarship, curriculum building and instruction, accountability, and student improvement will be discussed below.

**Structure of Access Scholarship**

The Access Scholarship student and associated faculty are burdened with the struggles related to the recipient’s acceptance into a highly-ranked university on a full financial scholarship, as this will lead to the student’s resettlement in a Western country. This has led to questions regarding the structure of the Access Scholarship, namely: Is the current set-up of the Access Scholarship too short a duration for such an immense undertaking? Should it therefore be extended into a two-year duration and commitment which decreases the pressure on the student as well as the faculty and staff?
It is recommended that the Access Scholarship be extended from a ten-month, final-year of high school experience, to a two-year commitment that begins in grade 11. Detailed discussions have been held with faculty who are heavily involved in supporting the Access Scholarship program and the student. Their feedback suggests that ABC Academy extend the duration of the scholarship to minimize the stress and better prepare the student to succeed in both our program and the standardized exams, the latter of which they are expected to sit and achieve a minimum score in order to be eligible for a scholarship and resettlement overseas.

Even more profound was the feedback from our current Access Scholarship student who made it very clear that they are overly stressed and anxious. This student has done an exceptional job acclimatizing to life in Beijing and at our school; however, the recipient struggled to meet the expectations and minimum scores on the SAT and TOEFL examinations, which complicated the student’s ability of gaining access to and receive full scholarship at a university overseas. While such information is disconcerting, it is certainly not unexpected. The student has never prepared nor taken a test like the ones mandated prior to this process commencing. Other students in our school excel in these types of exams, as culturally and generationally Chinese students are required to take these exams and attain a high score to improve their ranking amongst their peers. Scoring well on these tests can also come as a consequence of one’s wealth because of the investment into private tutors, coaches, and crash-courses to better understand the intricacies of the exam. There is only person, involved with the Access Scholarship, who is not wholeheartedly in favor of extending it, because one of the goals has been to find resettlement opportunities for disaffected individuals, even if that involves the Access Scholarship student’s admittance into a language program or lower-tier university. One
of the major concerns is that it would decrease the number of Access Scholarship students ABC Academy could transition through our program and ultimately to resettlement overseas.

The board of directors will not be receptive to the initiative if the Access Scholarship student does not gain acceptance into an Ivey League university in a Western country. Board members are looking to promote ABC Academy, its affiliated school network, and the Chinese government based on the ranking and status of the school into which this student and others matriculate. Gaining acceptance into a university-bridging program or having to return to Jordan will be viewed as a failure, and the concern is that the board will not support the continuation of the Access Scholarship if recipients do not ascertain the expected results.

Another issue related to the Access Scholarship is that the student, who holds a Syrian passport, is prevented from returning to Jordan during the Chinese New Year holiday. In addition to not being able to return to Jordan—without the fear of not being able to leave subsequent to arrival—there is the complication that many countries, including those in the West, currently have a ban instituted on Syrian passport holders gaining entrance into their country. ABC Academy, lacking the necessary authorization, is not permitted to host the SAT, ACT, and other standardized examinations, which means our students are forced to travel around the world to take these exams, creating an incredible financial and logistical burden. Our current Access Scholarship student was limited to taking the SAT examination in Penang, Malaysia, due to the passport restrictions from other countries.

**Curriculum Building and Instruction**

Additional concerns deal with the existing curriculum at ABC Academy. There is an internal need to support faculty members in their efforts to build a robust curriculum, particularly because of the absence of any state or provincial curriculum, nor curricular framework like the IB, to use as a template. Resources from ABC Academy are required as the institution expands
to more satellite campuses across China. This mainly falls on the shoulders of the CEO/superintendent, the three deputy heads of school, and the human resources director. As a result, a gap has become apparent in regards to curricular development and instruction practices.

A curriculum coordinator would be beneficial to support teachers in building curricular resources and assessment tools, and to connect units and themes to diverse resources. This is a major undertaking that will require an individual to disassemble our curriculum within each discipline in order to rebuild it with more cohesion and strategy. This individual will also play a key role in connecting curricular themes to differing disciplines, not to mention ensuring horizontal and vertical alignments.

Feedback has also included the need to support struggling teachers or those that lack the confidence to explore different means to teach and inspire learning. An instructional coach has been requested to support teachers in bettering their practices and improving student outcomes. The key function will be to coach and mentor teachers in new, innovative approaches to instruct and teach their students, all in line with our mission, vision, and philosophy of student-centrism. As department chairs teach classes themselves, it can be difficult for them to find the requisite time to work with every teacher within their department. This would allow teachers who are new to the profession and have a limited repertoire, to acquire instructional skills under the supervision and guidance of a coach in a non-threatening manner.

Accountability

Department chairs have expressed concerns regarding their inability to hold the faculty within their department accountable. They lead the hiring process for their department, onboarding with new faculty, department operations, and strategic planning. Dismissal has previously been conducted exclusively by the senior school leadership team and the human
resources director. As a consequence, the authority of department chairs is lost along with the reasons underpinning the termination.

I have suggested that the department chairs retain the power to terminate the contract of an employee should they not meet the basic requirements set forth by the chair in particular and the institution as a whole. From a net measurement perspective, it is believed that this will reduce the number of employees terminated, because the chairs will be expected to lead the dialogue and demonstrate how the employee neglected to meet basic standards despite the chair’s best efforts to improve any shortcomings amongst staff.

**Student Improvement**

As there are students within our program who have been permitted to enter based on their political connections rather than their academic history, many teachers have grown frustrated with lower-performing students within our program. Faculty have requested that supplementary courses be made available in the evenings to boost English fluency and mathematical reasoning—the two areas in which lower-performing students tend to struggle the most. Where concerns have been raised, the administration has sought to support the faculty to develop plans and allocate resources to respond accordingly. The ideas and suggestions have been heard and the school leadership team has responded to each and every request.

There has been some debate about removing struggling students from their classes and offering remedial tracks. However, this notion goes against ABC Academy’s philosophy that opposes the streamlining of students based on their ability. In lieu of removing these students, the expectation is that the curricular coordinator will help differentiate the curriculum to meet the needs of these students, while the instructional coach will better support teachers with instructional resources and differing methodologies to meet the diverse needs of students. In order to further support those who lack fundamental English skills and mathematical reasoning,
struggling students will be offered evening courses that will also boost their credit and overall GPA. The idea is not to shame or stigmatize these students and contribute further to their feelings of alienation. There is also the suggestion that top performing students can work with the teachers in a teacher-assistant capacity to better support their peers and receive more personalized attention to further expand their skills.

**Personnel Engagement and Empowerment**

Empowerment remains a major pillar of the change process implementation. Seagren et al. (1993) suggest the following:

> The concept of faculty ownership is basic to academic institutions; thus, departmental leadership requires greater emphasis on empowering activities than in many other types of organizations. The chair, in concert with faculty, must develop a vision beyond the immediate tasks and employ strategies that develop the faculty's commitment to that vision. (p. iv)

The proposal to develop two new positions—curriculum coordinator and instructional coach—will be instrumental in helping to improve ABC Academy’s curricular development and teaching practices, and will lead to greater agency amongst faculty and staff. It has become evident that our department chairs, and as a consequence their teachers, require more assistance in the coaching realm. The coaches will serve as a resource for support, motivation, and collaboration. Coaches will be better equipped to build and refine our curriculum and pedagogical practices to meet our short- and long-term goals.

Currently, we have two faculty members who have applied for the deputy head of school vacancy. In addition to the two internal candidates, we also have one external candidate who has been included in the final short list. The two internal candidates possess tremendous skills in the area of curriculum development and instructional coaching. If either or both of the internal candidates do not receive the promotion to deputy head, they would be ideal candidates to
develop these two new roles, which would also be beneficial experience if they remain interested in pursuing a higher leadership role in the future. These two positions will provide opportunities to handle professional development, instructional policies, and handbooks, while also supporting the teachers, students, and administrators at the satellite campuses. The board of directors expects that ABC Academy’s Beijing campus will provide the curricular and instructional framework for all other schools within the network that follows. As previously mentioned, the deputy heads of school are inundated with too many other projects and responsibilities to instruct in the classroom and to participate in an adequate amount of department meetings.

Department chairs will be empowered with the hiring, training, and support of their department members, and also entrusted with termination duties. The lack of definitive power in this regard has complicated the struggles faced by chairs in the recent past. Granting termination powers with necessary safeguards to department chairs is expected to address faculty reluctance and lack of responsiveness to change initiatives.

Fostering Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) will connect more faculty members together from varying disciplines and levels of the organization. The importance of PLCs cannot be understated as they “are believed to be necessary to sustain improvement in teacher practices” (Mitchell, 2013, p. 2). Moreover, they “alter traditional leadership hierarchy in schools where the principal is viewed as having positional and authoritative leadership” (Kastner, 2015, p. 47). As Kastner (2015) notes, this alternative approach forces leaders to “operate from a different conceptual framework that believes in and acts upon the idea of sharing and distributing leadership throughout the school” (p. 48). Such communities are beneficial for both new and seasoned teachers as the focus remains on improving student achievement (Mitchell, 2013, p. 5). Teaching and non-teaching faculty will be assigned to teams of four or
five, and these groups will meet to discuss curricular and non-curricular goals and initiatives. These groups will also provide support to faculty who are experiencing challenges in relation to their courses, student success, and other contributing factors facing international and domestic teachers. The latter point is important since effective PLCs “can link teachers across school districts, the state, or the world” and provide avenues for collective growth (Mitchell, 2013, pp. 6–7). The process for dividing up faculty will need to be done strategically in order to get an even number of foreign faculty, local faculty, instructors, and non-teaching roles. The objective is to further build and refine relationships, gain greater insights into the activity of peers, and work towards being an active supporter throughout the journey. The focus has to be on the individual and their relationship to the larger community because “the capacity for learning could be no greater than the capacity of its membership” (Curry, 2011, p. 30). Each academic year, teams may be redistributed to account for attrition and entrance of new faculty. This is relevant “because new relationships, as found in professional learning communities, and an understanding of these relationships are crucial for school improvement efforts” (Cranston, 2009, p. 4).

ABC Academy currently runs a “soft” PLC wherein all faculty and staff meet weekly to discuss school-related issues which predominately focus on teaching and learning. This allows non-teaching faculty to contribute to our academic program in a meaningful way. We are in a great position to build dialogue, assigning faculty to work in small teams that represent differing layers of our organization. Hillery (2014) notes that “professional learning communities have the potential to help teachers learn from one another when appropriate structures are in place to support collaborative discussions focused on student learning” (p. v). Smaller teams allow for more focused conversations regarding our school-wide goals, departmental goals, and individual
goals. This should be an organic approach that connects people to individuals with whom they have not necessarily had an opportunity to collaborate previously. All faculty and staff will be included in this initiative’s formation, overall purpose, and ongoing functionality. This could be a great way to gain faculty buy-in and motivate people within our community who do not want to disappoint their peers by neglecting tasks they have been assigned. It will also be an avenue to ascertain differing ideas and input from a diverse group of people, ultimately helping to break down silos—ones between teachers, non-teaching faculty, and departments.

**Additional Support and Resources Required**

The additional investment in a curriculum coordinator and instructional coach will be substantial. An additional stipend may need to be requested for faculty to consider such a position. Resources including conferences, workshops, professional training, and certification may also be required to ensure that those within this new role understand what is expected of them, providing the tools to make change and offer the necessary support. In considering this, these two individuals might have a very small allotment of time—if any—to teach full-semester courses. ABC Academy is unsure whether a reduced teaching load is practical for the curriculum coordinator and instructional coach, or if it will prevent them from building and scaling desired initiatives as quickly as possible. Therefore, more teachers may need to be hired to pick up the course-load of the two. That said, it would be beneficial if the curriculum coordinator and instructional coach taught at least one class per semester in order to model the expected curricula and student-centric focus. This increases their understanding of the practical implications of the initiatives, brings them closer to the students, and legitimizes their authority amongst faculty peers. Faculty, administration, and students could also audit and learn from these two coaches. Differing technologies may be required to help build our curriculum, which could include a platform for teachers to share resources, reflect on teaching practices, and
improve their own respective approaches. However, working with the IT department will be necessary as some hardware and software products will not be compatible with certain restrictions imposed by the Chinese government, in particular those that are Google-based.

**Implementation Issues and Action Plan**

There are myriad issues to consider, the first being that if neither of the two internal candidates are hired for the deputy head of school position, do the curriculum coordinator and instructional coach positions become trivial consolation prizes for them? Divisions may be created amongst the faculty if either or both of these individuals get offered the two new positions without the vacancies being advertised to the whole faculty or to suitable candidates external to the organization—both of which are standard practice for filling vacancies. Other issues that might arise include attaining faculty-wide support and accountability for continual growth and curriculum building. Collaboration is the focus and remains “an effective means to assist leaders with the transition from autocratic leadership to shared leadership” (Kirksey, 2018, pp. 34–35).

It will be important to set up this initiative as a means of supporting the growth of teachers and of the program. Some might feel as though this initiative puts them under scrutiny. Institutional leaders need to be cognizant of faculty feelings and morale, ensuring that people are receptive to the idea and that they provide their input into the process for implementation. One potential issue involves starting these initiatives in English with foreign faculty, which could alienate our Chinese faculty counterparts. For example, some disciplines like Chinese Language Arts are planned and taught in Chinese; it will be cumbersome for a foreign English-speaking person to decipher what has been planned and how best to sequence their discipline. While challenging, this also poses an opportunity to further align the English Liberal Arts (ELA) department with the Chinese Liberal Arts (CLA) department for more interdisciplinary
collaboration and continuity. To that end, we must be careful not to alienate or discipline staff from the outset. One approach could include departments needing to schedule sessions with the curriculum coordinator and instructional coach for a defined period of time, to accomplish both personal and departmental goals. Over the span of one semester or full academic year, departments and individuals might be mandated to have a minimum number of collaboration hours to complete. This could be part of that quota and a requirement for the position.

Identification of Goals

It is imperative to have indicators along the way that guide and reenergize ABC Academy constituents; their efforts and results need to be recognized and appreciated, which will meaningfully impact the institution and its constituents.

Short-term Goals

Faculty, staff, and students are more empowered, encouraged, and supported to connect their knowledge, skills, and projects to tackle real-world issues. As Wilson (2011) explains, improvement in instructional practices “requires an organizational culture that supports collaboration and continuous learning and that recognizes teachers as primary creators and re-creators of school culture” (pp. 18–19). As Morgan (1986) notes, organizations are “socially constructed realities that are as much in the minds of their members as they are in concrete structures, rules, and relations” (p. 135). The school culture itself is both symbolic as it is palpable, which means there is an interplay between the mindset of members and the manner in which culture is embodied. Collaboration among faculty extends to increased dialogue between local and foreign faculty, stretching across disciplines and areas of expertise, even reaching out to areas outside of the organization. Faculty and staff are more open-minded, willing to share, take risks, and experiment with curriculum and teaching practices. ABC Academy is able to get the Access Scholarship student into a top-tier Western university and resettle, or continue for an
additional year to improve their standardized-exam scores so as to be eligible for the level of institutions for which we are aiming.

**Medium-term Goals**

The teaching and non-teaching faculty embrace PLCs and support one another as we seek to improve teaching and learning outcomes. There is a central need in this stage for staff “to develop their understanding of shared or distributed leadership” because of the “role differences among members” (Easton, 2015, p. 26). Faculty should be more reflective as practitioners work towards bettering their craft on a daily basis. Betterment of the craft extends to teachers as each one “should engage in professional learning at their school as part of their workday” (Hillery, 2014, p. IV). Faculty should seek to expand knowledge in their respected field, continually refining their curriculum, teaching practices, and contribution to pertinent academic publications.

The Access Scholarship student is successfully admitted into a top-ranking university and has gained a resettlement opportunity. The Access Scholarship program expands to become a two-year program and is offered at multiple ABC Academy schools, including its satellite campuses.

**Long-term Goals**

During this phase, a structured and open-ended educational system is developed which is agile and adaptable. The curriculum is accessible and utilized at multiple satellite campuses. Faculty attrition will decrease to 10 percent or lower on an annual basis. Department chairs will be less inclined to dismiss or move faculty without proper due process and substantial efforts to coach the employee in question. The Access Scholarship should continue to scale and serve as a model that holds each part of the institution accountable to forward progress in teaching and learning practices. Ultimately, schools outside of ABC Academy’s affiliation will also develop similar scholarships in the mold developed by our institution.
Limitations and Challenges

It was challenging to get our current Access Scholarship student through the ABC Academy program successfully. This challenge was compounded by the college application process, a time-consuming endeavor that involved scholarship forms and the mobilization of resources to perform successfully on the SAT, ACT, IELTS and TOEFL examinations. Many of our resources have been exhausted, and we have not been successful in satisfying the standardized exam minimum requirements. It is still unclear if we will be able to keep the Access Scholarship program in place for more than one year and if the board will continue to support the initiative if the current recipient does not garner the expected results.

Another challenge is the possibility that some of the PLCs do not invest a significant amount of time, energy, and support to those in their group. Individuals constituting these groups may lose sight of their intended purpose and view it as a rudimentary requirement as opposed to an incredible opportunity to learn, share, support, and grow. One individual in a group who is not interested in the initiative could make the experience stressful and toxic for other colleagues.

A lot of pressure will be put on the curriculum coordinator and instructional coach to improve our curricular and instructional shortcomings. This task may seem daunting and unending, providing minimal reward and creating the potential for burnout for the two individuals. There is also the propensity of some faculty being reluctant to work with, learn from, and utilize the coaching, viewing it instead as superficial advice from a generalist who has no authority or expertise to give advice in their field. It will be important for the curriculum coordinator and instructional coach to create a realistic timeframe and strategic plan related to program auditing which is communicated to all faculty and staff prior to implementation. My
role will be to directly liaise with these staff members to ensure the goals and their implementation plan align with ABC Academy’s values. The scope of this venture may require additional support and coaching, which I am positioned to provide.

These initiatives are meant to be scaffolded. ABC Academy will extend the Access Scholarship to a two-year commitment and seek to retain its inaugural student if the outcomes after this year are not promising, all of which is contingent on board approval. Department chairs will have the authority to dismiss a faculty member from their department if he or she is negligent in regards to student learning, and does not model the mission, vision and philosophy of the school. PLCs will be developed to connect individuals from all levels and areas of the organization as a means to extend resources (knowledge and skills), improve cross-curricular collaboration, and substantially improve teaching and learning outcomes both for students and faculty. The additional positions of curriculum coordinator and instructional coach will be developed to support the department chairs and teachers as they seek to improve their curricula and teaching practices.

**Change Process Monitoring and Evaluation**

This section’s purpose is to identify critical tools and measures that will aid in assessing the efficacy of the leadership approaches to change, and of the selected Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA) cycle. From an operational standpoint, the attainment of desired program results is aided by the understanding of monitoring and evaluation frameworks, as each contains key assumptions and actions that will aid in the development of specific measurement tools.

Monitoring focuses on “tracking program implementation and progress” by looking at “what is being done in a program and how it is being done” (Markiewicz & Patrick, 2016, p. 12).

Highlighting key reference points and outputs, like performance indicators and outcomes, help “support management and accountability” within a program itself. In the case of evaluation,
there is less of a focus on the day-to-day managerial operations, and more of a focus on examining data over a longer period of time in order to gain a nuanced perspective on the outcomes themselves. Programs are examined according to their value and quality, with particular emphasis on making judgements about the overall feasibility and goal attainment within a program (Markiewicz & Patrick, 2016, p. 12). Monitoring, then, can be understood as a continuous process, while evaluation can be understood as a longer-term assessment of the continuous trends identified over a period. The selected PDSA cycle, explained in the subsequent section, will be informed by these two forms of assessment, which better position this OIP to judge short- and long-term progress based on the problem of practice identified in earlier chapters. The relevance to the leadership approach to change, then, bears some close examination as it directly impacts not only the selection of the PDSA cycle, but also the manner in which to achieve short- and long-term goals.

Kotter’s (1996) eight steps “represents the teleological change [for] theorists who believe that change is possible, rational procedures are necessary, and leadership to facilitate the change is indispensable” (Rosser, Hermsen, Mamiseishvili, & Wood, 2007, p. 528). Rather than thinking of the organizational change path as strictly a linear progression, there is value in viewing it in a fluid manner wherein certain stages need to be re-visited as new initiatives and approaches are introduced that support the overall change path (Kotter, 1996, p. 23). This creates a path that is less rigid and more responsive to a constantly changing environment. Previous chapters have addressed the applicability of Kotter’s eight steps to ABC Academy’s vision for change, demonstrating its value in creating momentum for further advancement. Research by Nitta, Wrobel, Howard, and Jimmerson-Eddings (2009) noted that “several powerful positive feedback mechanisms create momentum toward change. Accordingly, the best
way to lead change is to allow change to feed on itself” (p. 467). In this way, positive outputs and progress have tangible value to ongoing development if they are utilized in a manner that is constructive and empowering.

Convincing community members that change is necessary will not be sufficient to lead change, meaning that “the new idea or vision must be transformed into a course of action or strategy with goals and a plan for achieving it” (Fernandez & Rainey, 2006, p. 169). The vision is predicated on cultivating an educational ecosystem that can inspire all students to learn and maximize achievement, thereby improving the world and the lives of others in real-time. One noteworthy critique of Kotter’s eight steps is that “he neither explains how to evaluate success, nor more troublingly even encourages such an evaluation” (Hughes, 2015, p. 457). It is therefore necessary to supplement the work of Kotter with a PDSA cycle that can provide a more meticulous framework to monitor and evaluate change. This will be effective in addressing “a range of different purposes” that includes results, management, accountability, learning, program improvement, and decision making (Markiewicz & Patrick, 2016, pp. 4–5).

This vision, which combines Kotter’s stages with a defined PDSA cycle, can be thought of “in terms of adaptive work that leverages the creativity of educators closest to the work…After all, those who are closest to the problem are best suited to have the solutions” (Starr, 2016, p. 41). Not having the initiative derive from the school leadership at its inception further emphasizes the longstanding commitment to a bottom-up leadership system typified by faculty and student autonomy. The vision essentially came from faculty and students, and the administration has supported this vision, recognizing that the objectives and goals of the Access Scholarship will leverage the change we believe is necessary for our institution to realize its mission. This relationality has an added benefit in that it demonstrates to those inside and
outside of our school community that high school-aged students and teachers are capable of making tremendous impact locally and globally.

The monitoring and evaluation processes hinge on the ability of institutional leaders to “raise the level of organizational conversation. Even more important, good leaders describe their work as the building of leadership teams, making other leaders by establishing a climate of trust and by sharing information” (Abbate, 2010, p. 36). This notion will help inform the selection of a PDSA cycle.

**PDSA Cycle Selection**

The work of Ireland (2017) is instrumental in the development of a more meticulous monitoring and evaluation framework because it builds off the work of Kotter (1996) by supplementing it with additional scholarship directly tied to a robust PDSA cycle. Ireland (2017) relied on certain theorists whose expertise extended to the science of improvement to address the systemic ineffectiveness of student mental-health support. The work of Cohen-Vogel, Tichner-Wagner, Allen, Harrison, Kainz, Socol, and Wang (2015) provided that valuable and complementary support framework to Kotter’s eight steps.

Cohen-Vogel et al. (2015) examine the gap between workable solutions that are perceived to be effective, and the inability of said solutions to lead to tangible improvements in schools. The research of Cohen-Vogel et al. (2015) notes that such a gap regrettably cannot be filled merely through evidence; certain solutions address context-specific problems that make them inapplicable or untranslatable—partly or wholly—to variable problems of practice. Prescribed solutions may also encounter hurdles during the implementation phases, which can also stifle school improvement efforts. A systemic approach is needed that targets improvement through a transformational lens, focusing both on research and policy implementation as a means to ameliorate the persistent problems noted above.
In an effort to address these issues, Ireland (2017) utilized “multiple PDSA cycles cover[ing] four phases of system change: development, refinement, implementation and spread” (pp. 69–70). There is a direct connection made between the work of Cohen-Vogel et al. (2015) and Kotter (1996) wherein:

“development” involves creating a sense of urgency and creating a guiding coalition; “refinement” involves change vision and communication; “implementation” centres on the empowerment of individuals to enact change, and to identify and celebrate gains; and “spread” suggests the larger goal of any school improvement initiative, to consolidate changes, anchor new approaches and realize the shift in culture. (p. 70)

This structure is valuable since it permits implementation in contexts outside of strictly mental health support, which was the focus of that OIP study. The structure allows an initiative with stratified objectives or phases—each with their unique monitoring aims—to be understood as part of a larger goal or program which can be subject to evaluation over a longer period of time. Ireland (2017) is careful to note the limitations of this model as it is difficult to foresee what corrective actions can be taken in the future since they are contingent on the outcomes of prior stages. In considering this, Ireland (2017) relies on hypothetical questions for the latter two stages of each PDSA phase in order to properly guide or inform future actions (p. 70).

Figure 3 provides a graphical representation of the four PDSA cycles, each corresponding to a phase that combines Kotter (1996) and Cohen-Vogel et al. (2015). Development, refinement, implementation, and spread are present at different intervals on the x-axis, while the improved teacher capacity is located on the y-axis. Each of the four PDSA cycles provide a framework for assessment and monitoring which is necessary considering the stratified objectives.
By outlining specific objectives in Figure 3, Ireland (2017) was able to leverage the benefits of Kotter (1996) and Cohen-Vogel et al. (2015) to create a robust framework capable of creating continued change well into the future. This figure is relevant as it provides a visual representation of complex processes of each phase. The earlier stages are necessary to improve teacher capacity, while the steady improvement is an indication of the methodical monitoring and evaluation conducted.

This approach will be used for the purposes of this study to address the complex priorities that have developed throughout the course of change path implementation. In doing so, ABC Academy will be able to specifically identify the needs of the organization as they pertain to employee empowerment, resource mobilization, instructional improvement and student success. Table 4 outlines four specific goals previously addressed in this chapter and the key considerations or questions pertaining to each element (Plan, Do, Study, Act) of the PDSA.
Key Objectives

The PDSA cycle below in Table 4 highlights the important directives and questions as they pertain to the four goals identified earlier in Chapter 3. Much like in Ireland (2017), the goals in Table 4 are aligned with the Cohen et al. (2015) and Kotter (1996) framework, namely the development, refinement, implementation, and spread. Each element of the PDSA cycle is explained in relation to the central goal, with specific details, tasks and directives, as well as analytical questions that assess effectiveness.

Table 4
Change Cycle

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Plan</th>
<th>Do</th>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Act</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Development: Structure of Access Scholarship</td>
<td>Design Access Scholarship to make it more sustainable and conscientious</td>
<td>Extend Access Scholarship to two years; hold weekly meetings within and between faculty regarding exams, resources, strengths, weaknesses, logistical considerations, HR concerns; survey community regarding support, assistance, resource allocations, and evolving sentiments</td>
<td>Look for evidence of test results, breadth of admission offers, healthier learning space, reluctance from staff, receptivity of students and larger community</td>
<td>How have the recipient’s results, offers, and learning outcomes changed as a result of this restructuring?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refinement: Curriculum Building and Instruction</td>
<td>Develop robust curriculum and improve teaching practices</td>
<td>Hire curriculum coordinator and/or instructional coordinator to audit department and sections, to identify shortcomings and devise corrective measures; survey faculty on specific instructional needs</td>
<td>How have corrective measures contributed to collaboration, depth of knowledge, research produced?</td>
<td>What additional measures can be introduced that lead to an appreciable increase in student and faculty centric initiatives?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Implementation: Accountability

Increase accountability of department chairs and faculty

Department chairs meet with associated faculty to develop shared objectives, responsibilities and goals; provide coaching and instruction; solicit feedback from department members, students, and parents

How have accountability measures contributed to the exploration of novel subject areas inside and outside of the classroom?

Are there additional baseline requirements for faculty that need to be developed in order for teaching standards to be exceeded?

Spread: Student Improvement

Broaden student learning, and improve fluency and reasoning

Create additional courses to boost English literacy and mathematical reasoning, develop instructional resources for teachers

Have additional courses and teaching resources led to improvements in learning outcomes?

What additional resources can be mobilized to facilitate student-centric growth at campus and sister campuses?

The third and fourth columns in Table 4 deal with the Study and Act dimension of the PDSA cycle, with almost each row asking specific questions regarding the effectiveness of measures. The value of these questions cannot be understated as they force ABC Academy leaders to confront possibly uncomfortable realities about the feasibility of goals. They also provide an ongoing monitoring and evaluation prompt that can lead to either goal adjustment, or a revision of the directives in each row. Outcome aside, the methodical approach to understanding effectiveness will provide necessary guidance in the implementation of change initiatives.

This aforementioned approach to monitoring and evaluating change merges existing organizational strategies with the change process stages mentioned below: tracking change, assessing change, and refining the change process. Existing organizational structures will be relied upon as a means to implement the monitoring tools. Adjusting the manner in which
information is ascertained and shared represent the major adjustments to the organizational structures; this will not alter the structural integrity but instead augment it with valuable tools to strengthen it.

**Tracking change.** Scheduling weekly meetings will provide regular opportunities for faculty to discuss pertinent developments. This will allow department heads and support personnel, such as the curriculum coordinator and instructional coordinator, to understand the faculty sentiment, provide coaching and instruction, and create channels of dialogue to better understand program needs. Meetings held within particular faculties will also be complemented by twice-a-month meetings held between faculties. This level of transparency will create opportunities for interfaculty collaboration, while also allowing support staff members to understand if systemic problems appear across faculties. Meetings will be augmented by faculty-and staff-wide surveys that address specific deficiencies at ABC Academy, which will be necessary in order to correct for any observational biases on the part of managers, and allow for anonymous feedback from faculty and staff members who might be unwilling to share during meetings. Such surveys are part of the current best practices used within ABC Academy.

The addition of the two new support staff coordinators will be instrumental as they will be responsible for the auditing of the curriculum and instructional practices. Their value will extend beyond this initial phase; however, ABC Academy lacks staff who have the ability and time to properly assess curriculum and instructional practices. The development of a robust schematic will provide coordinators with the tools, and give teachers a framework, from which to improve. The creation of educational resources will be targeted and based on the observed, surveyed, and expressed needs of teachers and students. This will ensure that any and all approaches taken by institutional leaders have both qualitative and quantitative dimensions.
ABC Academy administration should be mindful of inundating faculty and staff with monitoring and evaluation. The overbearing presence of watchful and critical eyes has the potential to create discomfort amongst the community. Frequency in the re-articulation of the vision will be important since the meetings, surveys, program auditing, instructional feedback, and the like are a means to an end; they are an opportunity to better understand how far our community has come, and how much farther the community needs to go in order to quell insularity and create a more holistic educational environment.

**Assessing change.** The shift from tracking to assessing is accompanied by the shift from tools to measurable improvements. For example, have the measures enacted by ABC community led to tangible developments in learning outcomes, instructional quality, accountability, collaboration, research, extracurricular exploration, and a healthier learning environment? The extent to which these areas have improved, stagnated, or regressed will be consequential, since additional corrective measures will need to target whatever deficiencies exist within the current monitoring and evaluation framework. While the extent is impossible to assess in the present moment it is worthwhile to consider, in the event of stagnation or regression, why such an outcome prevailed despite concerted efforts to mitigate. Even in the instance of success, the potential for complacency and institutional inertia remain in place, which can serve as a motivator for the ABC community to continuously improve upon its methods.

**Refining the change process.** One of the overarching goals of this change process is to institute micro-level changes that lead to macro-level improvements to the ABC Academy culture. In the case of the former, micro-change management should be understood as “tactics or guidelines for managing intervention implementation process and human factors,” which is primarily focused at the task- or individual-based change level (Kang, 2015, p. 30). Macro
change management refers to the “process or initiative for changes of organizational directions, strategies, structures, processes or capabilities,” which is conducted at the “strategic and process” change level (Kang, 2015, p. 30). In considering this, the hybridized framework provided in Ireland (2017) adds a newfound flexibility to Kotter’s eight steps, affording greater latitude in change process revisions and adaptability. Without theorizing or hypothesizing specific outcomes, there is already imbedded within the framework the process for ongoing change and refinement.

As mentioned in earlier chapters, cultural change does not happen instantaneously; it happens through concerted effort on a daily basis. Culture itself may morph in the future beyond recognition, showing its fickle and transient nature. The key to sustainable cultural development hinges on constant refinement through increasingly diverse practices and perspectives. This applies to methods as much as it applies to personnel. Fostering an inclusive environment means that “different voices are respected and heard, diverse viewpoints, perspectives and approaches are valued and everyone is encouraged to make a unique and meaningful contribution” (Pless & Maak, 2004, p. 131). These unique contributions “not only exemplify new knowledge frameworks about teaching and learning but also illustrate redistribution of power as all educators worked together to achieve excellence” (Shields, 2010, pp. 579-580). While there is potential for divergent opinions to create divisions, there are tangible benefits to creating a culture of inclusion. Much like the robust change framework used above, which has possible corrective change path processes imbedded within it, taking a diversity-centric approach “can shed light on existing diversity barriers and help remove those assumptions that prove problematic to an inclusive diversity approach” (Pless & Maak, 2004, p. 136). That is, imbedded
within the inclusive approach is the ability to identify barriers hindering transparency and the diversity of opinions, which provides a continuous pathway to a more inclusive culture.

**Plan to Communicate the Need for Change and the Change Process**

ABC Academy is a small organization with approximately 75 teaching and non-teaching faculty, which allows the organization to remain nimble and agile. The structure of the organization itself, as explained in Chapter 1, affords me a great deal of latitude. As a consequence, institutional changes whether large or small can be implemented based on identified needs. This creates a sense of freedom but also confers a degree of responsibility on me; any initiative would need to be justified as resultant successes or failures would reflect on my leadership approach to change. Prudent decision making is essential in all facets, including in the development and implementation of a holistic communication plan.

Information access and sharing remain a major imperative for the organization and, to that end, communication has developed into a multidirectional exchange of thoughts and ideas. Creating a communication plan that is responsive will “serve as a continuous, holistic, and innovative strategic change function, one that quickens momentum and agility because it never stops” (Kotter, 2014, p. 178). Rather than having information trickle down the organizational hierarchy to different ranks and tiers, ABC Academy will become a community that is inclusive and expects participation from all actors within the organization—be they department chairs, teaching faculty, non-teaching staff, or students.

While change has been driven by empowering individuals at all levels of the organization, there remains a hierarchical structure that has aided in the completion of daily managerial tasks. As evidenced by the previous section, there are four major areas that require an approach distinct from that of the managerial variety: development (structure of the Access
Scholarship); refinement (curriculum development); implementation (accountability); and spread (student improvement). This distinct approach is necessary because these four areas fall into the category referred to by Kotter (2014) as strategic acceleration. A large-scale initiative like the Access Scholarship necessitates a robust structure beyond that which is confined to daily operations: “The processes that run within the new network structure look less like systematic management (which creates reliability and efficiency) and more like mobilizing leadership (which creates speed and agility)” (Kotter, 2014, p. 13). Figure 4 illustrates the differences between management-driven hierarchy and strategy acceleration network. The dichotomy is evident: each side has its own primary function, with the left side being management-driven while the right side is leadership-driven. By reviewing the primary function, additional functions, and key directives, organizational leaders are better positioned to identify precisely the side in which they fall, thereby aiding the decision-making process.

Figure 4. The Dual Operating System detailing management-driven hierarchy and strategy acceleration network from Kotter (2014).
ABC Academy is presently situated on the right in regards to this expansive change initiative. The aforementioned areas in need of attention involve innovation and leadership development, thereby necessitating focus on the eight accelerators. The latter three accelerators—wins celebrated, relentless action, and changes institutionalized—are noteworthy as they correspond to the level of progress made in regards to the Access Scholarship specifically. That said, each of the goals identified need to be assessed based on the eight accelerators due to the fact that these are new goals that require collective buy-in and support.

The communication plans outlined in Table 5 below are directly informed by these eight accelerators, with the ultimate goal of institutionalized change. Table 5 details the previously identified goals, the existing challenges within the communication network, the detailed communication plan, relevant ABC Academy personnel, and pertinent channels for the purposes of information dissemination.

**Communication Plans**

Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Communication Challenge</th>
<th>Communication Plan</th>
<th>Institutional Actors</th>
<th>Communication Channels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Development: Structure of Access Scholarship</td>
<td>Absence of diverse and representative opinions communicating initiative’s value; lack of channels to communicate rationale for program extension and understand divergent opinions</td>
<td>Creation of diverse committee that involves members at all levels of organization; weekly and monthly meetings that foster interaction, shared meaning, and collective learning</td>
<td>Dr. M, department chairs, scholarship recipient’s teachers, inaugural recipient, one student from each year (3), senior leadership</td>
<td>Group meetings, weekly updates, memos, articles, LinkedIn and WeChat updates, website updates, informal one-on-one discussions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refinement: Curriculum Building and Instruction</td>
<td>Providing reasons for curriculum oversight, monitoring and change; absence of individuals capable of providing communicative support to teachers; lack of inter-faculty support</td>
<td>Coordinators audit curriculum and instructional practices, schedule meetings with department chairs, have consults with teachers, facilitate large-scale professional development; divide faculty into 15 groups of 5 and meet tri-weekly</td>
<td>Coordinators, teachers, department chairs, non-teaching faculty</td>
<td>Meetings, training sessions, large-scale professional development seminars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
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<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation: Accountability</td>
<td>Faculty-wide open forum to convey rationale for accountability; meticulous reporting of behavior perceived to be counterproductive; consults between senior leadership and department chairs that focus on coaching and action items</td>
<td>Teaching and non-teaching faculty, senior leadership, deputy heads, HR director department chairs, individual teachers</td>
<td>Meetings, faculty handbook, detailed reports, action plans, coaching sessions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spread: Student Improvement</td>
<td>Underscoring the value of experiential and extracurricular learning; lack of reliable resources to use for communicating successes; motivating students about opportunities to become more thorough leaders</td>
<td>Updates that celebrate short-term wins and student- and faculty-led initiatives; repository of outlets to celebrate wins; develop positive feedback loops through development of communication channels between students, teachers, non-teaching faculty</td>
<td>Admissions officers, college counselors, advisors, parents, students, teachers, deputy heads, senior leadership</td>
<td>Student handbook, admissions events, assemblies, website, LinkedIn updates, WeChat updates, TedX events, comprehensive database, meetings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As shown in Table 5, there are myriad ABC personnel involved in every goal and countless communication channels that can be leveraged for the purposes of goal attainment. Creating defined schedules and action items will ensure that developed plans are implemented in earnest. The complexity of every goal requires unique communication plans, each of which is explained in greater detail below.

**Communication Plan: Development**

The Beijing Campus’ senior leadership team along with Dr. M will meet weekly to discuss, build, and refine the Access Scholarship. This team can scale-up to offer more meetings as needed, which may happen during times when the Access Scholarship is being promoted, potential candidates are being interviewed, the visa application process encounters challenges, and when the recipient requires support during onboarding at the institution. The Access Scholarship Committee will be comprised of all department chairs from the Beijing campus, the Access Scholarship recipient’s teachers, the inaugural Access Scholarship recipient, and three other students that represent each grade level. In addition to those mentioned, there will be opportunities for other teaching and non-teaching personnel who are inspired by the initiative to join the committee as well. What is significant is that “the invested group of faculty can be considered the guiding coalition. The coalition group is motivated and willing takes a leadership role to implement the improvement plan” (Barbour-Stevenson, 2018, p. 30). This committee initially will meet monthly and provide updates to the senior leadership; if it is deemed by the senior leadership that progress is stagnating or the meetings are too infrequent, meeting frequency can be increased to bi-weekly. The focus on meetings is predicated on the idea that “cultures that foster persistent interaction during change efforts meet with great success in achieving shared meanings and collective learning” (Manini, 2018, p. 61). Communication will extend beyond those on the committee to include the entire faculty, staff, student, and parent
groups, which will be conducted through consultations led by myself and the non-teaching
faculty.

Far from being an overkill, this wide network ensures that “[w]hen the same message
comes at people from six different directions, it stands a better chance of being heard and
remembered, on both intellectual and emotional levels” (Kotter, 2012, p. 93). As Kotter (2012)
goes on to note, “all successful cases of major change seem to include tens of thousands of
communications that help employees to grapple with difficult intellectual and emotional issues”
(p. 94). Information-dissemination channels will include large group meetings, weekly updates,
memos, articles on the institution’s website, LinkedIn and WeChat account updates, as well as
informal one-on-one talks. This communication plan empowers and entrusts people at all levels
of the organization to contribute to the betterment of the Access Scholarship, cultivating a
meaningful shared experience between our community and the scholarship recipient. This
communication plan better connects groups previously stratified within the organization,
encouraging them to be important participants in the ABC Academy community.

Communication Plan: Refinement

Curriculum coordinator. The curriculum coordinator and instructional coordinator will
audit the curriculum mapping and design, as well as the instructional practices within each
department. The two individuals will join department chair meetings on a weekly basis to gain a
better sense of the demands imposed on the departments, including the nuances and day-to-day
operational mechanics of each group. Exploring these details is important because “collective
competence is evolving, unstable and based on situations with varying social relations and
material conditions that can support or constrain teamwork in the moment” (Hibbert, Enge-Hills,
Abdel-Wahab, Chhem, & Hasegawa, 2017, p. 559). Coordinators need a thorough
understanding of the differential conditions inherent to each department—based on composition,
familiarity, working conditions, level of expertise, and the like—because not all departments will exhibit a problem in the same permutation. A defined process of engagement will help in order to gain this level of understanding. Department chairs will register to work with the two coordinators, and the coordinators will then attend daily classes in conjunction with the weekly department meeting. The coordinators will also offer one-on-one and small group training sessions for teachers to improve their curriculum design, assessment and teaching practices. Furthermore, they will facilitate large-scale professional development for the entire faculty—teaching and non-teaching—on a monthly basis. Communication will be shared among those within the department, the department chairs, the senior leadership team, and the entire faculty. Enabling departments and individuals to receive the support they require will help foster a more supportive and transparent community. This will create additional channels for collaboration across faculties and lead to a monitoring and evaluation culture that is non-threatening and conscientious.

**PLCs.** The 75-member faculty constituting ABC Academy will be divided up by the two coordinators, under the supervision of the deputy heads, into 15 groups of five. These groups will be assigned during late-August orientation and remain as such for the full academic year, which allows faculty members to grow familiar with one another and create a safe space for sharing. Each year the teams will change as faculty will be assigned to a new group. This is important because as faculty composition changes, so too do the perspectives at the institution. There is value in adjusting group dynamics on a yearly basis in order for members to continue along their growth trajectory. PLC groups will meet tri-weekly with the focus being on the improvement of our curriculum and teaching practices. If additional time is deemed necessary for the purposes of collaboration, this meeting frequency can be increased. Being that weekly
faculty meetings are part of existing protocols, there will be time allocated for shared announcements, professional development, wellness support, and collaboration.

Through a transformational lens, “educators will be encouraged to collaborate on designing programs and practices that not only augment their effectiveness in the classroom, but that have a residual effect of improving student engagement, and ultimately, achievement” (Manini, 2018, p. 32). This communication sub-plan is especially targeted at those who “fear they will not be able to develop the new skills and behavior required of them” (Kotter & Schlesinger, 2008, p. 4). According to Charles (2017), the effectiveness of a teacher is tied directly to the belief that a difference can be made to student learning, a point that is of utmost importance for senior leadership to underscore. Similarly, the professionalism of a teacher is tied to the responsibility over student learning. The environments that should be created are those that are centred around positivity, development of instructional practices that are of the highest quality, and the appropriate application of such practices (Charles, 2017, p. 14). By fostering such collaboration, colleagues can become informed of techniques and approaches that add to their effectiveness and underscore their responsibility as instructors. PLCs will serve to connect together faculty and staff because many still operate in silos, limiting their social and professional interactions while collaborating only with those within their department or exclusively along expatriate or local faculty lines.

**Communication Plan: Implementation**

A faculty-wide open forum will be held at the beginning of the school year wherein the accountability policy, developed by the senior leadership, will be explained. This revised accountability policy will also be included in the faculty handbook given to staff to ensure all individuals have an opportunity to review it as needed. Should concerns from department chairs arise in relation to a faculty member, the chair in question will be required to report and meet
with one of the deputy heads of school as well as the director of human resources. This will open communication channels and provide training opportunities that empower the department chairs. Communication plans must be responsive to specific OIP contexts, and as noted in Stokes (2018), the process at work extends leadership and accountability to include those in both managerial and non-managerial positions, creating opportunities “for the expertise of many people to combine into a mutual effort to achieve a single goal” (Stokes, 2018, p. 20). Healthy learning communities are those “that collaboratively diagnose what teachers need to do, plan programs and teaching interventions and evaluate the success of the interventions” (Hoogsteen, 2018, p. 15). Accountability measures “can be used to create a culture that embraces change through fine-tuning and recalibrating services and processes on a regular basis” (Decker, 2018, p. 35). Barring conduct that is illegal or of a morally dubious nature, the focus is firmly on capacity building for teachers and department chairs alike. In any and all instances documentation will be required, and must detail the concerns of the chair and proposed steps for remedying the matter. This is necessary as the senior leadership will need to determine targeted approaches for individualized capacity development based on documented and verifiable reports. Previously, the senior leadership have found they have been too far removed from problematic situations, leading to the issues further compounding and solutions becoming proportionally complex. Appropriate documentation and continual department-chair coaching will enable chairs to become better managers and leaders, diminishing the prospect of termination and creating cohesion among the faculty. Clearly outlined accountability structures, rather than detracting from the teaching experience, will help to improve learning and teaching outcomes for students and teachers alike, thereby promoting a sense of comradery and shared purpose while diminishing insularity in the process.
Communication Plan: Spread

Expectations and exemplars, developed by senior leadership and non-teaching faculty, will be disseminated through the student handbook, admissions events, assemblies, the school’s website, LinkedIn, WeChat, and weekly updates. These attempts to improve the world and champion inclusive behaviour will also include student-hosted TedX events that in the past have exemplified a concerted attempt to make impact beyond merely Ivey League admission.

Creating a database of publications, speaking events, and media channels for students and faculty will provide a repository of outlets to use for communicating successes. Student improvement will also include routinely meeting with student representatives to understand their goals and provide an opportunity for feedback throughout their educational journey. Many diverse opportunities exist for students to accept roles that allow them to become more thorough leaders: boarding and residential advisors, teacher assistants, student teachers, house president, club president, and general manager. Taking on such roles are not only valuable on their own, but also provide an opportunity for contemplation and engagement. In order to continue inspiring change ABC Academy should be cognizant of outside factors and forces that shape how initiatives are developed and communicated, since the feedback loop has a direct impact on what future students accept as the norm; the more provocative and innovative the outcomes, the higher number of students and faculty alike will be inspired to create a similar project that connects to others on a meaningful level. In this way, there are direct connections between the communication of opportunities, the acceptance on the part of students as to the value of said opportunities, and the celebration of the achievements in order to inspire future leaders. Such an expansive approach to teaching and initiative-taking has proven worthwhile in a Chinese context, as “directing teaching and learning to a more humanistic educational experience” led not only to “increased participation and engagement in the learning process,” but also to teachers
appreciating and embracing the associated challenges and freedom (Guo, 2013, p. 96). Both students and teachers benefit greatly from this feedback loop in which communication remains a central consideration. As improvement continues to be the focus, students across the organization should be more adept and inspired to take on leadership roles, whether it is through the continuation of existing initiatives or the creation of new ones. Encouraging students to take risks and extend their leadership capabilities will garner more traction and embed this approach within the institutional culture, further reinforcing the program’s sustainability.

**Chapter 3 Conclusion**

This OIP’s concluding chapter has confronted the challenges of implementing largescale institutional changes to combat insularity and create a culture at ABC Academy that realizes its stated objectives. Four specific goals were identified that would address prior institutional shortcomings, and continue ABC Academy’s growth trajectory: revised Access Scholarship structure, curriculum building and instruction, greater accountability, and student improvement. Four PDSA cycles were then aligned to these goals, each representing a phase of system change: development, refinement, implementation, and spread. Appropriate monitoring and evaluation tools were selected that would help measure progress and provide guidance as to the best course of action moving forward. Communicating such changes also required meticulous planning, as specific goals involved unique challenges, institutional actors and communication tools. Plans were developed that would aid ABC Academy’s information dissemination efforts both internally and externally.

**Conclusion: Next Steps and Future Considerations**

While the insular school culture represented the foremost challenge for ABC Academy, the Access Scholarship itself created the impetus for the institution’s growth. That is, it would have been increasingly difficult to underscore the need for change and motivate institutional
actors around a common goal in the absence of an individual who would create an impetus for us to change our processes and structure. It provided an opportunity for ABC Academy to institute fundamental changes to our system wherein the success of the Access Scholarship was intimately tied to the development of our school culture. The presence of the recipient forced ABC Academy to re-evaluate how our day-to-day operations, instructional practices, resource allocations, monitoring and assessment criteria, and the like were equipping our students with a diverse and multi-faceted educational experience. These created uncomfortable questions, but also allowed us to think critically about the institution we wanted to create.

Next Steps

ABC Academy still has steps to take in order to create a sustainable program that continues to grow and contribute to lives of those inside and outside of the institution. Three steps have been identified and will be discussed. As ABC Academy expands and opens new satellite campuses, the CEO/superintendent as well as the three deputy heads of school and the Beijing campus’s director of human resources will be responsible for coordinating expansion activities, thereby significantly decreasing the time allocation previously earmarked for the institution’s daily operations. While department chairs have been empowered with a significant amount of autonomy to support the changes at the departmental and institutional level—particularly when it comes to auditing courses, re-building curricula, and coaching instructors—they are also responsible for teaching courses, creating a formidable burden in their ability to successfully manage all duties. The curriculum coordinator and instructional coordinator will help to alleviate such a burden, which will aid in the faculty’s ability to successfully coordinate activities for the institution’s continual growth.
Future Considerations

Responsiveness in the face of new data and information remains paramount, as methods will need to be constantly adjusted and refined for the betterment of our teaching and learning community. Access Scholarship structural changes are expected to result in benefits for the student, as the belief is that a lengthier and more supportive framework will lead to admission into a Western postsecondary institution complete with a full scholarship and resettlement opportunities. The process of implementing this structural change—not to mention curricular development, increased accountability measures, and student improvement initiatives—will need to consider and involve the opinions of all institutional actors, particularly those that may be resistant to change. The summer months will provide ABC Academy leadership with the opportunity to create introductory manuals and resources that will help inform the change. Detailed schedules will also need to be developed that clearly outline meeting dates, progress updates, collaboration sessions, extracurricular engagements, professional development seminars, and other important events.

This initiative is a continuous opportunity to remain resilient in the face of complacency. Institutional change is never easy, particularly when the goals involve addressing complex socio-economic, political, and cultural differences. This is not to say, however, that it is insurmountable. As our institution grows and changes, there will be new challenges that emerge which force us to embrace our differences and rely on them as a means to shatter barriers that hamper development. Insularity may exist, but the manner in which we respond is what will ultimately define us.
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Appendix A
Glossary of Key Terms

Access Scholarship: A scholarship awarded annually at ABC Academy to a refugee or displaced individual who has not been able to continue their secondary education. The Access Scholarship includes one-year all expenses paid opportunity to study in Beijing at one of China’s elite high school programs. At the conclusion of the academic year, the expectation is that a post-secondary institution overseas will fully cover the student and support their re-settlement.

Gaokao: National College Entrance Examination held in the People’s Republic of China on a yearly basis. Acceptance into undergraduate-level institutions is conditional upon completion of this examination. It is used to distinguish students and is customarily taken in a student’s final year of senior high school.

Hukou: Household registration system in mainland People’s Republic of China and Taiwan. This system is a means for identifying an individual as a resident of a particular region, and includes information concerning members of a family within a household. Develops in the form of marriages, divorces, movement in and out of the region, births and deaths are included.

Zhongkao: Senior High School Entrance Examination held annually in the mainland of the People’s Republic of China for students in the final year of junior high school. This exam is a requirement for all students and must be taken as a prerequisite for admittance into virtually every senior high school.
Appendix B
Contemporary Global Refugee Crisis

According to the UN Refugee Agency (2016) by the end of 2016, 56.6 million individuals were forcibly displaced worldwide as a result of persecution, conflict, violence, or human rights violations. That was an increase of 300,000 people over the previous year, and the world’s forcibly displaced population remained at a record high” (UNHCR, 2016, p. 2). Betts and Collier (2017) state that “sixty-five million people have fled from their homes in fear of violence” (p. 32). Britain’s Department for International Development has increased the share of its budget from 30 per cent to 50 per cent in 2015 to support fragile states (Betts & Collier, 2017, p. 32). This is one tactic to impede or at best prevent uninvited guests from trying to seek asylum in the United Kingdom. Betts and Collier (2017) elucidate that “a large group of fragile states is each exposed to a small but significant risk that it will implode into the mass violence against civilians that generates displacement. Many of those displaced will probably remain in their own countries, but many others will seek havens beyond the border. For the next few decades the international community will need to react to the needs of the internally displaced and the refugees” (p. 33). Many of those displaced are unable to continue their education for several reasons including being out of school a maximum of three years, not having appropriate documentation, the need to work, and the lack of funds and safety. The United Nations (UN) Universal Declaration of Human Rights declares that “everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory” (1948, Article 26). An attempt has been put in place to safeguard those of whom are displaced, however many do not receive the adequate support and fundamental basic human rights articulated in the declaration. Refugees are included in the declaration and have the same right to education in a camp and in their country of resettlement. However, experiences
in camps vary in content, resources, and accessibility. Though providing education is mandatory, the country in which families have sought refuge determines the priority and assistance education receives in camps (Campbell, 2013, p. 33). According to Filippo Grandi, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, while the global figures for tertiary education has risen by 2 points and currently stands at 36 per cent, refugees only account for 1 per cent (2016). Grandi further contends that 91 per cent of children globally attend primary school while refugees in low-income countries have fewer than 50 per cent (Grandi, 2016). In 2015, around 17,000 children fled their homes daily as a result of persecution and conflict (Khawaja, Martínez, & Van Esveld, 2017, para. 2).

Forcibly displaced children, including refugees, have the right to available and accessible quality secondary education, without discrimination. Such access is crucial: it can protect them physically; create a normal routine vital to healing and recovery; provide a safe space at a developmentally critical age; develop problem-solving skills; pave the way for better economic possibilities; and nurture hope. (Khawaja, Martínez, & Van Esveld, 2017, para. 2)

**United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child**

Recognizing that the child, for the full and harmonious development of his or her personality, should grow up in a family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding,

Considering that the child should be fully prepared to live an individual life in society and brought up in the spirit of the ideals proclaimed in the Chapter of the United Nations, and in particular in the spirit of peace, dignity, tolerance, freedom, equality and solidarity,
Article 27

1. States Parties recognize the right of every child to a standard of living adequate for child’s physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development.

Article 28

1. States Parties recognize the right of the child to education, and with a view to achieving the right progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity, they shall, in particular;
   a. Make primary education compulsory and available free to all;
   b. Encourage the development of different forms of secondary education, including general and vocational education, make them available and accessible to every child, and take appropriate measures such as the introduction of free education and offering financial assistance in case of need;
   c. Make higher education accessible to all on the basis of capacity by every appropriate means;
   d. Make educational and vocational information and guidance available and accessible to all children;
   e. Take measures to encourage regular attendance at schools and the reduction of dropout rates.

2. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that school discipline is administered in a manner consistent with the child’s human dignity and in conformity with the present Convention.
3. States Parties shall promote and encourage international cooperation in matters relating to education, in particular with a view to contributing to the elimination of ignorance and illiteracy throughout the world and facilitating access to scientific and technical knowledge and modern teaching methods. In this regard, particular account shall be taken of the needs of developing countries.

Article 29

1. States Parties agree that the education of the child shall be directed to:

   a. The development of the child’s personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential. (OHCHR, n.d., pp. 1, 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10 & 11).
## Appendix C

### Summary of Change Implementation Plan for ABC Academy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage of Change Implementation Plan</th>
<th>Summary of Planned Change</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholder Reactions and Plan Adjustment</td>
<td>A mix of weekly and daily meetings with key stakeholders provides avenues for feedback, advice and revisions. Surveys also allow ABC Academy leadership to understand the sentiments of the community. Recent issues include the structure of the Access Scholarship, staff accountability, and commitment to student scholastic improvement. Solutions to these aforementioned issues — including the hiring of a curriculum coordinator and instructional coach, greater autonomy granted to department chairs, and supplementary courses for students — have been devised in concert with faculty and staff.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personnel Engagement and Empowerment</td>
<td>Department chairs will be empowered with the hiring, training and support of their department members, and also entrusted with termination duties. Fostering Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) will connect more faculty members together from varying disciplines and levels of the organization. Teaching and non-teaching faculty will be assigned to teams of four or five, and these groups will meet to discuss curricular and non-curricular goals and initiatives.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Additional Support and Resources</td>
<td>Additional financial resources will be required for the hiring of the curriculum coordinator and instructional coach. Software and hardware will also be needed to assist in teacher collaboration and information dissemination.</td>
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<td>Implementation Issues and Action Plan</td>
<td>There are concerns that internal candidates passed up for promotions may view others new roles as demotions. Changes in the curriculum may alienate domestic faculty as the primary language will be English.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Identification of Goals</td>
<td>Short-term goals include: faculty, staff and students are more empowered, encouraged and supported to connect their knowledge, skills and projects to tackle real-world issues;</td>
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<td>Increased Collaboration</td>
<td>Access Scholarship student gains admittance into Ivey League University. Medium-term goals include: PLCs are embraced by faculty; faculty should seek to expand knowledge in their respected field, continually refining their curriculum, teaching practices, and contribution to pertinent academic publications; the Access Scholarship program expands to become a two-year program and is offered at multiple ABC Academy schools, including its satellite campuses. Long-term goals include: a structured and open-ended educational system is developed which is agile and adaptable; the curriculum is accessible and utilized at multiple satellite campuses; faculty attrition will decrease to 10 percent or lower on an annual basis.</td>
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<td>Limitations and Challenges</td>
<td>There is a challenge presently in trying to get our current Access Scholarship through the ABC Academy program successfully. This challenge is compounded by the college application process, a time consuming endeavor that involves scholarships forms and the mobilization of resources to perform successfully on the SAT, ACT, IELTS and TOEFL examinations. Another challenge is the possibility that some of the PLCs do not invest a significant amount of time, energy and support to those in their group. A lot of pressure will be placed on the curriculum coordinator and instructional coach to improve our curricular and instructional shortcomings. This task may seem daunting and unending, providing minimal reward and creating the potential for burnout for the two individuals.</td>
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