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## Improving educational opportunities by weaving Indigenous knowledge into the academy from an Indigenous perspective

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## Abstract

To address the atrocities that Indigenous people have endured and provide guidance to support reconciliation, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada released its 94 Calls to Action (TRC, 2015). Educational reform is one of the key areas identified as necessary for reconciliation. Educational institutions such as River College (a pseudonym) are working towards the integration of Indigenous knowledge into current educational strategies and practices to achieve the acceptance and inclusion of Indigenous epistemologies, thereby acknowledging that Indigenous peoples are significant to the formation of current day Canada. The colonized approach to education at River College lacks cultural connection and supports that relate to Indigenous students, thus, affecting their sense of identity, culture and belonging. The work in this Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP) will focus on creating and supporting stronger cultural connections through the two-eyed seeing approach embedded in professional learning as a method to provide a culture of inclusiveness and a welcoming environment for Indigenous students at River College. The initiatives proposed in this OIP will look to increase engagement with Indigenous knowledge systems at River College by achieving a paradigm shift that recognizes and validates Indigenous perspectives and voices, alongside Western perspective. I will draw from transformative, transformational, and Indigenous leadership approaches to strengthen the relationship between the staff at River College and the Indigenous community to foster meaningful implementation. The creation and implementation of a common vision for systemic change and organizational improvement at River College will serve as a model for other institutions to follow.

*Keywords:* Education, Indigenous, Indigenous Leadership, Transformative Leadership, Transformational Leadership, Two-Eyed Seeing

## Executive Summary

The work in this Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP) explores a problem of practice (PoP) at River College (a pseudonym) that addresses the lack of cultural connection and supports that relate to Indigenous students in strengthening their Indigenous identity, such as one's cultural identity, and sense of belonging, such as Indigenous culture, kinship, and community. The work of the OIP is designed to consider what organizational strategies in education can be developed and implemented within River College that are culturally responsive by recognizing the significance of including Indigenous knowledge in all facets of teaching (Burnham, 2020), to promote cross-cultural sensitivity, awareness, and content in existing and new programs and services for Indigenous students. The purpose of the work in this OIP is to propose to the relevant PoP by creating a culture of inclusiveness and a welcoming environment for Indigenous students through the significant integration of Indigenous knowledges, cultures, and beliefs into the educational practices at River College.

The colonial approach to education that is dominant in Western educational contexts exists at River College and does not align with Indigenous knowledge or culture. For there to be a more accepting approach to Indigenization, change leaders need to challenge the perspectives set forth by the dominant group. Chapter 1 introduces the purpose of the work in this OIP and the conditions necessary for greater support for Indigenous students in efforts to strengthen their Indigenous identity, culture, and belonging at River College. This chapter includes a description of the organizational contexts, and an analysis of the change readiness assessment completed at River College.

Chapter 2 identifies transformational, transformative, and Indigenous leadership approaches as necessary to lead the change process and introduces Deszca et al.'s (2020) change

path model as a framework to structure the change process. Nadler and Tushman's (1980) congruence model is used for organizational analysis. A critical analysis of the organization outlines various inputs that should be considered when implementing a strategy.

The proposed solution draws on elements of two of the three possible solutions presented in this chapter. This solution includes the two-eyed seeing approach, which is embedded in professional learning. This holistic, non-hierarchical, and synergistic approach will help staff and students at River College and community see the world from both an Indigenous lens and a Western lens (Barlett et al., 2012), while also creating a greater understanding, knowledge, and appreciation of Indigenous identities, perspectives, and voices. The two-eyed seeing approach requires the support of Indigenous knowledge keepers (Wright et al., 2019). Due to the lack of Indigenous representation at River College, Indigenous community engagement and collaboration with Indigenous students are vital to achieving organizational change. Without active participation and collaboration with Indigenous people, the utilization of the two-eyed seeing approach in professional learning will lack the framework needed to understand Indigenous perspectives. Donohoo (2017) states that stakeholders can positively influence student outcomes through improved collective actions. Change agents must have opportunities to share their expectations and collaborate effectively through sharing, recognizing, and critiquing strategies during the implementation process (Donohoo, 2017). Indigenous perspectives and voices must be involved throughout the change process to develop authentic relationships and create successful organizational change. While this may be one facet of learning from the Indigenous community, culturally relevant pedagogical approaches are necessary to build intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect (Calls to Action, 2015).

Chapter 3 outlines the change implementation plan, modelled after Deszca et al.'s (2020) culturally relevant pedagogical approaches, and utilizes the Plan, Do, Study, Act cycle, to achieve the desired change at River College. Tools to monitor the change are implemented in the planning and implementation stages. Tools to evaluate the change are presented to ensure ongoing evaluation after the implementation of change. A comprehensive communication plan is introduced to communicate the following: a plan of action for building awareness of the need for change; communicate the change vision and path of change; and successes, milestones, and the change process. Next steps and future considerations are also outlined for contemplation. The first suggestion discusses the idea of extending the two-eyed seeing approach to incorporate the voices and perspectives of other minority groups. The second suggestion discusses increasing Indigenous representation in all levels of education at River College. The final suggestion discusses the need to develop an Indigenous Education Plan that reiterates River College's commitment to meet the unique and diverse needs of an increasingly diverse Indigenous student body. This resource would allow other institutions to have a foundation in which to start their change process.

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## Acronyms

CAAT (Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology)

CAE (Centre for Academic Excellence)

CIC (Colleges and Institutes Canada)

CPM (Change Path Model)

EDI (Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity)

IEP (Indigenous Education Plan)

IETC (Indigenous Education and Training Council)

IK (Indigenous Knowledge)

ILA (Indigenous Learner Advisor)

MAESD (Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development)

MTCU (Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities)

OIP (Organization Improvement Plan)

PDSA (Plan, Do, Study Act)

PESTE (Political, Economic, Social, Technological, and Ecological/Environmental)

PoP (Problem of Practice)

PSE (Post-Secondary Education)

SFNS (Southern First Nations Secretariat)

SOG (Senior Operating Group)

ToR (Terms of Reference)

TRC (Truth and Reconciliation Commission)

UNDRIP (United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples)

## Definitions

**Allyship:** Refers to consistent support provided by members of the dominant group who advocate for and establish meaningful relationships with those from marginalized groups to change the unjust and inequitable institutions and systems (Brown & Ostrove, 2013).

**Anishinaabe:** Also known as Ojibway (including Saulteaux and Oji-Cree), Odawa, Potawatomi, Algonquin, Chippewa, Mississauga, Nipissing and Algonquin peoples. The term Anishinaabe is used to describe a collective group of First Nations people or oneself. People use Anishinaabe (or the plural form, Anishinaabeg) to indicate belonging or membership to that group (Hele, 2020; Johnston, 1990).

**Colonization, Colonialism:** Involves the action or process of one group taking control of the lands, languages, resources, and cultures of another group with the intent to claim them as one's own (Queen's University, 2022; Shoemaker, 2015).

**Culture:** The customary beliefs, material traits of a religious, racial, or social group, and social forms (Merriam-Webster, 2022).

**Cultural Practice:** A nation's traditionally expressed cultural symbols, practices, and belief systems either conscious or connected with the Spirit world (First Nations Pedagogy, n.d.).

**Culturally Relevant Pedagogy:** A theoretical model that focuses on aspects of student achievement and supports students to uphold their sense of cultural identities and belonging (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

**Culturally Responsive Teaching:** A pedagogy that recognizes the significance of including students' cultural references in all facets of teaching (Burnham, 2020).

**Decolonization:** The undoing or removal of colonial elements (Queen's University, 2022).

**Diversity:** Recognition of individual differences such as race, ethnicity, religious beliefs, socio-economic status, age, gender, sexual orientation, physical abilities, political beliefs, or other ideologies (Queensborough Community College, 2021).

**Four R's:** Indigenous principles of ethical research, which include respect, responsibility, reciprocity, and relevance (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991).

**Haudenosaunee:** Also known as the Iroquois or Six Nations, are members of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. Originally a confederacy of nations inhabiting the northern part of New York state, the Haudenosaunee consist of the Seneca, Cayuga, Oneida, Onondaga, Mohawk, and Tuscarora (Ramsden, 2006; Smith et al., 2016).

**Holistic Learning:** Holistic learning attempts to improve education, human development, and academic ability and performance by seeking to nurture the human spirit, balance, inclusion, and connection (Miller, 1999).

**Indigenous:** A characteristic of an Indigenous person or plant is that it inhabited an area prior to colonization. Thus, any person or plant that lived in an area prior to colonial contact is Indigenous to that area. First Nations, Metis and Inuit are Distinct Indigenous Peoples of Canada (Government of Canada, 2016; Smith et al., 2016).

**Indigenization:** The addition, redoing, rebalance, and return of Indigenous elements to Western ways of knowing and doing (Queen's University, 2022).

**Inuit:** Is plural for a group of three or more Indigenous people who inhabit the northern regions of Canada and the Arctic. An Inuk is one person and Inuuk is two people (Freeman, 2010; Smith et al., 2016).



**Lenape (Lunaapeew):** Also known as the Delaware, the Lunaapeew, or the Grandfather Tribe, Lenape are people of the Delaware Nation at Moraviantown and Munsee with established settlements up and down the Delaware and Hudson Rivers (Eelünaapéewi Lahkéewiit, 2022).

**Métis:** People of mixed European and Indigenous ancestry, and one of the recognized Indigenous peoples in Canada (Gaudry, 2009; Smith et al., 2016).

**Professional Learning Community:** An inclusive group of people motivated by a shared learning vision who work together to analyze and improve their classroom practice, and thus in turn, leading to higher levels of student achievement (DuFour, 2004).

**Reconciliation** –The ongoing process of establishing and maintaining respectful relationships between Indigenous peoples and non-Indigenous peoples. Reconciliation describes attempts made by institutions and individuals to raise awareness about colonization and its ongoing impact on Indigenous peoples (Sterritt, 2020; TRC, 2015).

**Sharing Circle:** Also known as talking circle, sharing circle is an essential part of the oral tradition of Indigenous communities, which provides an opportunity for each person to be heard (Pass the Feather, 2021).

**Talking Stick:** Occasionally used in sharing circles, the person holding the talking stick speaks without interruption as others in the circle listen. Everyone in the sharing circle gets a chance to hold the talking stick and speak. If the receiver chooses not to speak, they hand it to the next person until the item has been passed to everyone in the sharing circle (Raven Speaks, 2012).

**Two-Eyed Seeing:** An approach of inquiry which is based on the premise that better outcomes are more likely if two or more perspectives, such as both an Indigenous lens and a Western lens, are considered in collaboration (Jeffery et al., 2021).

## **Chapter 1: Introduction and Context**

The Organization Improvement Plan (OIP) addresses the impact of a lack of supports for Indigenous students affecting their sense of identity, culture and belonging in a large, public post-secondary institution (PSE) in Southwestern Ontario. The work in this OIP illuminates the process of the organizational change through an Indigenous lens with transformative, transformational, and Indigenous leadership approaches. The Problem of Practice (PoP) presented in this OIP is analyzed using a theoretical framework and a political, economic, social, technological, and ecological/environmental (PESTE) analysis (Deszca et al., 2020). Finally, guiding questions emerging from the PoP are explored, followed by a vision for change, and a discussion of change readiness.

### **Organizational Context**

The context of the OIP and its organizational structures are presented in the following section as well as an overview of organizational values. Current and historical educational practices then offer a platform through which the PoP will be understood. To abide by the OIP requirements of anonymization, a pseudonym has been used to identify the organization's name. As such, River College is the identifier to refer to the organization throughout the work in this OIP. The terms 'college,' 'institution,' and 'organization' will be used interchangeably with River College. Furthermore, the organization's vision, mission, values, purpose, and goals statements have also been subtly altered to protect the organization from being recognized, while keeping the school directive intact.

River College has an extremely diverse student population with 4,188 new international and newcomer students registered in 2019 (River College, 2019). Serving approximately 14,225 students studying in over 120 programs (River College, 2020), River College has seven locations

with its main campuses located in two urban locations in Southwestern Ontario. River College has an estimated enrollment of 270 Indigenous students (Indigenous Services, 2020), with many First Nations students identifying themselves as either Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, or Lenape (Lunaapeew). Indigenous students attend River College from several different First Nations including Aamjiwnaang First Nation, Caldwell First Nation, Chippewas of the Thames, Eelünaapéewi Lahkéwiit Delaware Nation, Kettle and Stony Point First Nation, Munsee Delaware Nation, Oneida Nation of the Thames, and Bkejwanong First Nation (Indigenous Services, 2020). Despite the presence of diverse Indigenous student population on campus, River College is yet to develop effective strategies to provide an inclusive and welcoming environment to these students and support student success, a reminder that the colonial approaches to education do not address the needs of Indigenous students.

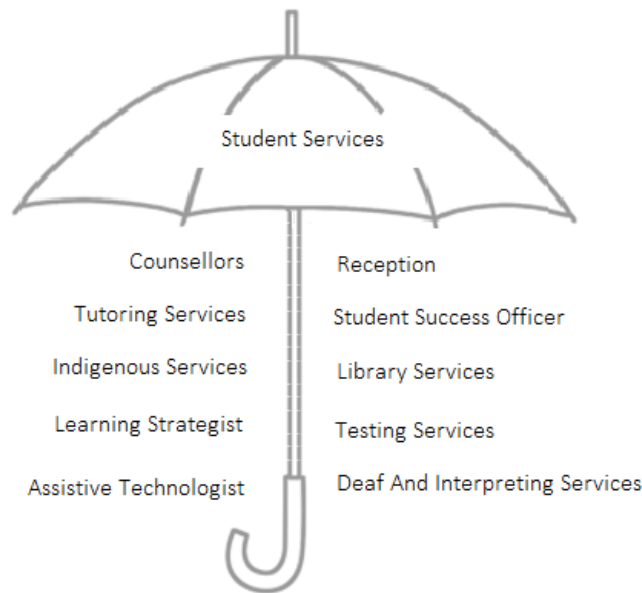
River College faces many contemporary challenges. These challenges include responding effectively to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)'s (2015) Calls to Action, as well as answering to governing bodies, stakeholders, and the public regarding Indigenous student supports. The Indigenous Services department at River College exist under the umbrella of Student Services (Figure 1). Indigenous student data, as often reported, simply identifies Indigenous student enrollment at the time of entering a program and is updated when leaving a program. Such basic analysis leaves the perception that students either withdrew or graduated, ignoring the complexity of issues such as absenteeism and retention.

Though the process of reconciliation has led to an understanding that supporting Indigenous students at River College involves building relationships, many staff members at River College are uncertain about how to build these relationships with Indigenous learners, and more so, within a PSE institutional setting. Some of them question the lack of culturally

congruent education, while others question the lack of culturally responsive pedagogical approaches. Whereas the lack of supports for Indigenous students in strengthening their Indigenous identity, culture and belonging is apparent at River College. Furthermore, the absence of data on Indigenous student satisfaction prevents counsellors and administrators from recognizing areas of challenges Indigenous students at River College face. As a result, planning geared towards eliminating the barriers that impede the Indigenous students' sense of cultural belonging has been inadequate and ineffective. Hence there is need for a comprehensive student-centered approach where learners' unique cultural strengths are recognized and supported to promote the Indigenous student achievement and wellbeing at River College.

### Figure 1

*Umbrella of Student Services at River College*



*Note.* This figure represents the umbrella of services at River College.

### **Vision, Mission, Values, Purpose, and Goals**

Kantabutra and Avery (2010) argue that vision statements are important to leadership, change and strategy implementation. Leithwood et al. (1996) point out that building a vision is

intended to create a fundamental sense of purpose. Baum et al. (1998) further argue that it is a leader's vision that guides their actions and choices for the organization. First, a leader develops a vision in their own way, either objectively or subjectively, meaning rationally or intuitively (Kantabutra & Avery, 2010). Visionary leadership styles typically vary from leader to leader. Second, every leader introduces their vision to others through a range of processes such as team building, organizational restructuring, modeling, authority, and goal setting (Kantabutra & Avery, 2010). Third, the leader facilitates growth of a venture through positive and significant impact of their own compelling vision on the development of the organizational vision (Baum et al., 1998; Kantabutra & Avery, 2010).

River College's mission to transform lives through accessible high-quality educational experiences and its vision of workplace excellence aim to strengthen communities through education, innovation, career readiness, and lifelong learning. Further, River College has articulated a goal committing to create a culture of inclusiveness and a welcoming environment for people of all cultures and backgrounds. Alongside its stated commitment to diversity, River College is committed to be an inclusive and diverse institution that provides space for more representation in all aspects of the system for all staff, faculty, and students. Yet, improving supports for an Indigenous population of learners continues to be a long-standing issue facing River College. To rectify this issue, decolonizing the educational methods is the primary step to undertake.

### **Decolonizing Education**

Decolonizing education "seeks to reconcile contemporary education with the past and with the peoples' present ensuring that the ideological and self-interests within Eurocentric education are not imposed on Indigenous peoples and they build their own present with their own agency and power" (Battiste, 2013, p. 26). Decolonizing the educational experience of

Indigenous students at River College would assist them in establishing a connection to their learning environment and to the content and teaching methods used within it. Goulet and Goulet (2014) acknowledge that decolonization requires teaching from the heart and emphasize that Indigenous epistemologies are about connectedness and honoring lived experiences as expertise in order to foster mutual understanding and relationships. Such interconnectedness with the lived past is associated with the educational experiences we would expect if decolonizing methods and Indigenous knowledge (IK) are integrated within River College. The goal supports positive organizational environments through the allocation of time and collaborative norms by stakeholders. However, greater collective and collaborative action within River College is required to reach this desired state.

### **Organizational History**

Ontario launched the community college system as a PSE alternative for people seeking career-specific skills and training in 1965 (Cocco, 2013). Initially, the Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology (CAATs) were distinguished from the more academically focused institutions in that they offered diplomas specifically designed to meet the needs of the workforce (Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, 1999). Gradually, the 24 CAATs extended their breadth of program offerings to include advanced-diploma programs, applied degrees, and post-graduate certificate programs (Walker, 2001). The Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development (MAESD) (previously called the Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities, MTCU) became responsible for overseeing the program delivery offered through Ontario's colleges and universities.

In 1967, River College was established as a CAAT under the legislation that distinguished it from universities by requiring that it offer career-oriented education and training

to assist people in obtaining, retaining, and meeting the needs of the changing work environment (Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology Act, 2016). River College's original program offerings were responsive to the needs of the community in which it is located. Over time, River College has grown from a student population of 500 students in business and technology programs to serving over 14,225 full and part-time students enrolled in over 120 certificate, diploma, and degree programs (River College, 2020). River College cultivates employability skills and vocational knowledge through experiential learning designed to help students meet the needs of today's workforce. River College seeks to increase the number of programs delivered online and to continue developing pathway programs of study and pathway agreements with other PSE institutions.

Historically, annual enrollment numbers for domestic, international, and Indigenous students have tended to fluctuate. For instance, there are approximately 270 students who self-identify as Indigenous (Indigenous Services, 2020). According to River College's Strategic Mandate Agreement Annual Report 2017-18 (2018), past system-wide metrics revealed an enrollment of 123 Indigenous students for the 2014-15 academic year, 145 Indigenous students for the 2015-16 academic year, 244 Indigenous students for the 2016-17 academic year, and 627 Indigenous students for the 2017-18 academic year.

Following the release of the TRC's (2015) Calls to Action educational institutions are working towards the integration of Indigenous cultures into policies, mandates, and curriculums with the acceptance of Indigenous epistemologies, and furthermore, recognition that Indigenous peoples are significant to the formation of current day Canada. As such, River College now has an active Indigenous Education and Training Council (IETC) that meets quarterly. The IETC consists of senior department leaders who are approved by other members of the IETC, the

Indigenous Services staff, and Indigenous community representatives who serve as ambassadors and advocates for the Indigenous student population that are represented on campus. Recent revisions to the IETC's Terms of Reference (ToR) (2020) mandate the council to be involved in the finalization of development, design and implementation of appropriate and relevant culturally responsive campus plans, programs, and services for Indigenous students at River College.

Moreover, the IETC's ToR (2020) mandate the Council to assist with the development and promotion of strategies designed to improve and increase Indigenous awareness, including but not limited to Indigenous heritage, culture, and tradition. With political, economic, and social forces in favor of reconciliation, the time is optimum to leverage supports for Indigenous students in strengthening their identity, culture and belonging at River College.

### **Organizational Structure**

Understanding River College's organizational structure is helpful not only for planning effective improvement initiatives but also for assessing the change readiness of support staff, faculty, and administrators. Furthermore, the IETC's ToR (2020) presents additional avenues for engagement to pave the reconciliation pathway. For instance, the IETC creates a direct link between Council members and River College's Senior Operating Group (SOG) on matters that relate to Indigenous proposals, programs and services specifically designed for Indigenous students. Currently, senior leaders at River College make decisions through a top-down process, or top-down management, whereby tasks, projects, and goals are determined by senior leaders, usually independently of their department or teams (Lee, 2021). These tasks, projects, and goals are then communicated to the staff and to the rest of the college.

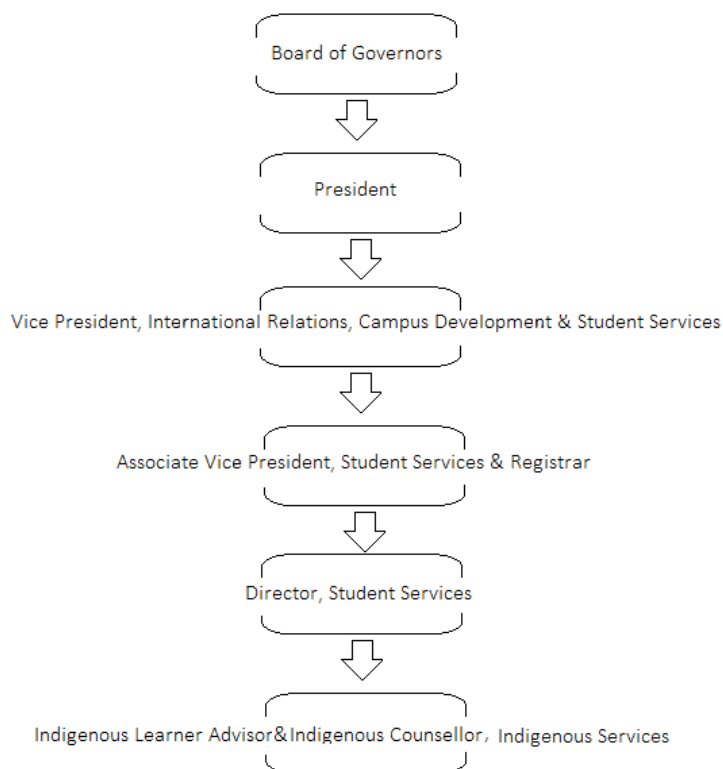
Efforts are underway to implement a shift from a hierarchical organizational structure (Figure 2) to a lateral leadership structure (Figure 3) in which input from multiple levels and



diverse perspectives are considered in the organizational change initiatives. Moreover, Indigenous leadership supports the shift to a lateral leadership structure because of the responsibilities among interconnected parties (Martin & Garrett, 2010) that this work encompasses.

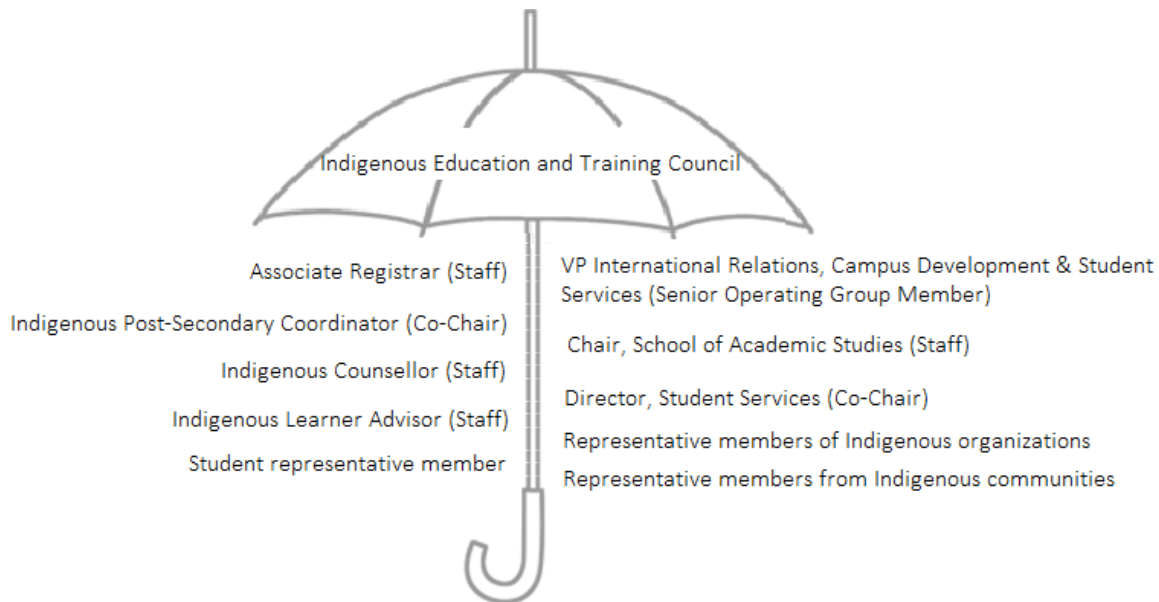
## Figure 2

### *Hierarchical Organizational Structure*



*Note.* This figure represents the hierarchical organizational structure at River College.

Indigenous leadership helps us recognize the power of decolonization, through a process of Indigenization, to help achieve reconciliation (Tavernaro-Haidarian, 2019). The goals of the work in this OIP align with the concepts of Indigenous leadership, but also embrace the importance of interconnectedness, community, and consensus building for decision-making (Julien et al., 2010).

**Figure 3***Lateral Leadership Structure*

*Note.* This figure represents the IETC Membership at River College. This figure also displays a direct link to the SOG at River College through the Vice President.

### **Leadership Position and Lens Statement**

Identifying a need for change does not always guarantee change. Deszca et al. (2020) state that one's power in an organization correlate to their character, reputation, position within the organization, and their ability to influence others. The more proficient a person is in these areas, the more influential they are within the organization. Framing a philosophical approach to educational reform requires the identification of fundamental beliefs that guide current leadership practices. As a leader, one of my fundamental objectives is to ensure access to supports regardless of race, ethnicity, culture, or socioeconomic status. Examples include creating Indigenous student groups, providing students with ceremonial and traditional medicines, facilitating cultural events, and arranging sessions for them with traditional Elders.

## **Leadership Lens**

I am an Anishinaabe woman, who grew up on a First Nation reservation. The values I have learned are those of the Anishinaabe Seven Grandfather Teachings which are ongoing and continuous in my life. I am an intergenerational survivor as a result of the Residential School legacy. As a child, I have attended an institution that was formally an Indian Day School. I am also a Millennial scoop survivor. The phrase Millennial scoop spans the early 1980s to today and is used to describe the alarming rate at which First Nations, Métis, and Inuit children continue to be brought into the child welfare system (Centennial College, n.d.).

I am an Indigenous educator, who is passionate about decolonizing parts of education by implanting inclusive and equitable learning opportunities to staff, for staff, and for students. A more inclusive and equitable learning environment for Indigenous students must be envisioned and created at River College by first, identifying the current educational environment as embedded in Eurocentric dominance and values, which are exclusionary to Indigenous students (Ryan & Rottman, 2007). The historic separation, segregation, and disconnect between the education system and Indigenous students and their communities must be addressed (Shields & Mohan, 2008) through recognizing the ways in which class, ethnicity, and race are treated within the educational system (Theoharis, 2007). Hence the need for Indigenization and Indigenous leadership to dismantle oppressive institutional policies and practices (Crosby et al., 2018) and to become receptive to Indigenous student needs (Shields & Mohan, 2008). This will also increase the ability of River College's transformational leaders to understand the complexities of reform and transformative change (Shields, 2010). The relationship between transformational leadership, transformative leadership, and Indigenous leadership will need to become mutually symbiotic and complementary to addressing the PoP (Tavernaro-Haidarian, 2019). There is also

an expectation for the leaders at River College to be humanistic and to be dedicated to the promotion of student achievement regardless of differences (Calabrese, 2002), thereby inspire others to increased levels of achievement and purpose. As educators, the status quo at River College can no longer be just an option to provide inclusive and equitable education while supporting diversity; rather, educators must venture into progress and liberation (Asghar, 2013), since it is the moral and right thing to do (Calabrese, 2002).

Connected to my Indigenous identity, working against oppressive forces has been at the forefront of my personal and educational journey. My awareness of issues of oppression and exclusion will allow for an emphasis on rectifying injustice or inequity by which Indigenous students at River College are marginalized (Berkovich & Eyal, 2018). Rectifying injustice must involve educational reform that places equity, diversity, and inclusivity (EDI) at the forefront and recognize efforts to establish anti-racist approaches works (Codjoe, 2001; Shields & Mohan, 2008). Yet this leadership style requires a different kind of approach.

While characteristics of Indigenous leadership alone will not result in full educational reform, the acknowledgment of educational disconnect and privilege, coupled with continual reflection that allows for the creation of the recommendations, will strengthen Indigenous identity, culture and belonging at River College (Butler et al., 2005; Tavernaro-Haidarian, 2019). Indigenous leadership amplifies my voice as well as the voices of other Indigenous people and is strongly linked to Indigenous reclamation and restoration of cultural continuity. Elements of culturally responsive pedagogy and leadership are also necessary to Indigenous student success as this approach “facilitates critical consciousness, engenders respect for diversity, and acknowledges the importance of relationship” (Chrona, 2021). The inclusion of my voice and other Indigenous voices (Munroe, Borden, Orr, Toney & Meader, 2013) within River College

will illuminate the impacts of intergenerational trauma and affirm the need for decolonized consciousness (Battiste, 2013), and satisfy the TRC's (2015) Calls to Action to educate post-secondary teachers on how to integrate IK and teaching methods into classrooms. My use of Indigenous leadership allows me to guide the staff at River College toward a postcolonial system and disrupt the status quo and its normalized discourse by allowing diverse objectives, perspectives, and voices into mainstream programming, supports, and services (Battiste, 2013).

In an effort to create more equitable experiences and counteract the current educational privilege systems and processes (Stewart, 2006), transformative leaders will encourage respectful dialogue. Moreover, building strong relationships will allow for mutual understanding of each other's differences, but also a wider perspective of society. As educators, it is our duty to provide an equitable and inclusive education for all learners while supporting diversity. Indigenous leadership is one approach that closely aligns with my leadership and pedagogical beliefs (Tavernaro-Haidarian, 2019). Further, an Indigenous leadership approach allows for the utilization of committee and affiliation initiatives and encourages the revision and reconstruction of current structures that continue to marginalize Indigenous students at River College (Shields, 2018).

As the Indigenous Learner Advisor (ILA), I recognize the educational practices that create barriers for Indigenous students, and I believe that a culture of inclusiveness and a more welcoming environment are needed at River College. However, educators and school leaders must also recognize and identify their own privilege and power to begin dismantling discriminatory policies and practices (Ewing, 2001). This is not always easy for members of dominant groups. Though I recognize I am looking at the problem from an Indigenous lens of the non-dominant minority, I must also encourage others in the institutional hierarchy to do the

same. This is necessary to understand how current policies, structures and practices at River College continue to marginalize Indigenous students. Inclusive education can be achieved by encouraging and insisting on the integration of IK into educational practices and by supporting reconciliation efforts.

### **Personal Position**

To add to the abundance of leadership information, definitions, and views (Stogdill, 1974) an individual has access to, personal experiences, and values and belief systems also play a vital role in how an individual defines what leadership is. My position, as the ILA, ranks alongside the Indigenous Counsellor in management within the Indigenous Services department hierarchy. I am responsible for advancing Indigenous advising and practices. I build meaningful relationships with the staff members and students and work with them to identify areas that need improvement by creating practical plans of action that build on individual, academic, and cultural strengths.

At River College, I hold proficient knowledge on IK that leads to network and situational power. I have additional responsibilities as a committee member within River College's IETC, a recruiter and an affiliate within the Indigenous Postsecondary Education Council (IPEC) and Southern First Nations Secretariat (SFNS) PSE Collaborative committees. In order to support an effective and sustainable culturally responsive change, assistance from committee members and affiliations will be needed. My role and responsibilities within these committees guide my leadership philosophy.

Having been employed at River College for only a few years, I have limited knowledge of the institution. However, through my personal journey, I possess a greater understanding of IK. Adhering to Deszca et al.'s (2020) definition of organizational power, I hold influence and an

ability to encourage organizational change as I am the first point of contact at River College for the staff members and students to connect with Indigenous teachings and cultural supports. Moreover, I have decision-making abilities that affect change within the Indigenous Services department. I make decisions regarding programming and allocation of resources. I also have the power to influence educators to know more about campus-wide initiatives. The mutual trust and cordial relationship between the staff members and me will encourage and support culturally responsive initiatives such as establishing a community that values, embraces, and infuses culturally responsive teaching and learning (Kars & Inandi, 2018). The power that I hold-allows me to access stakeholders and resources needed to propose and support change. Given the importance of Indigenous perspective in the work of this OIP and the fact that the OIP is situated in a Eurocentric-dominated educational environment further solidify the need to construct an understanding of the PoP and aide others in working toward a solution.

### **Leadership Problem of Practice**

I report to the Director of Student Services, and I am responsible for advancing meaningful practices in the specialization of the Indigenous Services department, and the department reports to the IETC and the SOG. This distribution of leadership requires an Indigenous leadership approach. In this section the leadership PoP observed from my perspective is discussed.

#### **The Problem**

Across all campuses at River College, approximately 270 students of the 14,225-student body (River College, 2021) have self-identified as having Indigenous ancestry or Indigenous descent. There are only two staff members at River College to meet the various diverse needs of the 270 Indigenous students. The staff members are Anishinaabeg, which limits Indigenous representation among other nations and diverse faculty. As educators, we have a moral and

ethical obligation to ensure that all students have the opportunity to succeed (Stefkovich & Begley, 2007). To do so, we need to first and foremost address the lack of support for Indigenous students in strengthening their Indigenous identity, culture, and belonging at River College. This necessitates changes in the way the educators and change leaders think about systemic racism, privilege, and oppression found in society and educational institutions (Kumashiro, 2000). The PoP identifies the need for increased supports that represent the Indigenous student body at River College.

Educators and change leaders must first recognize the power dynamics and privilege that are historically entrenched in all educational systems. Consequently, this PoP exists due to the systemic racism and colonial-informed practices that are rooted in society and have found their way into River College. Overall, colonialism reinforces discriminatory power systems and educational practices that continue to perpetuate the marginalization of Indigenous learners (Wotherspoon, 2014). This mistreatment and oppression are reflected in the disproportionate enrollment rates (Livingstone & Weinfeld, 2017; Sefa Dei, 2007) among Indigenous students and the student body and in the hesitancy of students to reveal their Indigenous identity during their academic tenure (Wotherspoon, 2014).

PSE institutions have been slow to address the unique needs of an increasingly diverse student body in culturally responsive ways (Kezar, 2018). At River College, the Indigenous specialization of advising is a component of the much larger, loosely connected Student Services “system.” Student advising at River College is delivered by a handful of support staff or specialists, dispersed geographically across campuses, in two cities and one town. Advising has become conceptualized as individual, academic, or target-specific support including helping to develop cultural, career, or learning skills. Though available to all students who seek supports,



targeted advising which includes cultural or Indigenous support, are forwarded to the Indigenous Counsellor and me. The work in this OIP aims to offer a more effective method of refocusing on inclusion and true equity to serve the needs of Indigenous students at River College (Codjoe, 2001). In serving Indigenous students more effectively, educators and change leaders need to be more responsive to the unique needs of the Indigenous student community. This will include changes to the referral process within the Student Services department.

### **Problem of Practice**

The PoP to be addressed is the lack of supports for Indigenous students in strengthening their Indigenous identity, culture and belonging at a large, public PSE institution in Southwestern Ontario, Canada. The work of the OIP is designed to examine what organizational strategies can be further developed and implemented within River College that are culturally responsive and inclusive to support the IETC's mandate and promote cross-cultural sensitivity, awareness, and content in existing and new programs and services for Indigenous students.

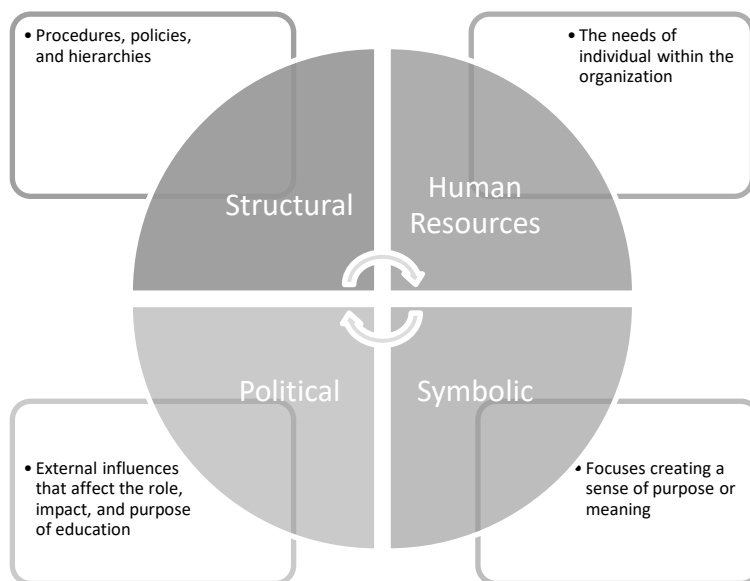
Shared reconciliation efforts at River College are important for Indigenous students because “the most important factor in the development and maintenance of a positive self-identity for Indigenous students in both home and school contexts is the attitude and behaviour of significant others” (Purdie et al., 2000, p. 24), as well as by their teachers. Positive self-identity for Indigenous students is attained when they see positive conceptions of themselves in their school environments. When Indigenous students are exposed to “positive conceptions of themselves both as Indigenous people and as students, attachment and commitment to school, and successful school performance will be more likely outcomes than when there are excessive contradictions or tensions between the various aspects of self” (Purdie et al, 2000, p. 4).

### Framing the Problem of Practice

This section presents a brief history of the PoP and provides further understanding of the current conditions within River College using Bolman and Deal's (2013) four-frame model (Figure 4), which includes an analysis of the structural, human resources, political, and symbolic factors. Relevant data have been integrated where possible to support the need for change at River College.

#### Figure 4

##### *Four-Frame Model*



*Note.* Adapted from Bolman and Deal's (2013) Four-Frame Model.

Creating an environment that is welcoming to Indigenous learners, an environment that strengthens Indigenous identity, culture and belonging is crucial to the PoP because Indigenous students at River College are direct survivors and intergenerational survivors from Residential Schools and Indian Day Schools. These government-mandated, church-run institutions were designed to remove Indigenous children from their communities to assimilate them into mainstream Canadian culture through abuse, racism, discrimination, and genocide by severing all

traditional connections (Barkan, 2003; Battiste, 2013; Hackett et al., 2016). Student attendance and attendance of a family member at these schools correlate with an increased risk of suicide, alcoholism, poverty, and poorer mental and physical health (Bombay, 2014; De La Mare, 2002; Hackett, Feeny & Tompa, 2016).

The Indian Act that facilitated the Residential School system (Battell Lowman & Barker, 2015), and assimilation policies, are major contributors of social problems and low educational achievement for Indigenous peoples (De La Mare, 2002). As a result, Canadian Indigenous students have lower levels of education than non-Indigenous Canadians (Calver, 2015). Further, Indigenous students withdraw from PSE at higher rates than non-Indigenous students because of challenges in identifying with mainstream education (Gilliland, 1995). Course material in curriculum is designed to meet the needs of mainstream learners but often denies the needs of many Indigenous students (Almeida, 1996). Moreover, educational disparities for Indigenous people have implications for not only the individual, but also the community (Pidgeon, 2016) and River College (Cote-Meek, 2014). This evidence impacts current Indigenous students at River College to a point that many of them refuse to disclose their Indigenous identity during PSE, which impacts their sense of self and cultural belonging, further highlighting the relevance and the need to address this PoP.

Indigenous students continue to struggle with a lack of sense of self and belonging at River College (McGregor, 2019). Focusing on culturally relevant initiatives is an important step to decolonization, furthering the Indigenous students' sense of identity and belonging needed to pursue advanced education. Further, advanced educational success strengthens awareness of Indigenous issues, and potentially reduces the social implications of poverty, suicide, alcoholism, and low educational achievement (De La Mare, 2002) for individuals and communities.

## **Structural Frame**

According to Bolman and Deal (2013), the structural frame considers the procedures, policies, and hierarchies that comprise the formal and standard roles within an organization. At River College, the Indigenous Counsellor and I work closely together. The Indigenous Services department is a department that the Student Services department at River College has recently prioritized. When requested, the Indigenous Services staff set up a time to meet with other departments leaders at River College, and through this initiative, professional learning communities through the college's Centre of Academic Excellence (CAE) can be established. I am then able to work closely with the staff members at River College.

River College employs a top-down, hierarchal leadership approach. The Indigenous Services staff report to the Director of Student Services, who approves the Indigenous Services staff requests and oversees the umbrella of Student Services at River College. Though River College resembles other PSE institutions, new hierarchal structures continue to grow. Furthermore, for example, River College seeks Indigenous input through the IETC in the decision-making related to development, implementation and design of appropriate and relevant Indigenous educational and training programs and services for Indigenous students (ToR, 2020).

## **Human Resources Frame**

Bolman and Deal (2013) state that the human resources frame focuses on the needs of the individual within the organization and highlights the relationship between people and organizations (Bolman & Deal, 2013). Meeting the individual needs contributes to the social interactions, culture, and relationship within River College (Bolman & Deal, 2013). Recognizing the rights of and responding to the needs of people to share their voices and perspectives on professional learning will be important. For the CAE staff, Indigenous collaboration will be valuable to build a culture of inclusiveness and a welcoming environment for Indigenous

students at River College. The human resources frame supports efforts to understand individuals, their values, and their needs to move River College to its desired state. This model illuminates how the institution serves the needs of some people but disregards the needs of others (Bolman & Deal, 2013). An assumption within this model is that the roles of workers require purpose and autonomy (Bolman & Deal, 2013). The ability to deliver a culturally relevant education relies on finding and retaining the right people to create a positive change at River College. A greater emphasis placed on the inclusion of Indigenous Knowledge Keepers in training and development at River College must also be delivered, to establish and maintain respectful relationships, and ultimately, a favourable learning climate for Indigenous students.

Focusing on the needs of individuals, the human resources frame contributes to the culture and social interactions (Bolman & Deal, 2013) within the organization. In seeking to build the organizational capacity, hiring, and retaining qualified candidates as the organization continues to grow is important. For recruitment processes, the IETC mandates that committee members actively participate in all stages of recruitment processes for all staff members involved in Indigenous courses, programs, and services (TOR, 2020).

### **Political Frame**

The political frame is foundational to building a culture of inclusiveness and a welcoming environment for Indigenous learners at River College. According to Bolman and Deal (2013), the political frame takes into consideration external influences that affect the role, impact, and purpose of education. Change leaders must try to understand these complex and multilayered influences to be able to make meaningful change (Deszca et al., 2020).

The political frame is important to the work in this OIP, both internally and externally. Looking through the political frame, competition for scarce resources and barriers, such as a lack of resources, funding and influence that divide groups with divergent interests, are identified.

The political frame challenges power dynamics and barriers within the institution. Notably, the change driver is political as this OIP would not exist if it were not for internal policies, such as River College's IETC. The IETC mandates its members to review and advise general policy revisions through periodic reviews and evaluations of Indigenous college programs and Indigenous partnerships within surrounding Indigenous communities (Table 1) (TOR, 2020). IETC membership will consist of four representative members of River College, a minimum of one Indigenous student representative, two representatives of Indigenous organizations, and two representatives from Indigenous communities. Elders as ex officio members of the Council will be invited as necessary by council consensus. IETC members will be consulted and involved in the development of partnerships that affect the Indigenous Services department and programming for Indigenous students at River College.

**Table 1**

*IETC Membership*

<b>Members</b>	<b>Ex Officio Members</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 River College Representative</li> <li>• 1 Indigenous Student Representative</li> <li>• 2 Indigenous Organization Representatives</li> <li>• 2 Indigenous Community Representatives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elders</li> </ul>

*Note.* This table describes the IETC Membership criteria.

**Symbolic Frame**

According to Bolman and Deal (2013), the symbolic frame focuses on creating a sense of purpose or meaning in one's work by aligning individual goals with organizational goals. The symbolic beliefs, faith, and meanings created by experiences are examined and then linked to individuals in a purposeful way (Bolman & Deal, 2013). Understanding the PoP through the symbolic frame is important in tying the proposed change to the culture of River College. This

connection will guarantee the integration of Indigenous culture into the school environment and support the reconciliation efforts at River College.

Moreover, Bolman and Deal (2013) describe the symbolic frame as a theatre production in which people look at the organization from the outside. It is important to understand the role IK and culture integration play in all of these frames since IK addresses the long term societal and economic costs that can have a continuing effect at River College. Though many personal factors that Indigenous students frequently deal with, such as the lack of peer and parental support, lower educational levels, and the effects of intergenerational trauma (Bougie & Senecal, 2010), are outside River College's control, it is important for change leaders to take these factors into consideration when implementing change initiatives for Indigenous students.

### **Historical Overview of the Problem of Practice**

The history of Indigenous peoples is filled with oppressive and discriminatory practices that have served to create great difficulties for them. The trauma from these difficulties impacts Indigenous students at River College, their families, and their communities. Looking at the historical context, the first European settlers believed that Indigenous peoples were inferior and not considered "people" at all (Indigenous Foundations, 2020). Ultimately, the Federal government of Canada set up the residential school system for over a century and half (Indigenous Foundations, 2020), with the goal of indoctrinating Indigenous children into Christian and Euro-Canadian ways of living. This was also the government's way to assimilate Indigenous children into mainstream white Canada and away from their language, culture, and traditions. The Indian Act was introduced in 1876, but the amendments in 1920 made it compulsory for Status Indian children to attend a Residential School or Day School (Parrott,

2006). This Canadian federal law controlled every aspect of Indigenous life. For instance, the Indian Act made it legal to force Indigenous children to attend residential schools.

The TRC (2012) estimates that approximately 150,000 Indigenous children attended residential schools. Attendees of the residential school system endured multiple forms of abuse; abuse so great that it correlates to intergenerational trauma (Bougie & Senecal, 2010). The trauma from attending these schools has been found to affect survivors and subsequent generations (O'Neill, Fraser, Kitchenham & McDonald, 2016), some of whom are also students at River College. Missions and colonial approaches to settler colonial-based education have failed Indigenous peoples and their communities. Looking at the problem, educational institutions in Canada need educational reform for a more equitable education (Battiste, 2002).

This historical overview impacts the Indigenous students at River College because of the lack of cultural connection and supports that relate to Indigenous students, thus they do not see their reality reflected and the ramifications are not recognized within River College.

### **External Factors Shaping the Problem of Practice**

The purpose of this section is to guide the reader to understand the context in which the PoP exists by analyzing the external factors that shape it (Deszca et al., 2020). For this analysis, I will use the PESTE analysis. PESTE stands for the political, economic, social, technological, and ecological/environmental factors (Deszca et al., 2020). In particular, the political and social-economic factors are most relevant to the PoP.

#### ***Political***

Political factors, otherwise known as complex, multi-layered, and external influences, can directly affect the role, impact, and purpose of education (Deszca et al., 2020). As previously outlined, increased access to PSE means more EDI in individual and academic experiences of today's students (Seifert & Burrow, 2013). To meet the unique and diverse needs of an



increasingly diverse Indigenous student body, PSE institutions must design, develop, and implement adaptable (Michalski et al., 2017) and equitable Indigenous supports. Focusing on this aspect strengthens awareness and reduces socio-economic implications (De La Mare, 2002). In this context, the political factors are multifaceted in that the political environment is directly tied to not only the cultural environment and EDI, but also the trauma stemming from historical context and education in general, which affects many of the Indigenous students at River College. Political factors include the following: provincial and federal legislative mandates, institutional-based mandates and protocols, and post-secondary education collaborative partnership agreements that call upon River College to mandate the inclusion of Indigenous learning.

### ***Socio-Economic***

Socio-economic factors are defined as cultural and demographic trends, social norms, and pressures of society (CFI Education Inc., 2015). By raising awareness of the systemic oppression and marginalization of Indigenous students at River College, the Indigenous committee will help River College's staff and administrators understand and support the ethical reasons for change (Deszca et al., 2020). Indigenization at River College benefits Indigenous and non-Indigenous students and staff in a manner that promotes, utilizes, and enhances awareness of IK and creates a shared understanding that paves the way toward reconciliation. Indigenization also counters the impacts of colonization by overturning beliefs and practices that discounts Indigenous history and knowledge. Looking through the socio-economic frame, socio-economic trends and rates become noticeable. For instance, Indigenous people have a higher unemployment rate than non-Indigenous people (Statistics Canada, 2018). Compared to the non-Indigenous unemployment rate of 5.5% in 2019 and 11.7% in 2020, Indigenous people have had an unemployment rate of

10% in 2019 and 16.6% in 2020 (Benning, 2020). Indigenous language loss is also prevalent in Indigenous populations, as there are around 70 Indigenous languages and, of those identified, over 25 of them have less than 500 fluent speakers (Statistics Canada, 2017). This is important to my PoP because the survival of Indigenous languages, and therefore culture, depends on the prosperity and political influence of the communities and community members who speak it and carry the knowledge. Indigenous languages are more than a means of communication; it is a sense of identity, culture, and how we connect with our ancestors. Training and education continue to be a concern among Indigenous populations and add to the importance of the five TRC (2015) recommendations that focus on revitalization, restoration and preservation of Indigenous culture and language. Recognizing that River College can impact the lives of Indigenous students in multiple ways is important moving forward.

Furthermore, the lasting negative effects of colonization are also apparent in the wellbeing and health conditions of the Indigenous people (Wilk et al., 2017). Since it has been well established that Indigenous people experience a disproportionate burden of poor health compared to non-Indigenous people, the socioeconomic factors that frame this PoP are influenced through the righting of Canada's wrongs. There is recognition of the need to make sure that River College is aware of the horrific chapter in Canada's history and to ensure that educators are working toward reconciliation. In an effort to create more equitable experiences for Indigenous students, the work in this OIP focuses on bridging the gap in education through the integration of IK into the educational practices at River College.

### **Guiding Questions from the PoP**

There are many questions that emerge from the process of implementing and developing a culturally relevant change-based initiative at River College. Framing the right questions

requires one to look outside the PoP to focus on the relationship between the individuals, the organizational structures, and the problem itself (Deszca et al., 2020). Guiding questions that emerge from this PoP are situated around the following factors: educator readiness with IK, organizational learning, school culture, and collaboration.

Learning about culture is different from learning through culture (Dimmock & Walker, 2005). Learning through culture requires the recognition of different ways in which cultures constitute the process of change (Dimmock & Walker, 2005). A change-based initiative that includes space for the integration and development of long-term development of IK and Indigenous culture knowledge systems at River College is desirable. Since culture is reflective in all aspects of life, acknowledgement of its significance in education is imperative. (Dimmock & Walker, 2005).

Questions that will help to address this issue include, but are not limited to, the following: Will an increase of IK at River College strengthen the sense of Indigenous self, belonging and community connections for Indigenous students, thereby increasing the engagement of Indigenous students? How can the staff guide an Indigenous student, or groups of Indigenous students, towards a deeper understanding of cultural knowledge and cultural practices? What supports are required of the staff at River College to initiate and implement change?

Acknowledgement of the unique learning and engagement styles of Indigenous students is imperative to launch change-based initiatives. Methods to integrate cultural styles within a change-based initiative lies within the integration of styles through collaboration in learning and teaching. The challenge lies in deciding how to acknowledge different learning styles and engagement conditions and how to validate these styles and conditions in the collaboration process. Working to address these issues demand educators at River College to understand the

complexity of situations that Indigenous populations face without immediately jumping to conclusions or deficit thinking. Davis and Museus (2019) identify deficit thinking as when populations who have been historically oppressed are held responsible for the conflicts and challenges that they must overcome, further perpetuating the blaming culture, which is an impediment to progress. The following section will explore components of each guiding question to better understand why these questions need to be addressed to best serve Indigenous students at River College.

### **Learning Environment**

Will an increase of IK at River College strengthen sense of Indigenous self, belonging and community connections for Indigenous students, thereby increasing the engagement of Indigenous students? An opportunity to learn in an environment where Indigenous students feel comfortable, safe, and accepted is needed at River College. When Indigenous students at River College feel welcome, they have an increase in motivation to learn (Preston & Claypool, 2013). The current educational system at River College is based on Eurocentric and colonial models (Madden et al., 2013). Battiste (2013) has acknowledged that colonial approaches to education do not align with the traditional value and belief systems of Indigenous cultures, hence the importance of understanding the educational and learning environment. When Indigenous students feel culturally accepted and safe, they can better focus on their education (Gunn et al., 2011). It is up to the educators at River College to provide a welcoming education and learning environment, so all students feel a sense of acceptance and belonging. Leadership plays a critical role in the development of a welcoming school culture as school leaders determine the school vision. Leaders who demonstrate the behaviours necessary to promote a welcoming environment (Preston et al., 2017) can build a shared vision of the school. Interactions with staff, students and

communities will help build stronger connections and relationships with educational stakeholders as relationships are vital to creating a safe and a welcoming environment. Studies indicate that there is a direct relation to academic achievement when there are positive relationships between the staff members and the students (MacIver, 2012; Milne, 2017; Preston, 2016).

### **Guidance**

How can the staff guide an Indigenous student, or groups of Indigenous students, towards a deeper understanding of cultural knowledge and cultural practices? Initiatives that encourage relationship building and community connections allow educators to co-create a welcoming environment toward achieving change. In support of this notion, Siemans et al. (2018) state that change must be developed and implemented from the bottom up. They propose that those closest to the matter are best able to respond in ways that support learners (Siemans et al., 2018). For instance, inviting external stakeholders familiar with Indigeneity to work within the environment will help foster a favourable learning climate for Indigenous students and also strengthen community connections. Given my recent academic advising experience, I have come to realize the importance and value of diversity and collaboration among diverse stakeholders in addressing the issues of lack of supports for Indigenous students at River College (Siemans et al., 2018). However, from my perspective, capacity for Indigenous innovation at River College has yet to be achieved.

### **Leadership Supports**

Many leadership models are based upon Western theorists. However, connecting these models to traditional Indigenous values and culture is important to culturally relevant change-based initiatives. So, what supports are required of the staff at River College to initiate and implement change? To foster a supporting environment, educators need to adopt a leadership

approach that is both instructive and inspiring. They must recognize and acknowledge the unique social and cultural factors prominent to the Indigenous student population at River College. School leaders who can empower and inspire educators are able to transcend their own self-interests to attain higher level of organizational function (Bass, 1985; Bass & Bass, 2008; Bass & Riggio, 2010). Among other qualities, delegation of responsibilities among stakeholders encourages shared leadership and a learning community. Emphasis on Indigenous pedagogies and Indigenous epistemologies acceptance are significant to the understanding of cultural knowledge and cultural practice. While intertwining these methods effectively into the status quo could be challenging, existing committee policies at River College can accommodate these considerations (Barlett et al., 2002).

### **Leadership-Focused Vision for Change**

River College has already gone through several changes over the past couple of years as it continues to grow and respond to the needs of an increasingly diverse student population. The vision of the Indigenous Services department articulates a clear direction that was established by River College's IETC. The department's vision is one that includes the overall direction of Indigenous peoples in Canada that focuses on Indigenous education, and the restoration of cultural practices (River College, 2020). One vision is focused on excellence through inclusive education for diverse populations. The other vision focuses on addressing the need for individual, academic and cultural support. Both visions are important to the Indigenous student population at River College in strengthening their Indigenous identity, culture and belonging on campus.

The future state of River College is one that is focused on promoting a shared vision of the future, and healing of Indigenous culture through the preservation of IK and languages. It is through this reconciling process that River College will see mutual reciprocity happen

instinctively, thereby building a culture of respect and trust. The desired state for River College is a culture of inclusiveness and a welcoming environment of reconciliation, as well as the top academic choice for Indigenous students.

Though communication between the SOG and the Indigenous Services staff is limited to quarterly IETC meetings at times, this leader-focused vision for change is driven by hope for improved relations and hope for reconciliation through an efficient and collective educational approach that has the potential to interrupt the status quo to establish more equitable conditions for Indigenous students at River College (Battiste, 2002). The leadership-focused vision for change envisioned is a future state at River College where services offered by the Indigenous Services department are interconnected with services offered by the Student Services department. Collaboration among stakeholders requires a more innovative capacity to meet diverse and changing needs and expectations of Indigenous students at River College. The proposed vision seeks the ongoing guidance of Indigenous students at River College, thus starting the evolutionary work toward a more integrated, Indigenous student-centered approach in identifying priorities for change and drivers of change.

### **Change Drivers**

Improving the academic achievement of Indigenous students at River College has been a priority focus of the IETC for quite some time (IETC, 2020). Despite the continued development of shared commitment and responsibility to prioritize the needs and interests to support Indigenous education by the SFNS's (2020) PSE Collaborative Partnership Agreement, a significant gap still exists. Milne (2017) found that even when there is a strong policy in place, policies and procedures do not always reflect reality, in that often the staff members lack the initiative to implement change. Regardless of policy, all school-based initiatives have shown to positively impact Indigenous education and academic achievement for Indigenous students at

River College (Milne, 2017). According to researcher By (2005), change drivers come in a variety of methods and can be influenced by either internal or external factors. The change drivers identified will be discussed below.

### ***External***

A driving force to this change is the enactment of the legislation that initiated many of the changes for Indigenous education in PSE. In this case, legislation is the result of the ongoing advocacy work by Indigenous leaders and Federal action.

**Federal Legislation.** Since the release of the TRC's (2015) Calls to Action, the harmful effects of colonization have been acknowledged (Milne, 2015) and educators have been given a set of standards and principles with which to explore Indigenization. Further, the TRC's (2015) Calls to Action invite educators to learn the history of Indigenous people and encourage them to engage in dialogue with Indigenous communities to foster a meaningful collaboration. Moreover, educators are encouraged to implement Indigenous voice into their teachings as Indigenous history in academic literature (Furo, 2018) has been and is written from a non-Indigenous perspective (Battiste, 2013).

Another legislative driver for change is the need for reconciliation, restoration, and reclamation of Indigenous culture. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) (2007) provides a framework for reconciliation across all sectors at all levels, of Canadian society. UNDRIP (2007) aims at recognizing the fundamental rights of all Indigenous peoples, their land, their customs, and their culture (Cowan, 2013). It also acknowledges the damage done by colonialism, and ensures that free, prior, and informed consent is a requirement for any action that infringes on the inherent rights of Indigenous peoples (Cheskey, 2021). Even though Canada officially endorsed UNDRIP (2007) in 2016 (Duncanson et al., 2021), the Senate passed Bill C-15, an Act respecting UNDRIP (2007) into law, only on



June 16, 2021 (Eggerman et al., 2021). This legislation, though delayed, is imperative to River College's transformation because it recognizes the importance of fostering a welcoming environment for Indigenous students at River College. This legislation creates a lasting, action-oriented framework that establishes accountability and greater clarity regarding reconciliation for Indigenous people, industries, communities, and for all Canadians (Government of Canada, 2021).

**Protocols.** Indigenizing River College successfully will take place when Indigenous people join alliances to support academic achievement for Indigenous students. This will occur when the staff members at River College take part in the protocols that honour and follow Indigenous models of governance and relate to Indigenous matters to enhance a culture of inclusiveness and a welcoming environment (Pidgeon, 2016). Such practices add value to classroom experiences for all students. The Colleges and Institutes Canada's (CIC) (2013) Indigenous Education Protocol for Colleges and Institutes was enacted by its members and partners in Indigenous communities to affirm the importance of Indigenous education. The change driver is founded on seven principles that aim to guide PSE institutions that are willing to implement the recommendations (Table 2) (Colleges & Institutes Canada, 2013). Further, this protocol strives for the application of Indigenous education into existing programming and initiatives (Treleaven, 2018). The shared responsibility, therefore, is dependent on building partnerships through stakeholder and community relations. Of 67 PSE institutions, River College was the thirteenth institution to sign this protocol.

**Table 2***The Seven Principles*

<b>Principle 1</b>	Commit to making Indigenous education a priority.
<b>Principle 2</b>	Ensure that governance structures recognize and respect Indigenous peoples.
<b>Principle 3</b>	Implement intellectual and cultural traditions of Indigenous peoples through curriculum and learning approaches relevant to learners and communities.
<b>Principle 4</b>	Support students and employees to increase understanding and reciprocity among Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.
<b>Principle 5</b>	Commit to increasing the number of Indigenous employees with ongoing appointments throughout the institution, including Indigenous senior administrators.
<b>Principle 6</b>	Establish Indigenous-centred holistic services and learning environments for learner success.
<b>Principle 7</b>	Build relationships and be accountable to Indigenous communities in support of self-determination through education, training, and applied research.

*Note.* This table describes the Seven Principles of the Indigenous Education Protocol for

Colleges and Institutes Protocol.

**Agreements.** The SFNS's (2020) PSE Collaborative Partnership Agreement provides a framework and conditions under which the collective decides to work together toward supporting Indigenous students at River College and Indigenous students from surrounding Indigenous communities (SFNS, 2020). The Agreement ensures a shared responsibility and commitment to prioritize the interests and needs of current, former, and aspiring Indigenous students in PSE (SFNS, 2020). Further, the parties to this agreement share a goal of ensuring a safe, positive, and successful learning experience for Indigenous students enrolled in PSE (SFNS, 2020). River College signed this agreement along with ten other PSE institutions in 2020.

### *Internal*

Since internal change drivers recognize factors that will affect change within River College, the organizational culture and employee morale will be discussed below.

**Organizational Culture.** Identified as the first internal change driver, organizational culture at River College needs to welcome change. It is evident that River College does not lack passion for decolonizing education or for networking. However, the Indigenous Services staff members have taken on most, if not all, of the additional responsibility toward creating a culture of inclusiveness and a welcoming environment for Indigenous students at River College.

While the word ‘reconciliation’ continues to take on different meanings for different people (Sterritt, 2020), the lack of accompanying action at River College needs to be addressed. A shared common goal to align the staff and departments is imperative to implement change. Reconciliation is more than acknowledging the impact of the intergenerational trauma on Indigenous students at River College. Reconciliation requires action to move forward towards achieving a welcoming environment for the Indigenous students at River College. Though this change process will take time, it requires transformational leadership, transformative leadership, and Indigenous leadership because of the shared responsibility among interconnected parties. Further, communication is the key to make this change happen. Effective communication inspires a shared vision and will influence resisters to positively engage in the change-based initiative (Deszca et al., 2020).

**Employee Morale.** Identified as the second internal change driver, employee morale is defined as “the degree to which an employee feels good about [their] work and work environment” (McKnight et al., 2001, p. 4). It also relates to employee performance and productivity (Noor & Ampornstira, 2019). I have observed educators at River College not

welcome increased workloads because they are feeling that they are already working beyond their capacity (Abenavoli et al., 2013). Thus, boosting morale may pose a challenge to change leaders. For this reason, a transformational leadership approach will be used to move the change process forward. Noor and Ampornstira (2019) state that academic leaders can boost employee morale through respect, development of skills and work conditions, and consideration for employee life environment to improve and handle better morale. It will be important to build momentum through engagement and empowerment, as well as through the celebration of small wins and milestone achievements along the way (Deszca et al., 2020).

### **Organizational Change Readiness**

Organizational change is a complicated process that requires a substantial amount of time and effort to understand its many facets. This effort is critical to developing a comprehensive strategy to effect change (Deszca et al., 2020). To ensure that River College is in a position of readiness where change can be initiated, preparation and planning are needed. Identifying a need for organizational change is the first step. However, identifying a need does not guarantee readiness. When the change team members and change agents (Table 3) identify gaps and dissatisfaction with current measures, action to enhance readiness for change can be taken. Once the need for change is aligned with supportive structures and systems at River College, a culture of change readiness can be created (Deszca et al., 2020).

**Table 3**

*Agents of Change*

Change Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IETC</li> <li>• Director of Student Services</li> <li>• Senior department leaders</li> <li>• ILA</li> <li>• Indigenous counsellor</li> <li>• Indigenous committee</li> </ul>
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Change Agents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff</li> <li>• CAE</li> <li>• SOG</li> <li>• Senior department leaders</li> <li>• Students</li> </ul>
Indigenous committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elders</li> <li>• Indigenous community members</li> <li>• IETC members</li> <li>• Indigenous students</li> </ul>

*Note.* The table describes the agents of change.

Armenakis et al. (1993) state that readiness can be a support or resistor to change and determines just how ready the team members are for change before the change takes place. Readiness is reflected in the change teams' intentions, attitudes, and beliefs regarding the change and the organization's ability to successfully implement those changes. The primary strategy for creating organizational readiness at River College is communicating an effective change message that identifies gaps between current and future states (Armenakis et al., 1993). The message must also recognize organizational and individual ability to overcome discrepancies (Armenakis et al., 1993).

Deszca et al. (2020) points out, relies on former experiences, adaptability, transparency, commitment, and confidence in leadership and the change team. Further, readiness is also influenced by organizational resources, information, structure, vision alignment, and reward and measurement (Deszca et al., 2020), adding to the complexity that must be understood to initiate and implement change effectively at River College.

To fully understand where River College sits regarding change readiness, an organizational assessment tool is needed. Utilization of tools such as Deszca et al.'s (2020) readiness-for-change questionnaire (see Appendix A) will provide leadership and the change team an initial assessment of change readiness. The readiness-for-change questionnaire (Deszca

et al., 2020) provides a tangible, readiness score ranging from -25 to +50, with low score indicating that River College is not ready for change, and a high score indicating River College is ready for change. A score below 10 indicates that River College is not ready for change and change possibly will be difficult to implement (Deszca et al., 2020).

The readiness-for-change questionnaire (Deszca et al., 2020) is divided into the following dimensions: previous change experiences, executive support, credible leadership and change champions, openness to change, rewards for change, and measures for change and accountability. Each dimension has a yes or no questions, and value that is assigned depending on the response. At the end of the questionnaire, the points are tallied, and a score is given.

To gain insight into River College's readiness for change, Deszca et al.'s (2020) readiness-for-change questionnaire was used as an informal assessment from my perspective on staff and organizational systems and structures. Even though the response to the questionnaire is not conclusive, it is informative. Following the completion of the readiness-for-change questionnaire (Deszca et al., 2020), River College falls in the higher level of change readiness with a score of 24, indicating change readiness. River College's assessment reveals a high score in all dimensions except the rewards for change dimension. Although there is no reward system for change set up at River College, high levels of change readiness areas earn momentum in team members' strengths. This provides a positive and appreciative approach that motivates team members to support and engage in change.

As the ILA, I am transparent and open about the importance placed on providing a culture of inclusiveness and a welcoming environment for Indigenous students at River College. I frequently reiterate to the staff members at River College that it is our moral responsibility and ethical duty as educators to support Indigenous education as defined by the college's

institutional-based mandates, protocols, and PSE collaborative partnership agreement. Deszca et al. (2020) emphasize the importance of increasing awareness as a method to support readiness for change. I will use my influence as the ILA to inform the staff at River College of the challenges and share anecdotal observations from within River College to provide a more comprehensive picture. Creating an elevated level of awareness of River College' present state will help recruit individuals who are passionate about allyship and will build support for the proposed change.

The organization's readiness for change assessment of River College shows that the staff members are willing and ready to work toward addressing the PoP. A vision for change as well as an identified gap has been demonstrated. The vision, mission, and values of the River College demonstrate a commitment to addressing this problem. The change team has also clearly articulated that a culture of inclusiveness and a welcoming environment for Indigenous students is a focus for the school moving forward. The organization's readiness for change assessment currently has all stakeholders supporting in principle a combined vision for change. All the readiness for change dimensions identified by Armenakis et al. (1993) and Deszca et al. (2020) point to a high level of organizational readiness. Then why does the gap at River College still exist? The problem does not seem to be in the willingness to change, but more so in understanding how to implement the change. Current initiatives and strategies undertaken to this point have not been effective. The aim of the work in this OIP is to provide guidance that can be used to achieve the desired state. The change team can eradicate the present gap with organizational readiness, a well-developed implementation plan, and Indigenous community engagement.

## **Chapter Summary**

Chapter 1 presents the purpose of the work in this OIP and the conditions necessary for greater support for Indigenous students in efforts to strengthen their Indigenous identity, and a sense of belonging at River College through increased cultural responsiveness. Chapter 1 describes the organizational contexts of the historical happenings and the organizational context of River College from a variety of perspectives. An analysis of the organization is completed, including a change readiness assessment that will aid in identifying possible solutions. Chapter 2 will focus on the development and planning of the change process, including the leadership approaches, the change management process, and further organizational analysis.



## **Chapter 2: Planning and Development**

Chapter 1 has articulated the problem, provided a historical overview of the organizational context, and proposed a vision for change. Chapter 2 begins with an analysis of the leadership approaches to change. Deszca et al.'s (2020) change path model (CPM) is the chosen framework for leading change. The chosen framework and leadership approaches outline the actions and stages through which change will be achieved at River College. Nadler and Tushman's (1980) congruence model provide a comprehensive organizational analysis tool which will inform the development of the proposed solutions. Possible solutions to address the Problem of Practice (PoP) will be explored with a rationale for a proposed choice being offered as well.

### **Leadership Approaches to Change**

Transformational, transformative, and Indigenous leadership approaches are conceptualized for this Organization Improvement Plan (OIP) and will be used simultaneously and in connection to the change leader's positionality (Table 4). These approaches complement one another as they identify the importance of leadership behaviours to build organizational commitment, follower commitment and highlight the creation of broad organizational improvement objectives (Demir, 2008). Transformative and transformational leadership approaches are best integrated when positioned with ethics of Indigenous leadership. Indigenous leadership involves the complexities and nuances of Indigeneity in different contexts, places, and methods (Wildcat et al., 2014). Indigenous leadership approaches are constantly changing and adapting in response to new conditions (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2005). The holistic outlook (Archibald & Hare, 2017; Child & Benwell, 2015) of Indigenous leadership focuses on relations, respect, reciprocity (Wildcat et al., 2014), reconnection, empowerment (Stewart & Warn, 2017),

and the foundational belief that knowledge is relational (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2005; Stewart & Warn, 2017; Wilson, 2008). The application of transformational, transformative, and Indigenous leadership approaches will be discussed moving forward.

**Table 4**

*Leadership Approaches to Change*

Transformational Leadership	Transformative Leadership	Indigenous Leadership
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inspires others</li> <li>• Develops a shared vision</li> <li>• Adopts organizational goals</li> <li>• Encourages problem-solvers</li> <li>• Maintains professional and collaborative culture</li> <li>• Builds relationships</li> <li>• Engages in positive interaction</li> <li>• Creates opportunities for meaningful and ongoing dialogue</li> <li>• Redesigns the organization</li> <li>• Assigns roles and responsibilities</li> <li>• Sets direction</li> <li>• Empowers change</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitates change in individual and social systems</li> <li>• Identifies organizational gaps</li> <li>• Prioritizes principles of equity, inclusion, excellence, and justice</li> <li>• Is inclusive and engaging</li> <li>• Emphasizes community involvement, inclusivity, and commitment</li> <li>• Encourages communal involvement</li> <li>• Is open to new thoughts</li> <li>• Accepts responsibility</li> <li>• Trusts others</li> <li>• Listens actively</li> <li>• Inspires participation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses constructed category or lens</li> <li>• Maintains close ties with the community</li> <li>• Emphasises decolonization, Indigenization, and reconciliation</li> <li>• Aims to center Indigenous worldviews and knowledge</li> <li>• Promotes Indigenous reclamation, restoration, and continuation</li> <li>• Aims to improve Indigenous prospects</li> <li>• Is complex, multifaceted, and reflective of cross-cutting concerns and perspectives</li> <li>• Is rooted in the belief that Indigenous knowledge is valid and relational</li> <li>• Is diverse and complex</li> <li>• Maintains adaptive integrity</li> <li>• Promotes reciprocal, equal, and dialogic relationships</li> <li>• Engages in collaborative decision-making</li> </ul>

*Note.* This table describes Bass (1985), Burns (2004), Shields (2010), Barnhardt & Kawagley, (2005) and Orvik & Barnhardt's (1974) elements of leadership approaches to change.

## **Transformational Leadership**

Researchers have suggested that transformational leadership tends to be the most appropriate leadership for leading change in today's organizations and complex work groups (Bass, 1985; Burns, 2004; Riggio, 2009). Bass and Riggio (2006) point out that transformational leadership involves inspiring the commitment of others to develop a shared vision and to adopt the goals of the organization. Followers are challenged to be innovative problem-solvers by developing leadership capacities through mentoring and through the provision of both challenge and support (Bass & Riggio, 2006). According to Stewart (2006), Burns (2004) contends that "leadership is a moral undertaking and a response to human wants as they are expressed in human values" (p. 10). Grounded in constructivism, transformational leadership helped leaders maintain a professional and collaborative culture and increase leadership development and effective problem solving (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005; Leithwood & Sun, 2012).

Leadership that supports and promotes Indigenous identity, culture and belonging in education requires a shift towards a transformational approach. River College's current servant leadership approach places a greater emphasis upon the needs of individuals (Stone et al., 2004). In a system faced with staffing fluctuations and high levels of turnover, current leadership methods will possibly limit or stall potential progress and the system-wide improvement. Transformational leadership focuses on the organization, while leadership behaviours build trust and organizational commitment to the change process (Stone et al., 2004).

Transformational leadership methods are critical elements for promoting organizational change and improvement and allow for the growth of culturally responsive initiatives at River College. Much like the servant leadership, the work of the counsellors, including the Indigenous Counsellor and I, are guided by the learning needs of others. As the Indigenous Learner Advisor

(ILA), I influence others directly by building relationships, engaging in positive interactions, and creating opportunities for meaningful and ongoing dialogue with the staff members and Indigenous students at River College. This leadership approach also allows me to exemplify the exploration of new ideas and Indigenous initiatives to the staff at River College whilst reframing the status quo (Popper, Mayseless & Castelnovo, 2000).

Transformational leadership refers to leaders who inspire others to identify themselves with organizational goals and interests to perform beyond expectations (Vonoga, 2019). Common transformational leadership actions include creating a vision, embracing individuality, promoting authenticity in mission, developing a focus on making a better future, maintaining integrity, adopting a growth mindset, and promoting creativity (Bass, 1985; Burns, 2004).

Using a transformational leadership approach will be helpful in creating a framework to facilitate interactions between the change team and change agents at River College. Interactions, such as communication, will occur as change leaders generate awareness, broaden employee interests, and promote acceptance of the mission of the group (Bass, 1990). In addition to the ability to empower others (Spillane et al., 2001), leaders using transformational approaches are able to redesign the organization by assigning roles and responsibilities, setting direction, and empowering change (Spillane et al., 2001). Change leaders at River College can adopt these approaches to create greater vision and focus on community, school, and group. These tasks are the primary responsibilities of managers and directors, and they constitute the work they create and the vision they promote at River College. It is important that the staff members at River College support, maintain, and respect ethical responsibilities and cultural diversity. Using a transformational leadership approach will play a vital role in creating changes that are necessary for effective improvement in educational settings. The influence of transformational leadership

can reduce reluctance and cynicism to change (Hebert, 2011). Research suggests that transformational leadership positively influences organizational and follower performance (Diaz-Saenz, 2011).

As the ILA, I play an integral role in making sure that these fundamental transformational elements are implemented. However, transformational approaches are best maintained and delivered by those in more evaluative, authoritative, and supervisory roles. If the transformational vision is viewed as an agenda of River College, then engaging the community to implement change will be difficult to achieve. Transformational approaches to create meaningful and sustainable change at River College will require collaboration with the Indigenous community.

### **Transformative Leadership**

Viewed as a means to improve the common good and a means of transporting participatory acts of social responsibility (Komives & Dugan, 2010), transformative leadership facilitates change in individual and social systems (Shields, 2010). As an ethically based leadership model rooted in an activist agenda (Caldwell et al., 2012; Shields, 2010), transformative leadership is suited to address this PoP, as it identifies the context in which leadership occurs (Grin et al., 2018). The use of a transformative leadership approach will identify any gaps between current practices and the envisioned future state of Indigenization at River College through the prioritization of principles of equity, inclusion, excellence, and justice (Caldwell et al., 2012; Shields, 2018). This approach is well suited to initiate change at River College given the emphasis on inclusion and engagement of all stakeholders in River College's vision and mission statements (River College, 2020). Transformative leadership is also in alignment with the Indigenous Education and Training Council's (IETC) Terms of Reference

(ToR) (2020), which emphasizes community involvement, inclusivity, and commitment in collaboration with the Indigenous community and Indigenous students. Members of the IETC are modelling this leadership at River College.

Transformative leadership approaches encourage communal involvement in the change process (Armenakis & Harris, 2009, Caldwell et al., 2012) to allow for respectful and meaningful dialogue to occur (Armenakis & Harris, 2009; Shields, 2018). Through internal conversations to gain an understanding of resistance to change, this approach will allow for communal involvement and the choice of change initiatives and establish what Armenakis and Harris (2009) refer to as “valence.” According to Armenakis and Harris (2009), valence “reflects the belief that the change is beneficial to the change recipient; there is something of benefit in it for them” (p. 129), resulting in organization and follower buy-in to create sustainable change. In keeping with transformative leadership, I will coordinate and engage the staff members and students with common goals. As the ILA, I will align with transformative leadership by being open to new thoughts, accepting responsibility, trusting other members of the change team, listening actively, and inspiring staff participation in professional learning sessions.

### **Indigenous Leadership**

An Indigenous leader is someone who recognizes the adoption of decolonization to result in more meaningful and sustainable mode for educational improvement and change (Tavernaro-Haidarian, 2019). Indigenous leaders have close ties with the community or anyone who recognizes the adoption of decolonization. Indigenous leadership will help River College recognize the importance of decolonization and Indigenization to achieve reconciliation. Colonization is the process of forceful integration of one culture onto another by means of suppression and exploitation, whereas decolonization aims to center on Indigenous worldviews

and knowledge systems (Butler et al., 2005). Indigenous leaders, such as the Indigenous Counsellor and I at River College, provide educational opportunities for others to acknowledge historical wrongdoings and promote Indigenous reclamation, restoration, and continuation in ways that improve Indigenous prospects (Stewart & Warn, 2017).

The literature relating to Indigeneity in leadership is complex, multifaceted, and reflective of cross-cutting concerns and perspectives (Stewart & Warn, 2017). Also recognized as a constructed category or lens, the notion of Indigenous leadership is itself one that reflects dominant scholarly traditions (Stewart & Warn, 2017). Originally, Indigenous leadership was recognized and documented from an Australian anthropological perspective in the 19th and 20th centuries (Stewart & Warn, 2017). However, as scholarly perspectives and reflections evolved in academia, accounts of Indigenous leadership drew increasingly on structuralism and other perspectives in the 1960s and 1970s (Hinkson & Smith 2005; Ivory 2008; Stewart & Warn, 2017). The tendency in earlier Indigenous literature, most of which have been written from a non-Indigenous perspective, is to focus on how to get Indigenous people to adopt Western worldviews (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2005; Orvik & Barnhardt, 1974). Until recently, very little literature addressed how to get educators to understand Indigenous worldviews and ways of knowing as constituting knowledge systems, and even less literature on what it means for Indigenous members when such worldviews coexist (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2005). An Indigenous paradigm comes from the foundational belief that Indigenous knowledge (IK) is valid and relational (Wilson, 2008). Indigenous leadership creates a paradigm shift in which IK and ways of knowing are recognized as diverse and complex knowledge systems with an adaptive integrity of its own (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2005).

Indigenous leaders demand all to work toward developing an understanding about colonization and its negative historical impact on Indigenous Peoples, their communities, and Indigenous students at River College. Indigenous leaders engage in a form of self-determination, and personal connection (Child & Benwell, 2015) to open opportunities for all to better understand learning and its manifestations, thereby informing educational practices (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2005). This understanding provides change leaders opportunities to decolonize and lead with reconciliation in mind (Kovach, 2009). To build a self-determining future (Wildcat et al., 2014), Indigenous peoples must find a way to practice governance, and a way to create leadership through ‘two ways’ (Stewart & Warn, 2017). Two ways refer to gaining acceptance in communities, while learning to effectively operate in non-Indigenous systems of governance (Stewart & Warn, 2017). In keeping with Indigenous leadership, I will build relations through reciprocal, equal and dialogic relationships, and collaborative decision-making to create a consensus among stakeholders at River College (Wildcat et al., 2014). Indigenous leadership aligns with the other two leadership approaches because it works to improve educational opportunities that support the reconciliation process and to improve and restore the relationship between groups (Wilson, 2008).

### **Framework for Leading the Change Process**

In order to create successful organizational change, selecting a change model appropriate for a culturally responsive plan is imperative. Indigenous ways of knowing, teaching, learning, and expressing knowledge are key elements of a culturally responsive plan that teachers need to learn about (Trumbull & Nelson-Barber, 2019). A comparison and analysis of Lewin’s (1951) stage theory of change and Deszca et al.’s (2020) CPM will be conducted in order to select a suitable change model. The strengths and weaknesses of these models will be reviewed to



provide an understanding of which model best fits with the organization and the type of change required. This section will then discuss the chosen change management model that best supports the goal of the organizational shift envisioned at River College.

### **Type of Organizational Change**

The organizational change at River College will require everyone involved in the change process to recognize the need for this change. The IETC publicly recognizes the need for a culture of inclusiveness and a welcoming environment for Indigenous students. As a response to the lack of cultural connection and supports that relate to Indigenous students in strengthening Indigenous identity and a sense of belonging, this type of organizational change is incremental and reactive (Table 5) (Deszca et al., 2020).

**Table 5**

*Type of Organizational Change*

	<b>Incremental/continuous</b>	<b>Discontinuous/radical</b>
<b>Reactive</b>	<p><b>Adapting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incremental changes in response to environmental factors</li> <li>• Internal alignment</li> <li>• Focus on individual components</li> <li>• Middle-management role</li> <li>• Modest changes</li> </ul>	<p><b>Overhauling or Re-creating</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Response to a problem</li> <li>• Re-evaluate the organization</li> <li>• Focus on organizational components</li> <li>• Senior management role</li> <li>• Major realignment of strategy</li> </ul>

*Note.* Adapted from Deszca et al.'s (2020) type of organizational change chart.

Reactive change has the potential to interrupt the status quo to establish more equitable conditions for Indigenous students at River College which include the re-evaluation of the organization and focus on organizational components (Deszca et al., 2020). Middle-management or senior leaders at River College can also implement transformational leadership components

such as reminder of the vision and motivate optimism to address this type of organizational change (Deszca et al., 2020).

### **Stage Theory of Change**

Widespread change that positively affects a system and meets the needs of multiple institutional locations, such as River College, will require a deeper level of institutionalization and mobilization than what is offered by other models of change. Lewin's stage theory of change, unfreeze, change, and refreeze (as cited in Deszca et al., 2020) can apply to the work in this OIP since elements of equity, diversity, and inclusivity (EDI) have been introduced to the staff members at River College; however, the change sought is primarily a change in the form of the inclusion of IK, Indigenous perspective, and Indigenous voice in education. It is possible that the actions proposed by Lewin's stage theory of change are also not relevant to the desired change since decolonizing and Indigenizing actions are situational and dependent upon the needs of the individuals, the school, the system, and the community. The refreeze stage will not be possible. The dynamic nature of decolonizing education, coupled with the diverse cultural needs of students, will make it impossible to identify a single point to unfreeze and refreeze.

A limitation of Lewin's stage theory of change is that it implies that change is an isolated event, rather than continuous (Deszca et al., 2020). Although Lewin's stage theory of change is valuable at the organizational level, it provides a general change process, rather than an in-depth analysis and organizational change plan (Deszca et al., 2020). Therefore, Lewin's stage theory of change model is not suited to meet the objectives of River College.

### **The Change Path Model**

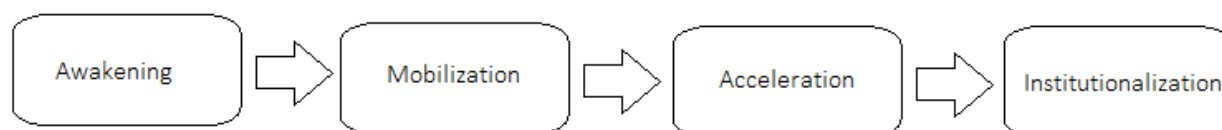
Deszca et al.'s (2020) CPM is the chosen organizational framework for leading change in this OIP. The model consists of the following stages: awakening, mobilization, acceleration, and

institutionalization. Deszca et al.'s (2020) CPM is chosen as the method to realize change and create educational improvement because it outlines suitable steps, processes, and leadership actions through which organizational improvement and change will be achieved at River College. Described as specific, detailed, and able to provide clear change-based actions, the CPM provides flexibility allowing for individualized or alternative solutions throughout the change path implementation (Deszca et al., 2020). In terms of leading change at River College, flexibility is required to ensure a culturally responsive plan that incorporates Indigenous perspective and Indigenous voice throughout. However, a limitation of this choice is that it provides a practical framework that presents a linear and straightforward process for organizational change, whereas organizations regularly take on multiple change projects simultaneously (Deszca et al., 2020). This model also risks having the change team and stakeholders oversimplifying challenges (Deszca et al., 2020).

The CPM outlines a series of steps (Figure 5) and leadership actions through which a shift and a change in organizational implementation will enhance Indigenization over more generic inclusive methods. The four stages of the CPM assist change leaders in planning and adapting a series of change-based initiatives. The desired results of these initiatives include thoughtful integration of IK into the school environment, as exemplified by Indigenous leadership, to strengthen Indigenous identity, culture and belonging at River College.

### **Figure 5**

#### *The Change Path Model*



*Note.* Adapted from Deszca et al.'s (2020) change path model.

### *Awakening Stage*

The first stage in Deszca et al.'s (2020) CPM is awakening. Developing a common understanding of IK and its implementation is desired at the awakening stage. During this stage, the need for change is envisioned and determined (Deszca et al., 2020). Through leadership action, stakeholders become aware of the areas in need of improvement and the possibilities of the organizational change. This stage requires the development of communication strategies to achieve consensus and ongoing consultation with both informal and formal leaders at River College. Transformational leadership approaches, such as setting the direction, organizing people, evaluating current practices, building a cohesive culture, and empowering people for change are required to create a consensus that change is needed (Spillane et al., 2001). In this stage, River College's public educational data and informal information are initiated, collected, and analyzed. The data will consist of Indigenous student enrollment, retention, and graduation rates at River College. Data will also be in the form of evaluating Indigenous student satisfaction surveys, student feedback, cultural opportunities, programs and resources, and anecdotal notes or informal observations. The desired vision for River College is defined at this stage.

Deszca et al. (2020) suggests that preliminary steps such as an ongoing observation of both internal and external environments and a thoughtful consideration of the forces for and against any organizational shift must occur to establish a platform for understanding the organizational functions and structures at River College. It is during the process of awakening that cooperation, communication, and consensus will be initiated by the change leaders. This includes developing deeper understandings of IK and how the implementation of IK will be achieved at River College. To be successful at implementing IK, change leaders such as faculty and department heads at River College must be able to identify and recognize the role of IK in

teaching, learning, and leading. The leaders must then work together and plan for organizational improvement and change.

The process of raising awareness or awakening helps to facilitate a critical organizational analysis which is imperative in creating a clear vision and path for an implementation plan at River College. In the awakening stage, change leaders work together on raising awareness about the importance of Indigenizing the educational environment at River College. The awakening stage will inspire the leaders to identify the desired behaviours and understandings for leadership and IK integration. Awakening to the need for Indigenous inclusivity at River College demands working together to create meaningful connections between education and leadership, and student achievement. As part of the awakening stage, River College will begin to plan how to partner with stakeholders to help create a culture of inclusiveness and a welcoming environment that will strengthen Indigenous identity, culture and belonging. Further exploration of promoting education that connects to IK through ongoing learning requires support from the staff members at River College.

In keeping with the awakening stage, I will identify the need for change, articulate performance gaps, create awareness, develop a shared vision, develop an action plan and resources, engage Indigenous students as co-teachers of knowledge, and form a council or committee of Indigenous student representation at River College.

### ***Mobilization Stage***

Mobilization is the second stage of Deszca et al.'s (2020) CPM. In the mobilization stage, what needs to change is determined (Deszca et al., 2020). This is done through additional data analysis, collaboration, and consultation. The assessments can influence and help move plans forward.

Built on the work done in the awakening stage, the mobilization stage requires ongoing communication and engagement with stakeholders to develop and recognize their roles and responsibilities. There is often a delay in the information transmission from the change leaders to the stakeholders due to the IETC meeting with the Senior Operating Group (SOG) only quarterly and including limited Indigenous representation. Addressing a delay in information transmission requires the change leaders to engage the stakeholders through other forms of communication to influence change towards a culture of more inclusiveness and the creation of a welcoming environment (Deszca et al., 2020). Ongoing collaboration and the development of partnerships will help to mobilize envisioned goals.

Seeking creative and innovative solutions for problem solving issues of importance to Indigenous students will be important during the mobilization stage of the change process. This stage must incorporate feedback from ideas expressed and incorporate the experiences of internal and external stakeholders. This stage often reveals the gaps between where an organization currently is and the desired future state or where it wants and needs to go (Deszca et al., 2020). A gap analysis would include the analysis of institutional systems, structures, and processes at River College. This information is important for the Indigenous Services staff at River College to take into consideration when planning for the implementation and integration of IK into the school environment.

In keeping with the mobilization stage, change leaders will consolidate progress, manage transitions, and continue to strengthen relationships, ensure meaningful and ongoing dialogue, build a collaborative learning community, and empower Indigenous students at River College through ongoing work to advance reconciliation. Through the inclusion of Indigenous voice,

River College can ensure their shared leadership, teaching, and activities honour and respect Indigenous expertise and redress colonialism and address internal systemic barriers.

### *Acceleration Stage*

In the third stage of Deszca et al.'s (2020) CPM, an acceleration of change begins. This stage involves preparation and implementation of the initiatives for change (Deszca et al., 2020). The Indigenous Committee, Indigenous Counsellor and I at River College will collaborate with students and community members of Aamjiwnaang First Nation, Caldwell First Nation, Chippewas of the Thames, Eelünaapéewi Lahkéewiit Delaware Nation, Kettle and Stony Point First Nation, Munsee Delaware Nation, Oneida Nation of the Thames, and Bkejwanong First Nation to develop new knowledge and increase momentum. In doing so, the Indigenous Counsellor and I are engaging Indigenous people to redress colonialism and advance the process of reconciliation as recommended in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)'s (2015) Calls to Action. During the acceleration stage, change leaders will be working together with internal and external stakeholders at River College to create partnerships for professional learning that will incorporate Indigenous voice and perspective. The collaboration with local Indigenous Knowledge Keepers and Indigenous community members will increase educator competency and efficacy regarding IK. A paradigm shift in the distribution of leadership among staff, students, and Indigenous community members, and the integration of an Indigenous lens into the development of educational priorities, will occur during this stage. At this stage, leaders need to be flexible and adaptable to expand their present ways of thinking and disrupt traditional leadership approaches. For acceleration to occur, the staff members and administrators must cooperate with the Indigenous communities. During this stage, Indigenous Counsellor and I will also build internal partnership and collaborate with the college's Centre of Academic Excellence (CAE) to strategize, build momentum, and deal with the necessary transitions to effect the

envisioned change (Deszca et al., 2020). The Indigenous Counsellor and I will use these cooperative and collaborative strategies and help to implement IK into professional learning opportunities. Achieving acceleration in the change process requires transformational leadership approaches such as proficiency in teamwork, communication, and continuous self-improvement. The Indigenous Counsellor and I will support this stage by working with the staff members to connect IK and Indigenous culture knowledge systems to curricular goals and into the school environment at River College. Recognition of Indigenization and increased integration of IK within the school settings will provide greater levels of support for Indigenous students and promote the system connectedness to empower them at River College. As organizational change progresses, this stage can also provide highlighted, short-term, and “celebrated wins” (Deszca et al., 2020). As the staff members become proficient in supporting others, efficacy increase and the integration of IK into the school environment will occur. To determine if staff at River College are proficient with IK into the school environment, communication and consultation methods will be utilized, and informal or formal observations will be monitored. The Indigenous Counsellor and I will observe the interactions among Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants and presenters. Furthermore, proficiency with IK will also be gathered during sharing circles through dialogue and surveying staff and students by directly asking them for their feedback. In keeping with the acceleration stage, I will continue to reach out to engage the staff and the Indigenous community, develop collaborative relationships, build momentum, and celebrate milestones and achievements at River College.

### ***Institutionalization Stage***

The fourth and final stage of Deszca et al.’s (2020) CPM, is institutionalization. Institutionalization involves transitioning to the desired new state (Deszca et al., 2020). This



stage will hopefully lead to long-term change. Ongoing monitoring and perhaps modification along the way will be required. Collaborative practices to increase efficacy and lasting change will need to continue. Increased efficacy, student engagement, and the implementation of IK and Indigenous knowledge systems into the school environment, will help to solidify Indigenous students' identity, culture and belonging at River College. As a result, increased Indigenous student success will be seen through annual transitions. Donohoo (2017) states that when witnessing student achievement, educators are likely to continue with the new and improved state, and less likely to revert to former practices. In keeping with the institutionalization stage, it will be important for leaders to track changes as well as develop and deploy new structures, skills, and processes as required. The CPM in its design as a change process has the capability to achieve a significant change which can be institutionalized. Deszca et al.'s (2020) CPM allows for the required flexibility to ensure a culturally responsive plan that incorporates Indigenous perspective and Indigenous voice throughout, thus better suited to meet the requirements to achieve the desired vision of change.

### **Critical Organizational Analysis**

The previous sections of this OIP identified the frameworks for leading the change. A critical analysis, also known as a "gap analysis," of the organizational structure at River College must now be considered to identify what components need to be changed (Deszca et al., 2020). A gap analysis done in the early stages of the Deszca et al.'s (2020) CPM helps change leaders to determine what needs to change. Although there are many frameworks available to assist with the gap analysis in organizations, Nadler and Tushman's (1980) congruence model will serve our purpose better. The congruence model assists change leaders in structuring the change teams' organizational analysis (Nadler & Tushman, 1980). This model can be embedded into the CPM

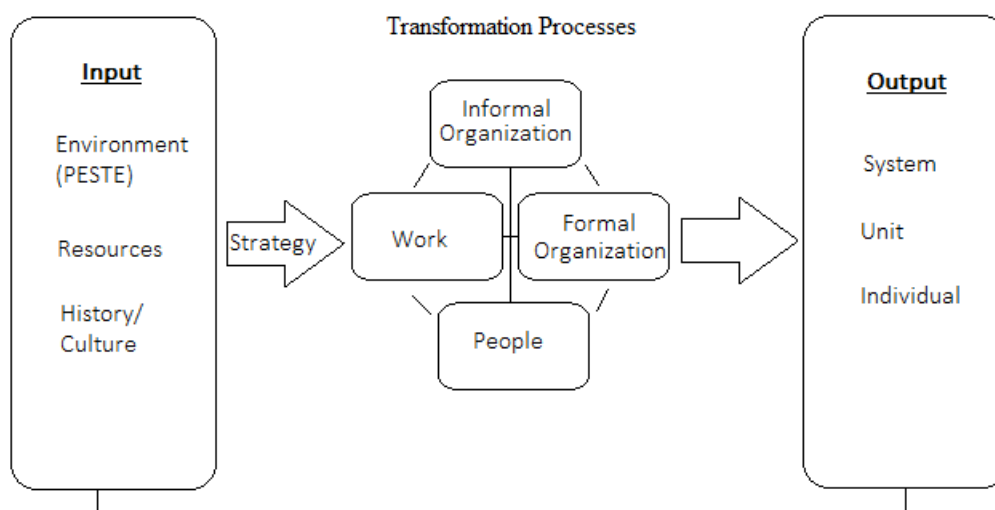
to help change leaders develop a comprehensive picture of the organization and its parts, and how they all fit together (Deszca et al., 2020). Nadler and Tushman's (1980) congruence model will be used in the OIP to determine the congruence or alignment between components of the organization.

### The Congruence Model

Based on an open system and an organization's interaction with its external environment, Nadler and Tushman's (1980) congruence model is designed to aid in the analysis of the organizational elements including inputs, transformation processes, and outputs (Figure 6).

**Figure 6**

*The Congruence Model*



*Note.* Adapted from Deszca et al.'s (2020) Nadler and Tushman's organizational congruence model.

This critical organizational analysis will focus on input identification and its significance upon change-based action and planning. Inputs are the fundamental elements an organization works with, and they consist of factors such as those identified in the PESTE analysis, resources, and historical considerations (Deszca et al., 2020). Outputs encompass an organization's

production, growth, and efficiency, and the production may be from the system, individual units, and individuals (Deszca et al., 2020). When the organizational elements function cohesively and align with the inputs, organizational output will result in more success (Deszca et al., 2020; Nadler & Tushman, 1980). Therefore, the congruence model will be used to identify gaps between the current and desired state of River College which is the key to advocate for and initiate change (Deszca et al., 2020).

Aligned with the change implementation plan, Nadler and Tushman's (1980) congruence model will help change leaders to define organizational gaps by breaking down organizational systems into manageable portions to better understand and predict organizational behaviours and patterns (Wyman, 2004). With an emphasis on transformation, the congruence model creates a pathway for reflection upon the organizational roles, relationships, and processes (Nadler & Tushman, 1980). It will support and align with holistic methods that support the integration of IK into the school environment at River College and promote the collective nature of Indigenous Peoples. Nadler and Tushman's (1980) congruence model reflects this holistic view of transformation and helps to identify the responsibilities to be shared among the interconnected parties at all levels of the hierarchy at River College.

### **Input**

The inputs of the congruence model identify the areas that need improvement in providing a culture of inclusiveness and a welcoming environment for Indigenous students at River College (Deszca et al., 2020). The inputs are eventually transformed to outputs, and feedback links will make the components interdependent (Deszca et al., 2020).

### ***Environmental Factors (PESTE)***

For the work in this OIP, the environmental factors include external policies and procedures that the organization must adapt to considering recent legislations that prompt organizational change. The organization considers how external factors, such as political and socio-economic factors outlined in Chapter 1, affect other factors such as resources, structure and people of the Indigenous community.

### ***Resources***

According to Deszca et al. (2020), resources are the materials an organization has access to, such as human resources, capital, technology, and information. One of the main concerns of River College as an organization is limited human resources and capital. It is unclear how the lack of sustainable funding for Indigenous education will affect organizational change.

Leadership at River College continues to work with the government to solidify capital, but also partner with other avenues to ensure capital in the interim. Many existing resources have been created for the Western or Eurocentric educational contexts. To overcome the financial barriers and lack of Indigenous contexts, planning and capital expenditures are required. However, the major challenge pertains to the human resources factor. Potential staffing fluctuations will affect operations and organizational growth, limiting the progress of improving Indigenous inclusivity efforts.

### ***Historical Considerations***

Organizational history consists of patterns of past behaviours, activities, and effectiveness (Nadler & Tushman, 1980). Historical considerations play a significant role in change planning and the efforts to develop an understanding of how change has affected present organizational functioning. The evolution of the educational institution in Canada has resulted in mistrust in education for many Indigenous students at River College, who are current and intergenerational

survivors with high levels of disengagement with learning in the education system. As they deal with the current external factors, change leaders must also recognize and confront the constraints the historical considerations have placed on the educational environment at River College (Deszca et al., 2020). Recognizing the history of Canada's education system and the traumas associated with residential and federal schooling is an important step to consider when planning change for Indigenous education contexts. By engaging in a historical analysis, change leaders will be able to recognize the current structures and systems that are oppressive and discriminatory towards Indigenous students.

As discussed in Chapter 1, current structures in place to support Indigenous education and the gaps within internal dimensions of change at River College have been identified. The critical organizational analysis in this OIP has identified gaps in active decolonizing and Indigenous efforts at River College. For change to occur, change leaders need to bring these disconnects into alignment and connect them into meaningful content. Consideration of these gaps will be included in the development of possible solutions.

### **Transformational Process**

During the transformational process, the organizational components will be leveraged to produce the desired outputs (Deszca et al., 2020). This process will take into consideration the informal organization, the formal organizational structures, systems and processes, work to be done, and the people (Deszca et al., 2020).

### ***Informal Organization***

The informal organization focuses on the informal relationships between groups, departments, and individuals (Deszca et al., 2020). To support the implementation of the change process, an effective communication plan will be developed to encourage the emergence of the

change team within these groups. Nadler and Tushman (1999) suggest that organizational values, culture, and shared goals are what hold an organization together rather than the organization's formal structure.

### ***Formal Organization***

The formal organizational structure refers to the structure, leader, or other mechanisms that help the organization direct its efforts and accomplish its works (Deszca et al., 2020). It is within the perimeters of the organizational structure the change team embrace the new vision to become change leaders who provide guidance to the staff members at River College (Deszca et al., 2020). River College will then be able to emulate a culture of learning that champions Indigeneity and become a leading institution in Indigenous education.

### ***Work***

This part of the transformational process focuses on the basic tasks to be accomplished to carry out the organization's strategy, taking into consideration the tasks required to successfully implement the strategy (Deszca et al., 2020). The work involved in completing these tasks at River College will be nested in teams which are separate and independent from each other (Deszca et al., 2020).

### ***People***

Understanding people's response to the proposed change will be significant in managing the organizational change (Deszca et al., 2020) at River College. Critical to the organization's successful transition to change, the key individuals required to make this change a reality are the staff members. The Indigenous Counsellor and I will provide knowledge and support to all staff members to decolonize River College. However, there are not enough Indigenous staff members

at River College who can help Indigenize the non-Indigenous staff members' practice; therein lies a significant gap.

### **Output**

The congruence model identifies what components of the organization are aligned and what are not. Components that are not aligned require change and the attention of the leaders. When the organizational elements of the congruence model operate effectively together and are aligned with the inputs, there is a likelihood of the organizational outputs being successful (Deszca et al., 2020; Nadler & Tushman, 1980). A strength of this model is that it does not specify a particular approach for designing organizational processes and structures, and thereby, does not place restrictions on change leaders (Basu, n.d.). Should change leaders address the PoP, the outputs will leverage supports for Indigenous students that will strengthen their identity, culture and belonging, thereby creating a culture of inclusiveness and a welcoming environment for them at River College.

### **Solutions to Address the Problem of Practice**

In the following section, three potential solutions to address the PoP are identified to incorporate and strengthen Indigenous identity and culture in education at River College. The potential solutions explored are as follows: 1) embedding components of decolonization such as holistic learning into education; 2) professional learning to increase understanding, knowledge, and appreciation of Indigenous identity, voice, and perspective; and 3) two-eyed seeing and engaging Indigenous students as co-teachers of knowledge.

Though decolonizing education and two-eyed seeing have overlapping components, research shows that these approaches are different from one another (Hatcher et al., 2009; Pratt et al., 2018; Ray, 2021; Stein & De Oliveira Andreotti, 2016). For instance, decolonization “can be broadly understood as an umbrella term for diverse efforts to resist the distinct but intertwined

processes of colonization and racialization, to enact transformation and redress in reference to the historical and ongoing effects of these processes” (Stein & De Oliveira Andreotti, 2016, p. 979). Furthermore, decolonizing education includes recognizing how colonization has impacted education and working towards dismantling colonial systems, structures, and dynamics in educational contexts (Pratt et al., 2018).

Two-eyed seeing is a practical application of decolonization (Ray, 2021). This approach seeks to avoid knowledge domination and assimilation by recognizing the best from both Indigenous and Western worldviews (Hatcher et al., 2009). Moreover, this method refers to the technique of seeing from the perspective of Indigenous ways of knowing with one eye, at the same time as using the alternate eye to look with the strengths of Western approaches of knowing (Ray, 2021). The proposed solution recognizes relevant components of the second and third solutions and integrates them to create a new solution.

### **First Solution**

The first solution looks at the current colonized approach to education at River College and focuses on embedding components of decolonization such as holistic learning into education. Since colonial approaches have proven to be misaligned with Indigenous teachings, cultures and traditional values, researchers have emphasized a call for decolonizing education (Battiste, 2013; Kovach, 2009; Munroe et al., 2013). Research conducted by Hare and Pidgeon (2011) revealed that Indigenous learners have expressed their feelings of not belonging in schools, and that the personal and systematic racism they encountered was rooted in the Western-dominated system. Indigenous culture highlights a more holistic approach to knowing and learning (Munroe et al., 2013). The holistic approach includes the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual compartments and its connection with the earth (Lavallée, 2009). An



educational system with a more holistic approach will better resonate with Indigenous learners, and therefore, support their learning (Moon & Berger, 2016; Preston, 2016) at River College, thus, creating a culture of inclusiveness and a welcoming environment that will strengthen Indigenous identity, culture and belonging.

Decolonizing education through holistic approaches to learning at River College would be one strategy that could address the Indigenizing gap that currently exists. Although the decolonization of education as a whole is beyond my influence, modifications at River College are possible and they will make a great first step in challenging the status quo at a much smaller scale. Changes that could support implementation of decolonization at River College include the following: the application of a holistic approach, diversifying teaching resources, teaching outcomes that address social justice and power, encouraging student participation in the creation-process of content, and developing assessments that allow for expression in diverse ways (Stewart, 2006). Such changes could be implemented with limited effort and would require minimal resources. Using an Indigenous leadership approach will challenge colonized approaches through reciprocal and dialogic relationship (Wildcat et al., 2014).

I can distribute resources that provide a wealth of IK to the staff members at River College about building relationships with Indigenous communities and connecting educational content to the experiences of Indigenous learners. Educators will be asked to review and implement such materials. Materials such as the Colleges and Institutes Canada's (CIC) (2013) Indigenous Education Protocol for Colleges and Institutes, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples' (UNDRIP) (2007) framework for reconciliation across all sectors, and the Southern First Nations Secretariat's (SFNS) (2020) PSE collaborative partnership

agreement framework for supporting post-secondary Indigenous students are beneficial to the educators, and they also provide additional support through IK and experience.

Limitations of this solution include the time it will take to identify strategies and overcome dominant ideologies. This process would stall in the mobilization stage of Deszca et al.'s (2020) CPM as the change could be met with large scale bureaucracy. However, evaluating the components such as assessments and content delivery could easily be taken up at River College. Indigenous community involvement and guidance could also help identify school practices that could be altered to better support Indigenous students, but it is just not feasible in an already established PSE setting. Therefore, a widespread decolonizing approach at River College will not be the main directive of the OIP but implementing specific components of this solution such as diversifying teaching resources, student-centered learning, and choice of assessment and evaluation that accommodate the diversity of learners, will be considered as there is incredible potential in this approach.

### **Second Solution**

The second solution looks at professional learning to familiarize the staff and students at River College with Indigenous histories and cultures. One of the greatest obstacles that Indigenous learners have expressed concern about is that many teachers are unfamiliar with Indigenous cultures (Preston, 2016; Whitney et al., 2013). To assist in the academic achievement of the Indigenous students at River College, educators need to understand and consider the diverse cultural backgrounds and social realities of the Indigenous communities within the historical and socio-cultural contexts (Pratt & Danyluk, 2017). In doing so, teachers must also recognize the power, privilege, and biases they carry as part of the dominant majority, to aid in the reconciliation efforts at River College (Oskineegish & Berger, 2013; Preston, 2016).

Professional learning to increase knowledge, understanding, and appreciation of Indigenous identity, voice and perspective is a key component to any solution (Gunn et al., 2011; Preston, 2016; Whitley, 2013). River College has allocated extra time for the faculty and support the staff members to receive such professional learning. The desired characteristics of a professional learning community will include a reflective collaboration focused on learning, a shared vision, student success, and both group and individual learning (Vescio et al., 2008; Watson, 2014). In order to ensure consistency of educational approaches and promote curricular and instructional innovation, River College offers the faculty professional learning opportunities, both within and outside of the college (River College, 2021). There is designated time for curricular innovation as well as time for instructional innovation. As the ILA, I am responsible for leading Indigenous-specific workshops and other programs to support Indigenous-centered education excellence. Indigenous-based training in education will provide an excellent opportunity for the staff to probe into and re-evaluate current practices while working at building greater competency. My role as the ILA at River College will be critical as many teams have noted the importance of Indigenous facilitation in Indigenous professional learning processes (Voelkel & Chrispeels, 2017).

Professional learning to increase IK is important when moving toward a culture of inclusiveness and a welcoming environment for Indigenous students at River College (Preston, 2016; Whitney et al., 2013). Financial constraints may limit the ability to bring in Indigenous Elders, knowledge keepers and community members to support this process, but school-level professional learning through the Indigenous Services department and the college's professional learning communities, such as the Centre for Academic Excellence, will continue regardless of this constraint. While local Indigenous hosts, facilitators, and presenters will strengthen the

authenticity of opportunities for learning, any time devoted to professional learning will help to build the capacity within the learning environment. Professional knowledge through IK acquisition will support the diverse needs of Indigenous students, but it requires engagement with local Indigenous communities. Building strong relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people are recognized as a necessary component in improving the academic results of Indigenous students (Milne, 2017; Pratt & Dannyluck, 2017; Preston, 2016). To move toward a culture of inclusiveness and a welcoming environment for Indigenous students at River College, educators need to be part of the solution (Smith, 2016). However, a solution that only looks at professional learning lacks opportunities for meaningful relationships, between Indigenous and non-Indigenous faculty and students which are essential to address this PoP. Though this solution has many beneficial components, it lacks the scope of people needed to fully address the PoP. Various groups of diverse needs and identities within the Indigenous student body at River College are left out of the narrative in this approach. The best approach must ensure that all voices are heard (Smith, 2000) in order to create and sustain a culture of inclusiveness and a welcoming environment for Indigenous students that will strengthen their Indigenous identity, culture and belonging.

### **Third Solution**

This solution focuses on applying a model that draws from several research sources to provide a multi-faceted and more comprehensive approach that aligns with the diverse needs of Indigenous students. Developed by Mi'kmaw Elder Albert Marshall, the two-eyed seeing approach connects Western and Indigenous ways of knowing through collaboration (Barlett et al., 2002). This approach allows one to look through both perspectives to provide a new way of “seeing” things and reinforces Indigenous identity and culture (Barlett et al., 2002). Furthermore,

the application of this solution calls for the Indigenous students to take on a role as co-teachers of knowledge by participating in student council and presenting to the staff members or other students. By sharing their unique cultures as co-teachers of knowledge at River College, the Indigenous students will offer voice, perspectives and insights that are Indigenous and authentic in nature. Indigenous students will then begin to see a reflection of themselves in a historically western dominated institution when their life experiences are valued as learning opportunities.

This approach will be used to support the restoration, revitalization, and the recovery of Indigenous traditions, languages, and cultures (Barlett et al., 2002), as the intergenerational effect of colonization impacts the lives of Indigenous students at River College. To support Indigenous students, there needs to be a greater connection between what they are learning at River College and their Indigenous culture (Hare & Pigeon, 2011; Kanu, 2002). Further, the role of teachers in terms of setting the level of expectations and building community through relationships is imperative to strengthen the Indigenous students' sense of belonging within the academic settings at River College (Toulouse, 2016). There is also a higher likelihood of Indigenous students achieving expectations when guidance is provided and positive relationships are formed (Moon & Berger, 2016; Whitley, 2013).

This approach also focuses on fostering an inviting and a welcoming environment in creating student success (Preston & Claypool, 2013). Like all students, Indigenous students need to have an environment where they feel included and safe and have the opportunity for positive relationships (Moon & Berger, 2016; Whitley, 2013). It is important for educators to create an inclusive and a welcoming environment in all educational aspects (Bascia, 2014). This can be achieved by demonstrating welcoming behaviors and the understanding necessary in promoting a positive and inclusive learning environment. The Indigenous leadership approach at River

College will be fundamental during this stage as this approach provides collaborative opportunities for strengthening Indigenous identity, culture, and belonging through Indigenous voice and perspective. Providing opportunities for stronger relationships and greater understanding of Indigenous peoples will pave the way for school and community collaboration and connections (Toulouse, 2016). With an emphasis on relationships with Indigenous students and Indigenous communities, this approach creates opportunities for partnerships through extracurricular events and activities. This approach also shows the interconnectedness of community and education while showing Indigenous students the importance of education and its impact on community. This solution supports the academic progress of Indigenous students as well. Though this model requires minimal financial resources, it requires a commitment of time from the educators at River College.

Integrating the two-eyed seeing approach cannot be accomplished without the partnership of the Indigenous community. Webster-Wright et al. (2019) emphasizes that this approach must have at least one individual who is proficient in Indigenous culture and knowledge for it to work, preferably an Indigenous Elder or knowledge keeper to allow for traditional ceremony and teachings to commence. Ensuring Indigenous representation will create strong collaboration and trusting relationships. Furthermore, the two-eyed seeing approach will strengthen Indigenous identity by providing Indigenous learners with a greater connection to their culture which supports learning (Hare & Pigeon, 2011; Kanu, 2002; Whitley, 2013). This approach outlines areas where teachers can focus their attention to support Indigenous students and how to better engage Indigenous students. By integrating Indigenous perspectives into oppressive colonial practices in education, this approach creates a path to a more inclusive and culturally responsive system in the school by removing barriers and providing Indigenous students a more welcoming

environment. Though this approach aims to challenge dominant practices and move toward a more desired state, long-term change will take a considerable amount of time as it involves understanding multiple perspectives (Webster-Wright et al., 2009). Table 6 below outlines the comparisons between the three options.

**Table 6**

*Comparison of Solutions*

<b>Solution</b>	<b>Strength and Weaknesses</b>
<b>Solution 1: Components of decolonization/ holistic approach</b>	Focuses on a holistic approach to education (S) The holistic approach includes the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual compartments and its connection with the earth (S) Decolonization of education on a provincial or national scale (W) Modifications are possible and would make a great first step in challenging the status quo (S) Diversifying teaching resources, teaching outcomes that address social justice and power (S) Encouraging student participation in the creation-process of content, and developing assessments that allow for expression in diverse ways (S) Can be implemented with limited effort and minimal resources (S) Time it will take to overcome dominant ideologies (W) Would be met with large scale bureaucracy (W) A widespread decolonizing approach in a PSE setting (W)
<b>Solution 2: Professional learning</b>	Familiarizes the staff on Indigenous history and culture (S) Familiarizes the staff on diverse cultural backgrounds and social realities (S) Relies on participants to be honest about their own power, privilege, and biases (W) Increases knowledge, understanding, and appreciation of Indigenous identity, voice, and perspective (S) Requires extra time on top of workload (W) Leads to reflective collaboration focused on learning, a shared vision, student success (S) Requires financial commitment in the form of a traditional offering or honorarium (W) Will support the diverse needs of Indigenous students (S) Lacks opportunities for interaction with participants (W) Lacks the scope of Indigenous representation (limited to representatives who reside in the area) (W)

<b>Solution 3: Two-eyed seeing</b>	A multi-faceted and more comprehensive approach (S) Consideration of multiple perspectives (Western lens and Indigenous lens) (S) Indigenous students take on a role as co-teachers of knowledge (S) Inclusion of Indigenous voice, perspectives, and insights (S) Supports the restoration, revitalization, and the recovery of traditions, languages, and cultures (S) Required financial commitment in the form of a traditional offering or honorarium (W) Emphasis on relationships (S) Shows the interconnectedness of community and education (S) Lacks the scope of Indigenous representation in the area (W) This process is time-consuming (W) Challenges dominant practices (Could be met with resistance) (W)
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*Note.* S = strength; W = weakness.

### **The Proposed Solution**

Indigenous perspectives and voice need to have a more prominent role in education to meet the objectives of a culture of inclusiveness and a welcoming environment for all Indigenous students at River College. The most powerful and feasible solution to meet this need recognizes the key components of the two possible solutions outlined: professional learning (second solution) and the two-eyed seeing approach (third solution). Leveraging these components through integrative thinking allows for the creation of a new solution, the proposed ‘best model’ (Riel & Martin, 2017). This proposed solution is powerful because it enables the change team to strengthen Indigenous culture at River College through professional learning and the integration of Indigenous voice and perspectives into professional learning. The staff and Indigenous students will be introduced to strategies and methods that will restore, revitalize, and recover Indigenous traditions and cultures, specifically in a school setting. Although creating a culture of inclusiveness and a welcoming environment for Indigenous students through two-eyed seeing embedded in professional learning will take time to achieve the successful implementation of this proposed new solution at River College will serve as a model for other institutions to follow.



Incorporating Indigenous voice and perspective through shared stories and lived experience during professional learning, will be viewed as a major component of decolonizing practices, which is important to Indigenous students because it promotes self-determination in the process (Cajete, 2000; Munroe et al., 2013). Furthermore, the staff at River College will be able to play key roles, which addresses one of the main challenges in change management: buy-in (Deszca et al., 2020). If people can see themselves in the change process, then they are able to connect to the change on a personal level, and they are more inclined to buy into the implemented change. Professional learning will provide opportunities for staff at River College to establish meaningful relationships with Indigenous students and Indigenous communities, which is critical to fostering a culture of inclusiveness and a welcoming environment. The solution I have chosen uses components of the second and third solutions and includes a strong relationship element. This approach aligns with my role and responsibilities as the ILA and is tied to the literature relating to Indigenous student success.

The proposed solution will be implemented using Donnelly and Kirk's (2015) Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA) cycle. The PDSA cycle is an inquiry process that encourages innovative approaches. The inquiry helps educational institutions to understand why there is progress or why there is no progress (Conzemius and O'Neill, 2014). The PDSA cycle begins with planning the action or the change, followed by the do stage that involves implementing the action or change. The study stage calls for looking at the results and determining whether the action or change worked or not. Lastly, in the act stage, an idea is adjusted, continued, or abandoned. The PDSA cycle will be created to support the strengthening of Indigenous identity and culture in education at River College, followed by actions in the implementation plan. The PDSA cycle outlines the implementation process as a series of steps that, if taken, will result in a

comprehensive, student-centered approach where Indigenous culture and strengths are recognized and supported at River College. Chapter 3 will elaborate on the potential implementation of the proposed solution at River College.

### **Leadership Ethics and Organizational Change**

This section pertains to the ethical considerations as part of this OIP. Throughout this section, an Indigenous worldview and a Western worldview will be considered in the context of this OIP to be able to move forward. Change leaders at River College must be transparent with their use of power and promote equity through integrity, respect for others, relationships, and serving others (Sharma et al., 2018). They also must possess a moral compass to make decisions and understand what is right and wrong, and they should have the courage to act (Tuana, 2014). To do this, ethical insensitivities and personal blind spots must be taken into consideration.

The work in this OIP aims to address the issues that are related to strengthening of Indigenous identity and culture in education at River College. The individuals involved with this PoP come from diverse backgrounds. Exercising increased caution during the change process is necessary as there is a lack of adequate Indigenous staff representation at River College. I am one of the few Indigenous staff members employed within a predominantly non-Indigenous environment. As a result, Indigenous voice and perspective must be included through the recruitment of Indigenous people during the change process (Smith, 2000) and ensured throughout the OIP. Although most individuals came from a place of good intentions, previous attempts to address the impacts of colonization at River College continued to mirror the historical and oppressive narrative due to the limited Indigenous knowledge systems the staff possess and inadequate Indigenous representation in the process of change (Osmond-Johnson and Turner, 2020).

I will be cautious in implementing allyship and advocacy from non-Indigenous partners as this change initiative requires partnership with individuals who can work alongside Indigenous change leaders as allies and advocates. Allies can still take up an Indigenous agenda in the spirit of reconciliation if they work to support relationships with Indigenous people (Battiste, 2013) and allow for reciprocity of ideas (Kovach, 2009).

Working in partnership with Indigenous communities will require a strong understanding of Indigenous ways of knowing and culture. As the ILA, I need to make sure that the recruited Indigenous people, culture, and practices are not exploited when implementing change at River College (Battiste, 2007) by ensuring that the staff at River College are working alongside Indigenous peoples and communities without pushing an alternative agenda (Osmond-Johnson, 2020). Battiste (2007) also notes that cautionary measures to prevent exploitation include the ongoing engagement and collaboration with Indigenous communities, Elders and knowledge keepers. This also ensures that the diverse Indigenous communities have their voices heard and are given opportunities to act as leaders for change (Battiste, 2007).

The proposed solution chosen to strengthen Indigenous identity and culture at River College places a great emphasis on the two-eyed seeing embedded in professional learning. This solution increases the push for the decolonization of educational practices, while also creating a greater understanding, knowledge, and appreciation of Indigenous identity, voice, and perspective. Transparency will be needed to address any level of dissonance from stakeholders and to help them understand that there is no hidden agenda. Hence, it is important that change leaders clearly identify and articulate why the change is needed and how it benefits the change team and change leaders (Northouse, 2016). When change leaders make changes based on

ethical foundations, trust is of utmost importance (Sharif & Scandura, 2014) to create the buy-in and gain the support from stakeholders.

Given the historical context of Indigenous students and the educational system, there is a moral and ethical obligation associated with this OIP. By formulating partnerships and collaboration between Indigenous and non-Indigenous individuals, educators at River College can ethically forge a path forward that works to strengthen Indigenous identity and culture in education. Additional ethical concerns along the way are to be expected and will require reflection and evaluation when the time comes. These moments will act as learning opportunities for all involved.

Furthermore, ethical considerations are important to creating trust in Indigenous educational settings and in cross-cultural settings. The historical underpinnings of unethical colonial and school management over a century and half of unjust and unfair educational practices have resulted in mistrust in education held by the Indigenous students and their communities today (Goulet and Goulet, 2014). As a result, ethical decision-making at River College must include ongoing consultation with Indigenous communities through partnerships in education. This work requires that value and respect be given to the lived experiences and opinions of other Indigenous educators, leaders, and community members.

Moreover, there are many additional factors that change leaders must consider when assessing the ethical implications of their actions. Ethical leadership means being able to influence and lead others without compromising both organizational and personal values and beliefs (Northouse, 2016). Leading change at River College, in terms of the work in this OIP, means recognizing the importance of traditional beliefs and values of diverse groups. I must also be able to adapt my leadership style and recognize cultural differences other than my own.

As noted in an earlier section of this chapter, I will be employing Indigenous, transformational, and transformative leadership approaches in the work of this OIP. Transformational leadership will assist in building an organizational learning culture at River College (Northouse, 2016). Transformative leadership will address inequalities and provide support for equity initiatives (Shields, 2010). Indigenous leadership will encourage non-Indigenous staff and students to learn about Indigenous culture, history, and its impacts through a holistic approach to knowing and learning, creating an interconnectedness of education and community (Tavernaro-Haidarian, 2019). One of the more important ethical considerations for implementing a multifaceted approach to change is the ongoing inclusion of multiple perspectives throughout the entire change process. For these reasons, the ethical considerations delineated in this section explain why I have included multiple perspectives in the proposed organizational change.

### **The Four R's of Ethical Research**

While conducting research on Indigenous communities, Kirkness and Barnhardt (1991) developed the four R's of ethical research, which include respect, relevance, reciprocity, and responsibility. These practices require a leadership style that support transparency. The transformational, transformative, and Indigenous leadership approaches used throughout the work in this OIP support the Four R's of ethical research. For instance, transformational leadership supports increasing follower trust, embracing individuality, promoting authenticity, building a better future, strengthening integrity, adopting a growth mindset, and promoting creativity (Bass, 1985; Burns, 2004). Transformative leadership supports equity, inclusion, excellence, and justice (Caldwell et al., 2012; Shields, 2018). And, Indigenous leadership

concentrates on respect, reciprocity, relationship to all relatives, reconnection, and empowerment.

Considering the historical context of the education of Indigenous peoples, a strong ethical and moral obligation must exist at River College. As the work in this OIP moves forward, there will be other ethical considerations to be considered along the way. These concerns will require ongoing evaluation, reflection, and reflective assessment. These circumstances will serve as learning opportunities for both the staff and students at River College, allowing them to learn from each other's viewpoints. Employing Kirkness and Barnhardt's (1991) Four R's model will hold ourselves accountable and to a greater ethical standard.

### **Chapter Summary**

In this chapter, transformational, transformative, and Indigenous leadership approaches are identified as necessary to lead the change process, and the CPM (Deszca et al., 2020) is presented as a framework to structure the change process. This approach is framed using the congruence model (Nadler & Tushman, 1980), and a critical analysis of the organization outlined various inputs that should be considered when implementing a strategy. Three possible solutions to the PoP are proposed. The proposed solution selected draws on elements of two of the possible solutions. Chapter 3 will outline the implementation plan, describe how the proposed solution will be monitored and evaluated, and outlines a communication plan.

### **Chapter 3: Implementation, Evaluation, and Communication**

Chapter 2 has demonstrated a need for organizational change by identifying a consistent gap at River College for Indigenous students. In Chapter 3, the change path model (CPM) is used to plan the change initiative by outlining the actions to be taken at all four stages to implement a culture of inclusiveness and a welcoming environment for all Indigenous students (Deszca et al., 2020). A discussion of how the change process will be monitored and evaluated by the change team will follow, and a communication plan will be incorporated in the CPM to bring about successful change (Deszca et al., 2020; Kotter, 2012). Chapter 3 will conclude with a discussion of the next steps for this Organization Improvement Plan (OIP) and future considerations.

#### **Change Implementation Plan**

The creation of a culture which engages culturally relevant pedagogy and leaders provides for greater inclusion of Indigenous perspectives and ways of knowing. Strategies to support traditional inclusivity, such as professional learning, require Indigenous consultation and Indigenous voice. Research surrounding the academic success of Indigenous learners acknowledges the need for a more welcoming environment (Preston & Claypool, 2013; Whitley, 2013) and cultural connections to the curriculum (Hare & Pigeon, 2011; Whitley, 2013) and programs at River College. In response to this identified need, this implementation plan focuses on creating an environment that is welcoming to Indigenous learners and strengthens Indigenous identity at River College through the integration of Indigenous Knowledge (IK) and Indigenous voice in professional learning.

#### **Alignment with the Organizational Strategy**

The documents used to identify a need for Indigenous inclusion at River College are provincial and federal reports (Calls to Action, 2015), United Nations Declaration on the Rights

of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP, 2007), legislative mandates, institutional-based mandates (Indigenous Education and Training Council, 2020) (IETC), protocols (Indigenous Education Protocol for Colleges and Institutes, 2013) and post-secondary education (PSE) collaborative partnership agreement (2020) that call upon educational institutions to mandate Indigenous learning and inclusion. These documents have identified the need to incorporate IK, cultures, histories, and languages within PSE and they have made it clear that PSE institutions have a fundamental role to play in Indigenization. Though many institutions are making a conscious effort to Indigenize the educational environment through a process known as Indigenization, it is important to note that Indigenization may not share the same definition across or within institutions. The opportunity for individuals to develop their talents and reach their potential in a respectful and a welcoming environment is believed to carry importance for individuals of Indigenous communities (Toulouse, 2016). Indigenous education focuses on the harmonious balance of physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual development. As such, contribution to intercultural dialogue and the cohabitation of IK and Western knowledge systems on campuses through Indigenous student voice is needed (Toulouse, 2016). Current leadership practices at River College do not align with this Indigenous perspective of collaboration. Typically, students at River College are provided with supports and services with limited consultation. Therefore, it is imperative to promote the inclusion of Indigenous groups in the process of academic reform to reflect the voice of Indigenous students in the change process (Pete, 2015).

The steps outlined in the work in this OIP will address the lack of meaningful support for Indigenous students in strengthening their Indigenous identity, culture and belonging at River College by including Indigenous perspective and Indigenous voice in professional learning for the staff. Though River College does use a few online tools for Indigenous professional learning,



Indigenous voice is left out of the narrative in this approach. Redefining Indigenous student belonging, an area where greater emphasis needs to be placed at River College, will begin by putting a face on the problem by encouraging and empowering Indigenous students to tell their stories and experiences. To do this, a plan of action is needed to outline how this implementation will work. Deszca et al.'s (2020) CPM will be used as the guide for implementing the integration of Indigenous voice and perspective in association with the two-eyed seeing approach in professional learning.

### **Managing the Transition: The Change Path Model**

The CPM includes four stages: awakening, mobilization, acceleration, and institutionalization (Deszca et al., 2020). At each stage, the change team at River College will organize and carry out various activities, which will be monitored by observing the progress over a period of time to determine if staff at River College are proficient with IK into the school environment. These actions and responsibilities will provide flexibility for the change team to pivot to alternative and modified strategies when necessary. The following subsections will discuss how the key elements of each stage of the CPM will be leveraged to initiate change at River College.

#### ***Awakening Stage***

The first step of the CPM (Deszca et al., 2020) calls for an awakening initiated by the Indigenous learner advisor (ILA), the Indigenous Counsellor, and the senior department leaders. The stakeholders are a great resource for the change team as they work to create a change. Indigenous partners and educators will need to be fully engaged in supporting the change to effectively apply the two-eyed seeing approach embedded in professional learning (Wright et al., 2019).

For educators, changes include a greater focus on the development, support, and guidance of culturally appropriate programs to meet the needs of Indigenous students (IETC, 2020). The change team must focus on generating opportunities related to Indigenous education for all levels of educators. This stage requires the change team to emphasize the importance of integrating IK and culture into River College through email communications and in-person staff meetings. A push from the administration focusing on greater accountability placed on the educators takes place in this stage. The importance placed on the issue is driven by the identification and recognition of a lack of Indigenous perspective and voice in education. The change team at River College will seek ongoing support and recommendations from the Indigenous Services department for additional co-teachers of knowledge to provide support to both the staff and Indigenous students. These individuals advise, consult, and involve the development of partnerships to improve Indigenous education and professional learning (IETC, 2020) to aid in the awakening process. As part of my role as the ILA, I sit on several Indigenous committees and learning circles in Indigenous communities as a representative of River College and engage with Indigenous youth during recruitment tours in Indigenous communities. This engagement has familiarized surrounding Indigenous communities with River College and has created a relationship with the college and Indigenous communities.

In the awakening stage, the recruited Indigenous community members will provide advice, guidance, and wisdom in the development of River College's Indigenous committee. To build trust, the interactions between the Indigenous Services staff at River College and Indigenous committee partners must be continuous throughout the process. Ongoing efforts between the Senior Operating Group (SOG) and the IETC will need to continue to build on this trust through frequently targeted approaches with professional development. Together the

proposed steps will not only support the awakening process but will also demonstrate River College's commitment to the issue.

The role of the staff members is instrumental in achieving reconciliation at River College. The following epistemology of promise must be adopted: know your students, have trust in their trajectory of greatness, and as educators, do your part to ensure their growth (Martell, 2018). To encourage the awakening in educators, I will use the Centre for Academic Excellence for professional learning allocation to focus on Indigenous education. As the ILA, I will recruit past and current Indigenous students to share their stories and experiences. A great start to the initiation process will consist of having a group of at least three Indigenous individuals to ensure that a variety of voices are being brought forward to the Indigenous committee. During this time, I will present the two-eyed seeing approach during monthly professional learning sessions to familiarize the staff with the concept. I will provide resources that are culturally responsive and encourage the staff to reflect on their beliefs and values toward Indigenous culture and current practices. Collaboration will create greater understanding and further support the awakening process and will demonstrate a need for change.

To increase awareness and participation, a common goal must be created (Deszca et al., 2020). For this to occur, opportunities must be provided for Indigenous community members to interact with the change team to develop relationships. This will be supported through existing relationships at River College among the professional networks, Indigenous Counsellor and I. Through these interactions, the importance of Indigenous voice and perspective will be presented as a vision for change. Furthermore, the interactions will provide River College connections with the Indigenous community for recruiting cultural experts.

This initial step of forming a committee of Indigenous partners who will take on the role of carriers and co-teachers of knowledge is foundational to the awakening process (Smith, 2016). The Indigenous committee will include IETC members, Indigenous students, Elders, and local Indigenous community members. Once the connections have become solidified, consultation to identify Indigenous practices will begin (Smith, 2000). Adhering to the Indigenous leadership approach, I will ensure that the Indigenous protocols are upheld and facilitate the development of connection and authentic relationships between the Indigenous community and River College.

### ***Mobilization Stage***

The second step requires the change team at River College to identify the ways in which the change could be implemented within the organization (Deszca et al., 2020). The Indigenous Counsellor and I will continue to recruit members for the Indigenous committee by contacting the surrounding First Nation Band Offices via phone and email communications and by attending Band Council meetings on Mondays for face-to-face meetings to seek support. By doing so, the Indigenous Counsellor and I are engaging in collaboration with Indigenous community members per the TRC's (2015) Calls to Action. This stage involves action planning such as scheduling meetings, setting up timelines, organizing cultural ceremonies, facilitating professional learning, reporting data, and maintaining ongoing communication.

Having been exposed to the two-eyed seeing approach during the awakening stage, the staff members will begin to understand the proposed change during the professional development. Discussions during the professional development will focus on barriers that impact Indigenous sense of self and belonging. In order to remove these barriers and make learning relevant and authentic for Indigenous students (Deer, 2010), the educators must familiarize themselves with the cultures to which their students belong (Agbo, 2004; Kanu, 2007; Nardozi &

Mashford-Pringle, 2014). The National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health (NCCAHA) (2017) has identified the following factors affecting educational attainment among Indigenous peoples: Historical and contemporary impacts of colonialism, socio-economic marginalization, and personal factors. The Indigenous students and Indigenous community members will narrate their experience with one of the primary barriers to learning. Participating staff members and the Indigenous representatives will be encouraged to reflect upon current and historical educational practices and share their thoughts on current barriers and provide culturally supportive suggestions that contribute to improving the Indigenous students' sense of belonging with committee members at River College.

The staff members at River College will be asked to share their thoughts on the professional learning sessions they have attended and will collaborate with Indigenous staff during the professional development meetings, through an open forum, using talking stick protocols, and incorporating elements of Indigenous culture into the meetings to ensure that changes are culturally supportive. Once the modified topics and suggestions have been accepted by all, time and preparation for additional professional learning will be implemented. As groups collaborate to understand the varying perspectives on Indigenization, power dynamics will play a significant role in the implementation stage. Non-Indigenous people will need to listen with an open mindset which enables them to learn and understand. Indigenous leadership is important during this stage as it creates a paradigm shift that validates and recognizes complex knowledge systems (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2005) such as IK. While the staff members reflect on personal beliefs and recognize their power and privilege, the Indigenous committee and I can help them modify these beliefs through collaboration to create and sustain a more welcoming environment for Indigenous students at River College.

### ***Acceleration Stage***

The third stage involves taking action. Components of the acceleration stage include encouragement, empowerment, building momentum, and celebrating milestones (Deszca et al., 2020). The acceleration stage consists of the following: engaging the Indigenous community members as part of this process and engaging the staff members in the process of implementing IK into their teaching. Collaboration among educators and the Indigenous committee will aid in the development of global competencies through the integration of Indigenous perspective. As the ILA, I will be monitoring goals with the staff and the Indigenous committee and provide opportunities for new Indigenous community members and the students to join the professional learning sessions to forge strong relations between River College and the Indigenous community. Arranging ongoing professional learning for the staff members led by the Indigenous communities will not only increase teacher training and professional learning with reference to the inclusion of Indigenous perspective but will also create a sense of Indigenous belonging through Indigenous voice at River College and propel the initiative forward. The Indigenous community members will provide suggestions for the staff to consider and consolidate. Setting time aside during professional development for the staff members to discuss strategies for continued improvement, and to share successes will further support the change process.

### ***Institutionalization Stage***

In the final stage of Deszca et al.'s (2020) CPM, changes sought will become ingrained in the very fabric of the institution by achieving a paradigm shift that validates and recognizes two-eyed seeing and Indigenous voice. The ongoing approach to two-eyed seeing embedded in professional learning will generate an environment that is welcoming of Western and Indigenous cultures and build a sense of belonging for every student overnight (Barlett et al., 2002).

However, the steps laid out in Deszca et al.'s (2020) CPM provide a plan of action for the OIP and address the problem of practice (PoP). Institutionalization at River College will require frequent evaluation and adaptation to create a lasting change that values both the Westernized and Indigenous perspectives. This process will consist of tracking the change periodically and make ongoing adjustments when formatively addressed. While complete institutionalized change is the goal, this stage may not be achieved for some time. New structures, systems, knowledge, processes, skills, and abilities may need to be developed as and when required to stabilize and sustain the desired change at River College.

### **Supports, Resources, and Limitations**

The most crucial resource for the success of this organizational change plan is the Indigenous community whose members will make up the Indigenous committee. An Indigenous committee is important to the process of change because without an Indigenous committee, there will be no Indigenous voice, perspective or first-hand experience, and IK to take into consideration, which is foundational to the two-eyed seeing methods and process embedded in professional learning. Though scheduling meetings and setting up timelines surrounding the availability of this group are proposed, the two-eyed seeing approach embedded in professional learning cannot move forward without the participation of Indigenous community members (Barlett et al., 2002). The success of the work in this OIP's change plan relies on meaningful collaboration, consultation, and partnership with local Indigenous community members through not only phone and email communication, but also regular face-to-face meetings. Beyond sharing their stories and providing suggestions for staff, Indigenous students are also involved in the debriefing of each professional learning session. This process provides Indigenous students a seat at the table, an opportunity for social engagement, and most of all, a sense of belonging

(Denbow, 2015). It is evident from the research examined in the work in this OIP that fundamental changes must occur at River College in response to the identified need for change, and that the staff members need training and professional learning so that outdated teaching practices and pedagogical theories of the dominant majority are no longer relied upon and continued (Battiste, 2013; Battiste & Henderson, 2009; Denbow, 2015; Smith 2016).

The ongoing support of the Indigenous Counsellor and I will be necessary for networking, connecting to past and current Indigenous students, and recruiting cultural experts. I will also be responsible for helping to develop support options and solutions as we move through this process. The proposed change for the work in this OIP will require a minimal financial commitment in the form of a traditional offering or honorarium for Elders or Knowledge Keepers to participate in the process or when requesting them to share their knowledge (Ontario Federation of Labour, 2018). However, progress will not be affected by the failure to obtain adequate monetary resources. The greatest cost will be the allocation of time required for professional learning by stakeholders.

Additional costs to River College should be minimal with some potential technology requirements if meetings are forced into virtual mode due to the covid-19 pandemic. To accommodate this disruption, the Indigenous Counsellor or I will help promote connections between the staff and the Indigenous community. Online platforms such as Microsoft Teams, Zoom, or Google Meets will be utilized for initial consultations when meeting in-person is not possible. Furthermore, the many challenges associated with online platforms may create some obstacles to securing sufficient community participation. Some of these challenges may include limited access to technology, the internet, or recruiting participants. Such challenges may not be easy to overcome in an online environment. However, present relationships within the already



established Indigenous partnerships will help overcome some of the potential limitations. Additional efforts from the Indigenous Counsellor and I will be needed to strengthen existing relationships.

### **Short-, Medium-, and Long-Term Goals**

Identifying short-, medium-, and long-term goals are critical for the work in this OIP. Developing goals in small increments will help mark where we are in the change process. Given the various forms of complexities and nuances of Indigeneity in different contexts and methods (Wildcat et al., 2014), the completion of the preceding steps will determine successful completion. For instance, short-term goals consist of completing the steps in the awakening stage of Deszca et al.'s (2020) CPM.

An overview of the short-term goals includes the following: developing an action plan and timelines (2 months); creating awareness and vision (concurrently); Indigenous committee recruitment of and partnerships with cultural experts (immediate, no deadline); departmental partnerships for professional learning (2 months); ongoing support and recommendations (ongoing); and development of the Indigenous committee (1-3 months).

Medium-term goals consist of completing the steps in the mobilization/acceleration stages of Deszca et al.'s (2020) CPM. An overview of the medium-term goals includes the following: identifying barriers and impacts of dominate practices (ongoing); developing cultural competency through professional learning (ongoing); building a collaborative learning community (ongoing); articulation of action plan and culturally supportive suggestions (ongoing); strengthening relationships (ongoing); and empowering teams, building momentum, and celebrating milestones (3-5 months).

And lastly, long-term goals consist of completing the steps in the institutionalization stage of Deszca et al.'s (2020) CPM. An overview of the long-term goals includes the following: implementation of strategies to create a welcoming environment for Indigenous students (6-12 months); achieving paradigm shift that validates and recognizes two-eyed seeing and Indigenous voice (12-36 months); and establishing a system that celebrates the identity, culture and belonging of Indigenous peoples (12-36 months). Table 7 provides an overview of the goals allotted to specific CPM stages and the timeline for achieving these goals.

**Table 7**

*Overview of Goals*

<b>Short Term Goals</b>	<b>Medium Term Goals</b>	<b>Long Term Goals</b>
<i>Awakening</i>	<i>Mobilization / Acceleration</i>	<i>Institutionalization</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop an action plan and timeline (2 months)</li> <li>• Creating awareness and vision (concurrently)</li> <li>• Indigenous committee recruitment of and partnerships with cultural experts (immediate, no deadline)</li> <li>• Departmental partnerships for professional learning (2 months)</li> <li>• Ongoing support and recommendations (ongoing)</li> <li>• Development of the Indigenous committee (1-3 months)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify barriers and impacts of dominant practices (ongoing)</li> <li>• Developing cultural competency through professional learning (ongoing)</li> <li>• Build a collaborative learning community (ongoing)</li> <li>• Articulate action plan and culturally supportive suggestions (ongoing)</li> <li>• Strengthen relationships (ongoing)</li> <li>• Empower teams, building momentum, and celebrating milestones (3-5 months)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement strategies to create a welcoming environment for Indigenous students (6-12 months)</li> <li>• Achieve a paradigm shift that validates and recognizes two-eyed seeing and Indigenous voice (12-36 months)</li> <li>• Establish a system that celebrates the identity, culture and belonging of Indigenous peoples (12-36 months)</li> </ul>

*Note.* This table provides an overview of the goals and where the goals are hoped to be achieved.

## **Stakeholder Reactions and Resistance**

According to Kotter and Schlesinger (2008) there are four reasons for resistance to change, namely a) parochial self-interest, b) misunderstanding and lack of trust, c) different assessments, and d) low tolerance for change. Implementation of change is not always easy, particularly because some or all the stakeholders may be resistant to change due to an emotional response or fear of the unknown (Expert Program Management, 2009).

Stakeholders' reactions may be conceptualized by understanding their individual worldviews. Conceptualizing the possible and potential worldviews of stakeholders will enable the change team to better understand the root cause of the resistance and properly counter it. For instance, a non-Indigenous stakeholder, who sees the world through a Western lens, may be mainly situated within the Western-framed worldview, and may provide a Western response to new initiatives. If an Indigenous-framed worldview challenges Western perspectives set forth by the dominant majority, the resistor may feel that they will personally lose something and will be more focused on how the change impacts themselves (Expert Program Management, 2009) rather than the institution. This is known as the parochial self-interest type of resistance (Kotter & Schlesinger, 2008).

It is important to recognize that stakeholders' response to change may vary, in part due to the nature of their worldviews, experiences, and levels of tolerance for change. This is an important consideration in the development and implementation of the work in this OIP because it indicates that a cultural deficiency may be present among a number of different stakeholders', which, in turn, may delay the success of the change-based initiatives. Efforts that support a paradigm shift may overcome this resistance to change. Kotter and Schlesinger (2008) outline six approaches to address resistance. These strategies include education and communication,

participation and involvement, facilitation and support, negotiation and agreement, manipulation and co-optation, and explicit and implicit coercion.

One way to mitigate resistance to change is to inform and educate stakeholders about the change before it occurs (Dawgen Global, n.d.). Cordial relationships and mutual trust among staff and the change leaders will encourage and support culturally responsive initiatives such as establishing a community that embraces and values culturally responsive teaching and learning (Kars & Inandi, 2018), will also mitigate resistance. This communicative approach is useful when there is inaccurate information or a lack of information of the desired goal (Dawgen Global, n.d.). Through increased collaborative efforts, this approach will help stakeholders see the logic in the change effort and reduce unsupported and incorrect reports concerning the effects of the organizational change plan (Dawgen Global, n.d.). Once persuaded through deliberate efforts to educate, resistance may be minimized, paving the way for the stakeholders to help with the planning and implementation after the new learning. Flexibility in the implementation process will be guided by ongoing evaluation and assessments.

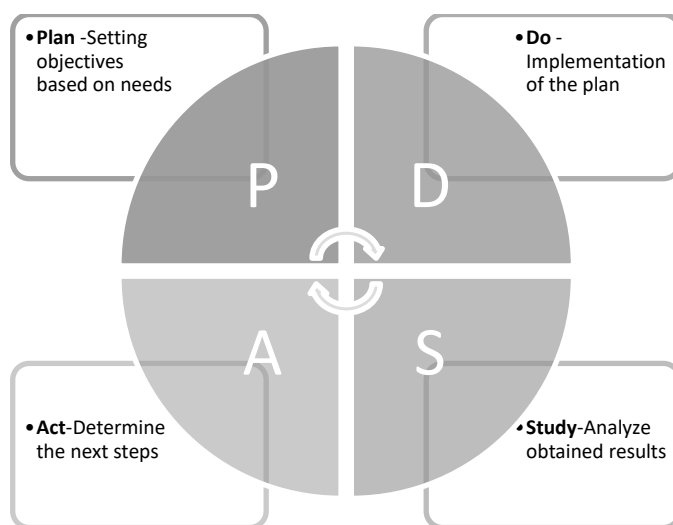
### **Change Process Monitoring and Evaluation**

In this section, I will introduce the Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA) cycle (Figure 7) (Donnelly & Kirk, 2015). The PDSA cycle provides a structure for monitoring and assessing the change systems (Taylor et al., 2014). The PDSA cycle allows the change team to manage changes by posing objectives, achieving valid measurements, and providing evidence whether the approach is working (Donnelly & Kirk, 2015). Markiewicz and Patrick (2016) define evaluation as the systematic determination of the value and quality of a project, with a summative judgement of the project's objectives and goals. The authors also define monitoring as the ongoing, shared, and systemic collection and analysis of information in relation to project

performance against stated expectations and objectives. To determine the integration of IK into current educational strategies and practices at River College during the PDSA cycle (Donnelly & Kirk, 2015) and its change processes, the Indigenous Counsellor and I will assess each stage of the PDSA cycle using Markiewicz and Patrick's (2016) tools of measurement. This monitoring and evaluation plan seeks to align measurements of change with the PDSA cycle to ensure that Indigenization is woven into the change process and incorporated at River College (Conzemius & O'Neill, 2014). In doing so, additional aspects, such as cultural components, need to be taken into consideration to ensure that Indigenous cultural guidelines and traditional protocols are adhered to when decisions are made.

### Figure 7

#### *The PDSA Cycle*



*Note.* Adapted from Donnelly & Kirk's (2015) PDSA model for effective change management.

### The PDSA Cycle

The first stage of the PDSA cycle (Donnelly & Kirk, 2015), plan, correlates with the first stage of Deszca et al.'s (2020) CPM, awakening. During this stage, questions such as “What is the problem at River College?” and “How do we know there is a problem at River College?” are

asked. Such questions are useful to determine measurable and attainable objectives. Answers to these questions help identify the change readiness and develop the change plan. During this step, roles and responsibilities, accountabilities, and targets are identified. The change team will determine the change readiness of the staff members at River College by engaging in collaboration with the staff and using Deszca et al.'s (2020) readiness-for-change questionnaire.

The second stage of the PDSA cycle, do, focuses on executing the action plan for the proposed change. This stage correlates to the mobilization stage of Deszca et al.'s (2020) CPM. The change team will observe and monitor the projected outcomes during the implementation process. Proposed goals and objectives, benchmarks, and checklists will be executed at River College during this stage. These action plans must be revisited, adjusted, or modified as needed, which leads to the third step of the PDSA cycle, study (Donnelly & Kirk, 2015).

The third stage of the PDSA cycle, study, correlates with the third stage Deszca et al.'s (2020) CPM, acceleration. During this stage, data are collected and questions such as "Did the intervention work as planned at River College?" and "Were the outcomes achieved or close to what was predicted at River College?" are analyzed. Activities during the study stage relate to the activities that occurred during the acceleration stage of Deszca et al.'s (2020) CPM. The analysis collected informs the fourth stage of the PDSA cycle, act (Donnelly & Kirk, 2015). During this stage, modifications to the change plan are made to ensure the effectiveness of other changes, to confirm that outcomes are being achieved, and to validate the sustainability of the overall change plan (Donnelly & Kirk, 2015). The PDSA cycle is repetitive to make sure that the improvements are being made, leading to a new planning process. Therefore, the PDSA cycle to ensure the process of incorporating Indigeneity at River College will be ongoing.

### *Awakening-Plan Stage*

The purpose of the first stage of the PDSA cycle is to identify why change is needed and to develop a shared vision for change at River College. According to Deszca et al. (2020), development of a “transformational vision based on higher-order values” is the ideal outcome for this stage (p. 113). The goals of the awakening stage in the plan stage at River College involve creating a shared vision and awareness and creating an Indigenous working committee to strengthen relationships with the Indigenous community. The awakening-plan stage requires collaboration, engagement, consultation, and participation from the Indigenous community. Strategies used in the awakening-plan stage offer opportunities for ongoing dialogue and mutual reciprocity between the staff at River College and the Indigenous community with the goal of creating a common vision for system change and organizational improvement. This stage incorporates IK and can be identified through the ways in which stakeholders engage with one other and communicate. It also requires the involvement of IETC members, Indigenous students, Elders, and local Indigenous community members. Monitoring communications among the stakeholders and setting guidelines for respectful consultation will identify and address areas in need of improvement. Monitoring will include one-on-one communications through emails, email tracking, phone calls and face-to-face meetings with staff, Elders and Indigenous community members. Evaluation of the stage will involve identifying and specifying IK components that are critical to the vision for change at River College.

Monitoring in this stage will need to take various approaches given the cultural component and individuals involved in the process. For instance, when targeting the staff members at River College, conducting a quick survey such as Deszca et al.’s (2020) readiness-for-change questionnaire will measure where the staff members’ thoughts are in terms of change. Collaboration with the staff will take place during meetings and allow for distributing

information needed to create awareness on the importance of creating a welcoming environment for Indigenous students at River College. I will implement monthly follow ups and check-ins through surveys and face-to-face meetings.

The inclusion of Elders, Indigenous community members, IETC members, and Indigenous students from First Nations, Métis, and Inuit populations will continue their efforts as members of the Indigenous Committee. Members who assisted in the recruitment of Indigenous community members and professional learning presenters during the awakening, mobilization and acceleration stages of the CPM (Deszca et al., 2020) will be utilized during the PDSA cycle (Donnelly & Kirk, 2015) and its change processes. In addition to helping to facilitate the recruitment, I will also monitor the level of engagement among Indigenous individuals in the process by observing their interactions with the staff at River College and their attendance at and participation in meetings. Observing a decline in attendance or representation will serve as a warning, requiring immediate response. The information obtained using the PDSA cycle will require ongoing analysis and modifications to achieve and sustain engagement. Adequate representation is necessary as feedback from current members of the Indigenous committee will also help identify gaps and flaws in current methods.

### ***Mobilization-Do Stage***

During the do stage, desired change will be communicated, and engagement will establish the conditions for ongoing professional learning. Collaboration during the do stage will provide opportunities to establish group norms and expectations. This step will also compare River College's current state and the desired state as proposed in the vision for change. Monitoring in the mobilization stage will include observations of Indigenous professional learning and committee meetings, and review of meeting minutes to ensure that the goals are being met. The change team may evaluate the outcomes of this work through formal and



informal dialogue, quick surveys that measure pre- and post-measures of relationship-building, and knowledge of IK in practice.

The mobilization stage of the Deszca et al.'s (2020) CPM requires some key actions to push the stage forward. According to Deszca et al. (2020), aspects that need to be monitored during this stage include organizational structures and systems, cultural dynamics, stakeholder management, and leveraging resources to support the proposed change. Monitoring is needed to ensure that the formalized and sustainable structures have been developed and that those structures at River College are ongoing. IK-specific strategies will need to be developed and provided, in consultation with the Indigenous committee, so the staff can better create a culture of inclusiveness and a welcoming environment for Indigenous students.

The involvement of the Indigenous committee is valuable in this stage as this is where the Indigenous voice, perspective, and past experiences are shared. After the strategies are implemented in the do stage, the staff and the Indigenous committee need to come together to identify successes and where changes need to be made at River College. Furthermore, the Indigenous committee will also ensure that the proposed changes adhere to the four R's (respect, relevance, reciprocity, and responsibility) during this stage (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991). Monthly meetings and professional learning for staff will allow for open dialogue and rich discussions and pave the way to work through the study stage. Frequent check-ins with the staff and the Indigenous committee to ensure movement toward a decolonized atmosphere at River College. To determine whether inclusion has occurred, and to what degree, anecdotal feedback from Indigenous students at River College will be considered. Following the structure of the PDSA cycle, opportunities for improvement will be explored on an ongoing basis at River College.

### *Acceleration-Study Stage*

The third stage of the PDSA cycle works to accelerate the desired change. In this stage, collaboration will empower and engage stakeholders in support of the implementation of change (Deszca et al., 2020). Consultation with the Indigenous committee for professional learning will help the staff members at River College develop new skills, abilities, and knowledge, and incorporate new learning into practice, thereby initiating new learning, reflective practice, and thoughtful planning. I will help the staff members by encouraging dialogue on co-teaching and learning, team-planning, and initiating modelling and mentorship. To monitor this stage, the Indigenous committee will continue to utilize effective communication and consultation methods to build greater cooperation through meaningful interactions. Observing the interactions of the committee members as well as the interaction among the staff members is one way to monitor progress. Surveying the Indigenous committee by asking if they feel they are making a difference, through a sharing circle, is another way to monitor the progress. Evaluation of this stage will result in the identification of the conditions through which deeper commitment and collaboration could be facilitated. Monitoring will be conducted through ongoing dialogue, participation, surveys and checklists, and informal or formal observation.

To measure changes in the acceleration stage, a clear understanding of the goals to be achieved by the stage's conclusion is needed. It is within this stage where the process begins to gain traction through empowering teams, recruiting cultural experts, managing the transitions, and celebrating milestones (Deszca et al., 2020). This stage is where the momentum occurs, and the stakeholders want to provide added support. I will monitor the Indigenous committees, Indigenous students, and the staff members through monthly surveys and face-to-face meetings to help me to understand how involved the Indigenous community feels in the change process.

An Indigenous leadership approach is paramount as it values relationships, interconnectedness, community, and consensus building for decision-making (Julien et al., 2010). A level of trust must exist so that members of the Indigenous community could express their concerns if they do not feel involved in the change process. A loss of Indigenous community engagement would mean that the crucial voice of the project will be absent. The staff members at River College must also be given opportunities to demonstrate some of their successes by working with the Indigenous committee and by observing intentions, dialogue, and attendance in the acceleration stage. Utilizing the time during professional development to share their successes and discuss strategies for continued improvement will further support the process. Monitoring the staff engagement will also offer a sense of where they stand in the change process. Opportunities for check-ins through face-to-face meetings and surveys will identify any problems or where additional steps need to happen to promote continuous growth at River College.

### ***Institutionalization-Act Stage***

The final stage of the PDSA cycle seeks to institutionalize new procedures and processes that result in deeper levels of collaboration to bring about change. Efforts to bring about the desired change at River College includes developing and employing new practices that implement new skills, knowledge, and abilities (Deszca et al., 2020). During this stage, I will support the conditions for collaborative action that promote the use of IK in practice at River College as part of new learning approach. Collaborative actions include deepening conversations that support transformative and transformational leadership approaches and Indigeneity to honor the experiences and knowledge of Indigenous voice and perspective. Collaboration will be monitored by tracking time and resources allocated for the change team to participate in the collaboration process. My monthly evaluation of collaboration will involve recognition of greater levels of innovation, solutions, and performance (Conzemius & O'Neill, 2014). Formal measures

to determine collective efficacy can be used as methods to measure and evaluate the process and instill confidence in the change processes at River College (Deszca et al., 2020).

Monitoring by measuring the efficacy of the actions taken in the institutionalization stage will provide the greatest clarity as to whether the objectives set out in the implementation plan have been met. Questions in the change process that the staff and Indigenous committee will ask themselves at this point of the stage include the following: “Was I able to create a culture of inclusiveness and a welcoming environment at River College that celebrates the identity, culture and belonging of Indigenous peoples?” and “Was I able to achieve a paradigm shift at River College that validates and recognizes two-eyed seeing and Indigenous voice?”

The methods to be employed in identifying if a paradigm shift at River College is achieved may vary, depending on perspectives. To assess perceptions, the change team could look at strategies implemented per component. To find out if a significant difference is noticed, similar questions could be asked to the Indigenous students at River College and community through a survey. Areas that are perceived as needing improvement will require further analysis and modifications. Progress toward a paradigm shift that validates Indigenous voice and perspective at River College, will need to be identified and monitored. Progress will be monitored anecdotally, through surveys and interviews. Continuous use of the PDSA cycle will allow for ongoing monitoring and evaluation as the change team at River College works toward developing a system where Indigeneity is fully ingrained in the school’s culture. Ideally, an institutionalization of Indigenization will be achieved when Indigenous students feel a sense of Indigenous identity, culture, and belonging at River College. If a paradigm shift at River College that validates and recognizes Indigenous voice and perspective has not been successfully implemented, then alternative suggestions for change will have to be looked at. Feedback from

the staff, the Indigenous committee, Indigenous students, and the community will look at whether the change process has been beneficial for students at River College.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation Considerations**

As previously stated in the work in this OIP, additional factors, such as cultural components, need to be taken into consideration and adhered to when decisions are made. Monitoring and evaluation methods that correspond with Indigenous methods include ongoing open-ended conversations and questions, the inclusion of storytelling, and listening (Kovach, 2009). In cultural settings, sharing circles and sharing circle protocols create a familiar environment for the telling of stories, sharing knowledge, and engaging in reflections, and they should be adapted to current settings (Kovach, 2009). More detailed information will provide further cultural understanding and greater levels of meaningful interactions and relationships that otherwise cannot be extrapolated from the analysis of data alone. With cultural inclusivity integrated into monitoring and evaluations methods, a paradigm shift at River College that validates and recognizes Indigenous voice and perspective can be achieved. With comprehensive monitoring and evaluations, it is anticipated that Indigenous students will have their voices heard and will be given opportunities to act as leaders for change at River College (Battiste, 2007).

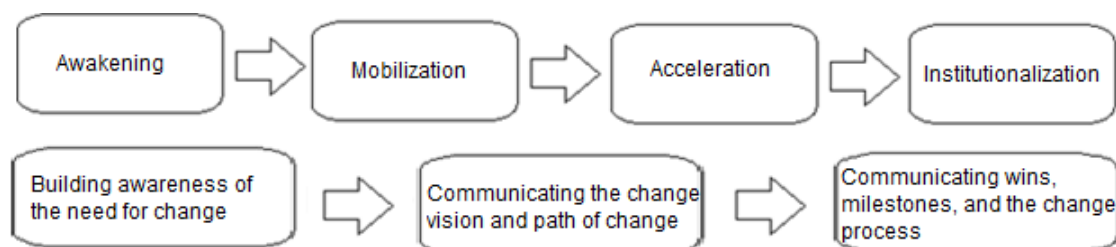
### **Plan to Communicate the Need for Change and the Change Process**

The stakeholders involved must receive a clear message of the purpose for the change when communicating a proposed change at River College. Communicating effectively in cross-cultural settings is imperative to advance the change process. The quality of collaboration and the desire of the staff at River College to cooperate in the process are impacted by the quality of communication (Glanz, 2006). Poor communication can negatively affect the participants' enthusiasm and commitment to the proposed change, immobilizing support (Criswell & Martin, 2007). In contrast, effective communication can sustain enthusiasm, foster commitment to the

intended change, and mobilize support (Criswell & Martin, 2007). The Indigenous Counsellor and I, along with the senior department leaders will communicate with the staff at River College and members of the Indigenous committee throughout the change process. Though the change team members are thoroughly familiar with the details of the change initiatives, they should not assume that stakeholders are just as familiar (Beatty, 2015). Therefore, communication must be ongoing and continuous to help stakeholders understand the proposed change. They should be informed of the changes that will occur during the change process (Deszca et al., 2020). The change team at River College will also engage in informal and formal conversations with stakeholders to support methods to evaluate, monitor, and modify areas that need to be addressed or supported in additional ways to enhance the likelihood for success (Massey & Williams, 2006). Communication is about responding appropriately to a particular audience, providing timely information, and offering feedback (Trees et al., 2009). To communicate the need for change and the change process, River College will focus on the following stages of communication: plan for building awareness of the need for change, plan for communicating the change vision and path of change, and plan for communicating wins and milestones. The change process is laid out in Figure 8 below (Deszca et al., 2020; Kotter, 2012).

### Figure 8

#### *Communication Plan*



*Note.* Adapted from Deszca et al.'s (2020) Change Path Model and Kotter's (2012)

Communication Plan.

Furthermore, an effective communication plan at River College will consider cross-cultural needs, acknowledge cultural differences, and respond appropriately to Indigenous stakeholders. According to Mundy and Compton (1991), the preferred mode of communication in Indigenous settings is done orally because of the long-held respect and recognition of oral traditions.

### **Building Awareness of the Need for Change**

In this process, the change team will communicate with the staff at River College and local education partners, including Elders to promote and influence change. This part of the process recognizes that education is a socially bounded process and dependent on the cultural values and traditions of the society (Dimmock & Walker, 2005). The change team can support planning during this process by highlighting and communicating the strengths of current programs and leadership initiatives such as the Centre of Academic Excellence's (CAE) goals to support the staff at River College in further developing skills and knowledge grounded within the curriculum design, quality assurance practices, outcomes-based education, and teaching learning. They can also support planning during this process by communicating deficiencies and areas that may require greater integration of IK. Communicating these needs will promote an awareness to integrate specific knowledge systems into professional learning and the educational environment. This process creates a purpose for the desired change at River College and links the change to River College's institutional goals and priorities (Deszca et al., 2020).

According to Deszca et al. (2020), communicating the need for change must be clear and compelling. At River College, the Indigenous Counsellor and I will initiate and deliver the necessary communication. First, the Indigenous Counsellor and I will begin the communication process through face-to-face communication with the senior department leaders and the IETC,

highlighting the need for change and explaining the risks if Indigenization initiatives are not implemented at River College. Once the message has been delivered and dialogue has occurred with the senior department leaders at River College, the senior department leaders will be assigned to share the message with the staff members in their departments during the weekly in-person departmental meeting. Shared messages that help to build awareness of the need for change will also address the questions regarding uncertainty. Once the senior department leaders have met with their staff and have begun building awareness of the need for change, River College will set up meetings with the CAE and Indigenous committee to address the staff and respond to any questions, comments, or concerns. The change team will jumpstart the process of building awareness of the need for change at River College, and this initiative will be framed around two specific scenarios: Federal education legislative responsibility and ethical responsibility to support students.

### ***Federal Education Legislative Responsibility***

While education is mainly a provincial responsibility and obligation, Indigenous education falls into the constitutional jurisdiction of the federal government (Government of Canada, 2020). Call to Action #10 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) relates to the federal legislation governing Indigenous education and states the following:

We call on the federal government to draft new Aboriginal education legislation with the full participation and informed consent of Aboriginal peoples. The new legislation would include a commitment to sufficient funding and would incorporate the following principles:

- i. Providing sufficient funding to close identified educational achievement gaps within one generation.
- ii. Improving education attainment levels and success rates.



- iii. Developing culturally appropriate curricula.
- iv. Protecting the right to Aboriginal languages, including the teaching of Aboriginal languages as credit courses.
- v. Enabling parental and community responsibility, control, and accountability, similar to what parents enjoy in public school systems.
- vi. Enabling parents to fully participate in the education of their children.
- vii. Respecting and honouring Treaty relationships (TRC, 2015, p. 2).

Call to Action #10 arose to oppose the federal government's attempt to pass Bill C-33, the First Nations Control of First Nations Education Act, in 2014 (ReconciliAction YEG, 2020). The purpose of this bill was to dramatically increase federal control over every aspect of Indigenous education, but it was shelved the same year when met with opposition from the ongoing TRC reporting (Rae, n.d.). Probably the most multifaceted and contentious aspect of Indigenization is what it means for programs, pedagogy, and learning at River College.

Call to Action #10 highlights the need for restoration, reconciliation, and reclamation of Indigenous culture, and permits Indigenous education and learning at River College to be taught from an Indigenous perspective, allowing for Indigenous voices to be heard. The staff members will be encouraged to make more of an effort to engage in dialogue with Indigenous communities by participating in traditional practices, experiential learning, sharing circles, and personalized professional learning led by Indigenous student representatives and also representatives from Indigenous communities. Furthermore, Indigenous-language and Indigenous-knowledge carriers will be equipped with effective teaching techniques to enable them to contribute to the cause of cultural retention and preservation at River College. Building general awareness of IK and providing comprehensive pedagogical support for the staff members

at River College, who may be nervous about committing a cultural blunder, is the key to encourage participation.

### ***Ethical Responsibility to Support Students***

As a post-secondary institution, River College has an ethical responsibility to support its students in general, but particularly its Indigenous students who attend the college with varying needs and who historically have a higher withdrawal rate than non-Indigenous students because of challenges in identifying with mainstream education (Gilliland, 1995), among other factors. Therefore, the current measures, which have not been adequate in supporting Indigenous student retention, must be changed to allow River College to effectively support the needs of its Indigenous student population. This will serve as the second key message from the change team.

Recruitment and improved retention of Indigenous students at River College remain an ongoing priority, which is why the proposed Indigenization efforts through forthcoming forum and professional learning are highly concentrated. To better support Indigenous students at River College when they arrive, the staff must recognize that IK systems have their own experts and an adaptive integrity of their own (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2005). For instance, Indigenous-language and knowledge carriers may not have Western degrees but have community recognition (Macdonald, 2016). Creating space for IK systems and practices at River College will also mean adjusting the qualification and credentialing criteria to ensure that Indigenization efforts are Indigenous led. In the end, building awareness of the need for change at River College is not a series of checkable boxes, but a process in which effective sustainability requires interconnected responsibility that this envisioned collaborative effort encompasses.

## **Tools for Communicating Awareness of the Need for Change**

To ensure efficient communication with stakeholders, River College will also use email and departmental communications.

### ***Email Communication***

River College will continue its plan to build awareness of the need for change through email correspondence to all senior department leaders, staff members, and members of the Indigenous committee. Correspondence will be modified based on the role the recipients play within the change process. For example, communicating cross-culturally with Indigenous people requires the recognition of certain sensitivities around language such as implementing ancestral names and nation names, and choosing certain terms that respect their constitutionally protected rights and unceded title (Indigenous Corporate Training Inc., 2018). Communication with the staff at River College will aim at explaining why allyship in creating a culture of inclusiveness and a welcoming environment is beneficial to them. The staff members who actively partake in the change process will join the Indigenous Counsellor and I in raising awareness about reconciliation at River College, and as a result of this participation, a new sense of purpose will be created (Deszca et al., 2020). To encourage bottom-up or lateral communication between the change team to the staff at River College, a generic email address for the Indigenous Services department will also be created for the non-Indigenous staff members to correspond with the Indigenous Services staff. This generic email will be monitored and individually responded to by the Indigenous Counsellor and I. This tool removes the hierarchical barriers so that the staff can feel free to provide input and contribute to the change plan regardless of their position, thereby beginning the cultural transformation within River College.

### ***Departmental Communication***

After building awareness of the need for change has begun, departmental communication through face-to-face meetings will take place between the senior department leaders and the staff within their departments. Meeting with the staff members in person will align with the Indigenous communication preferences (Kovach, 2009), will help build rapport, and will add a personal element to the conversations (Deszca et al., 2020). The departments at River College that are heavily involved with the change process will be given information by their senior department leaders about their responsibilities in the change process and will be provided with the opportunity to collaborate with members of the Indigenous committee. All CAE personnel will be encouraged to provide feedback or ask questions based on the communication provided, and the change team will be transparent with their responses about the change process. The change team will also reduce the uncertainty associated with the unknown by assuring the staff members that the future state of the River College will include them.

### **Communicating the Change Vision and Path of Change**

Once a sense of urgency has been established through face-to-face meetings with stakeholders, email communication, and departmental communication, it is important to ensure that the envisioned change and change process are communicated throughout River College. River College will utilize its website and email communication system across its campuses as communication tools.

### ***Website Communication***

River College will utilize its website and update the navigation bars to include a CAE-Indigenous Services department tab on the homepage to normalize the process and content as part of the River College's vision. The web content in this tab will provide an outline of Indigenous-led professional learning opportunities, calendar and timeline for Indigenous-led

CAE activities and sharing circles. Culturally responsive plans will be open to the staff and will serve to communicate River College's vision for change. Access to the CAE-Indigenous Services department website will be given to members of the school community. The website will be maintained and updated to display change planning information and to communicate with stakeholders.

### ***Email Communication***

River College will communicate the change vision and change process to all the staff members through email communication. This communication method is important to the change plan because River College has multiple campuses across Southwestern Ontario, and the method will be helpful in distributing information to all stakeholders across campuses. Messages to the staff will include contents such as key messages, change vision, and progress. The information sent will be compiled by the Indigenous Services staff through regular meetings with the CAE and members of the Indigenous committee. Email tracking will be enforced and monitored to ensure that the staff members at River College are engaging with the content.

### ***Regular Meetings***

Regular meetings will be necessary for connecting members of the Indigenous committee with the past and current Indigenous students. These meetings will also allow the change team to share with the senior department leaders, the CAE, and IETC information on what is happening and to seek guidance around strategies that will support inclusivity and more cultural understanding at River College. The interactions between the Indigenous Services staff and Indigenous partners will need to be ongoing in the process, and preferably with a designate who is influential and trusted in both mainstream and Indigenous cultures. Having a communications person with ties to the Indigenous community and school community will aid in circulating the information, updating what is happening, and strengthening relationships. As the ILA with ties to

both River College and Indigenous communities, I will be the initial person of contact. While face-to-face meetings are preferred, other forms of communications such as virtual meetings, phone conversations, and email are all possibilities. Regular meetings, often weekly, to communicate the change vision will increase the likely retention of Indigenous students and Indigenous community members to the change plan and process (Deszca et al., 2020).

### **Communicating Wins, Milestones, and the Change Process**

According to Kotter (2012), a milestone is a significant occurrence in the life of the change process that gives momentum to the change, whereas *wins* give the needed reinforcements to the change effort. Communicating wins, milestones, and the change process consists of celebrating successes and reinforcing the commitment to the initiative (Deszca et al., 2020). To celebrate success, during the mobilization and acceleration stages, River College will arrange a sharing circle where the staff and Indigenous partners explain how the two-eyed seeing approach embedded in professional learning have been used to enhance cultural understanding. During these sharing circles, participants will pass an item to each other around the circle to allow multiple individuals to take turns to speak.

The participating staff members at River College will share information on whether they have gained more cultural understanding, and whether they are able to recognize the importance of integrating Indigenous voice and perspective into the school community and employ strategies to create a culture of inclusiveness and a welcoming environment for Indigenous students at River College. Indigenous partners will share their thoughts on whether they feel included and welcomed at River College and whether they have a greater connection to their traditional teachings and feel that sharing their voice and perspectives strengthen their Indigenous identity,

culture and belonging at River College. Both the staff and Indigenous partners will be asked to clarify how this initiative has been beneficial.

Celebrating milestones and wins at River College will provide the momentum necessary for the change plan to be successful. The change team, the staff, and the stakeholders will want to know about the plans and how they will occur as the change continues (Richardson & Keith, 1996). To preserve momentum for the change process, milestones and wins need to be communicated. River College will use quarterly updates with the IETC as per its terms of reference (TOR) (2020), email communication, and website communication.

### *Quarterly Updates*

The Indigenous Counsellor and I will provide quarterly updates in-person to the IETC about the change initiatives so that those leaders may receive the information face-to-face with the initial person of contact. Updates on wins, milestones, and objectives will be shared quarterly with the change team such as the SOG, the senior department leaders, and Indigenous committee at River College to keep the momentum for the change. The Indigenous Counsellor and I will also create and distribute a correspondence that highlights the milestones and wins that have been met and the status of pending objectives. For instance, the planning and implementation stages of the change process involve new learning practices that occur per quarter. At the end of each quarter, the Indigenous Counsellor and I will create and release updates to stakeholders to inform them of where River College is in the change process, when milestones or wins have been reached, and what the next steps are in the change process. That way, the senior department leaders can share the progress of operation-specific initiatives with their staff and departments, and in turn, mobilize information through departments at River College.

### ***Email Communication***

I will create an email template for communicating milestones and wins so that the staff members at River College are informed of the change progress. This method of communication will be important for steering the change process forward while sustaining the employee enthusiasm during the 12-36 month-long timeline for change to be realized.

### ***Website Communication***

River College's webpage will not only help to communicate the change vision and path, but it will also display information on change planning and implementation. The information will include relevant details when the milestones are reached, when the objectives at River College are met, and when the staff members are rewarded within the change process. The staff will have access to the CAE-Indigenous Services department website, which will include a progress report with the most up-to-date information on the change process. Once the change team has reached certain milestones, and gained wins, increased Indigenous representation, and provided an inclusive perspective that reflects the diverse identities of Indigenous students, River College will notify the external stakeholders on its public webpage. This external communication will count as a win for River College as it allows the stakeholders know about the progress towards supporting Indigenous students.

In the end, all communication mediums will strategically deliver the necessary information on the plan for building awareness of the need for change, communicating the change vision and path of change, and plan for communicating milestones, wins, and the change process without repetition and over-communicating. Given the presence of its broad Indigenous student population, River College will not use external communication until momentous wins have been achieved including, but not limited to, the following: the development of an inclusive and a welcoming environment; the integration of Indigenous representation, voice, and



perspective through learning efforts; and strengthening of Indigenous identity, culture, and/or belonging in the school environment.

### **Next Steps and Future Considerations**

Once the change plan has been implemented, River College will continue to monitor and evaluate its transformation to ensure that the culturally responsive changes that spread awareness, promote cross-cultural sensitivity and content in current and new services for Indigenous students, are sustainable for the desired future state. Working with the staff at River College and the local Indigenous community, a collaborative approach is suggested that uses the concept of two-eyed seeing embedded in professional learning to create a positive change for Indigenous students. Combining Westernized knowledge systems and IK will provide the staff and students with a greater perspective in the quest for mutual understanding and reciprocal relationships, thereby building a culture of respect and trust. The weaving of IK, voice, and perspective in learning efforts at River College will challenge existing structures by dismantling the colonial voice that dominates education and pave the way toward reconciliation with Indigenous students.

### **Engaging Others**

Employing the two-eyed seeing approach embedded in professional learning provides the first steps for the staff members at River College to better engage and acknowledge the importance IK. This is only the initial stage of change; continuous efforts are needed to ensure reciprocal relationships are further fostered so that the Indigenous voice is strengthened at River College. Moreover, given the extremely diverse student population with an international and newcomer student population of 4,188 students (River College, 2019), River College can examine how this process can be taken and applied to other oppressed or minority student populations. Because the value of lived experiences and cultural perspectives is not limited to

any specific groups, the concept of two-eye seeing can be used as a method to better engage other student populations. Taking into consideration the voice and perspectives of the various minority groups will further aid in creating a sense of identity, culture and belonging for students, which aligns with River College's commitment to ensure a culture of inclusiveness and a welcoming environment for people of all cultures and backgrounds.

### **Increasing Indigenous Representation**

The work in this OIP aims to create a change in the way the staff members at River College provide a more welcoming, inclusive, and accepting environment for Indigenous students. Professional learning that includes IK and provides opportunities for greater Indigenous representation at River College is needed. Given the diverse Indigenous identities present at River College such as, but not limited to, Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, or Lenape (Lunaapeew) (Indigenous Services, 2020), it would be beneficial to recruit more student representative members (preferably one new student, one current student, and/or one returning student or alumni) to sit on the IETC per its ToR (2020). At present, Indigenous voice is underrepresented at all levels within River College, resulting in a lack of crucial Indigenous engagement, which is what the change team is trying to rectify. Therefore, student representative members must also reflect the diverse Indigenous identities at River College. In addition to broadening representation, the SOG, the senior department leaders, the IETC should actively seek out Indigenous instructors to provide a larger Indigenous presence and voice at River College. Members of the Indigenous community could also be encouraged to join the Indigenous committee as co-teachers of knowledge and provide a voice during the professional learning sessions. Promoting the need for and facilitating greater diverse Indigenous representations within these roles will solidify a strong Indigenous voice at River College.

## **Developing an Indigenous Education Plan**

Developing an Indigenous Education Plan (IEP) that reiterates River College's relatively recent commitment to its Indigenous students and communities would be incredibly beneficial. Highlighting strategies and key points that proved effective in the planning and implementation stages, while also navigating how challenges are addressed, will minimize time spent on challenges, so more effort is placed on promoting success at River College. Creating an IEP will allow River College to support additional mandates in the IETC's TOR, and additional principles outlined in Colleges and Institutes Canada's (CIC) Indigenous education protocol, Southern First Nations Secretariat (SFNS)'s (2020) PSE collaborative partnership agreement, the TRC's Calls to Action (2015), and UNDRIP (2007).

An IEP will allow the change team to focus on specific priorities, goals, and action items from these legislations, protocols, and agreements in which shared responsibility and a commitment to enact is adopted. The change agents can re-enact their role as partners and resounding voices to inform the goals and priorities to this plan's development. This includes River College's IETC, ILA, Indigenous counsellor, Indigenous committee, Elders, Indigenous community representation, the CAE, the SOG, the senior department leaders, students, faculty, and staff.

## **Chapter Summary**

Chapter 3 outlined the change implementation plan, modelled after Deszca et al.'s (2020) CPM and the PDSA cycle, to achieve the desired change at River College. Tools to monitor the change are presented to ensure continuous monitoring of the change plan during the planning and implementation stages. Tools to evaluate the change are presented to ensure ongoing evaluation after the implementation of change. A comprehensive communication plan is introduced to communicate a plan of action for building awareness of the need for change, communicate the

change vision and path of change, and communicate wins, milestones, and the change process. Next steps and future considerations are also outlined for contemplation.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the work in this OIP outlines a PoP that requires action. This OIP examines the lack of cultural connection and supports that relate to Indigenous students at River College and provides a solution to create a stronger cultural connection through the two-eyed seeing approach embedded in professional learning for Indigenous voice and perspective to be heard. The critical paradigm guides the change team of the actions to enact in a transformative, transformational, and Indigenous way. While this plan provides leaders of change a series of actions and recommendations, it is incredibly important to note that without active Indigenous participation, the plan to achieve a paradigm shift that validates and recognizes Indigenous perspective and voice, is not feasible. The importance of relationships to the change process is paramount in creating a common vision for system change and organizational improvement at River College. By helping in the organizational change process for the benefit of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, the staff at River College will not only increase cultural responsiveness but will also actualize their purpose of becoming educators.

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## Appendix A

### Readiness-for-Change Questionnaire

Rate the Organization's Readiness for Change	
Readiness Dimensions	Readiness Score
Previous Change Experiences	
1. Has the organization had generally positive experiences with change?	Score 0 to +2
2. Has the organization had recent failure experiences with change?	Score 0 to -2
3. What is the mood of the organization: upbeat and positive?	Score 0 to +2
4. What is the mood of the organization: negative and cynical?	Score 0 to -3
5. Does the organization appear to be resting on its laurels?	Score 0 to -3
Executive Support	
6. Are senior managers directly involved in sponsoring the change?	Score 0 to +2
7. Is there a clear picture of the future?	Score 0 to +3
8. Is executive success dependent on the change occurring?	Score 0 to +2
9. Has management ever demonstrated a lack of support?	Score 0 to -3
Credible Leadership and Change Champions	
10. Are senior leaders in the organization trusted?	Score 0 to +3
11. Are senior leaders able to credibly show other how to achieve their goals?	Score 0 to +1
12. Is the organization able to attract and retain capable and respected change champions?	Score 0 to +2

13. Are middle managers able to effectively link senior managers with the rest of the organization?	Score 0 to +1
14. Are senior leaders likely to view the proposed change as generally appropriate for the organization?	Score 0 to +2
15. Will the proposed change be viewed as needed by the senior leaders?	Score 0 to +2
Openness to Change	
16. Does the organization have scanning mechanisms to monitor the environment?	Score 0 to +2
17. Is there a culture of scanning and paying attention to those scans?	Score 0 to +2
18. Does the organization have the ability to focus on root causes and recognize interdependencies both inside and outside the organization's boundaries?	Score 0 to +2
19. Does "turf" protection exist in the organization?	Score 0 to -3
20. Are the senior managers hidebound or locked into the use of past strategies, approaches, and solutions?	Score 0 to -4
21. Are employees able to constructively voice their concerns or support?	Score 0 to +2
22. Is conflict dealt with openly, with a focus on resolution?	Score 0 to +2
23. Is conflict suppressed and smoothed over?	Score 0 to -2
24. Does the organization have a culture that is innovative and encourages innovative activities?	Score 0 to +2

25. Does the organization have communications channels that work effectively in all directions?	Score 0 to +2
26. Will the proposed change be viewed as generally appropriate for the organization by those not in senior leadership roles?	Score 0 to +2
27. Will the proposed change be viewed as needed by those not in senior leadership roles?	Score 0 to +2
28. Do those who will be affected believe they have the energy to undertake the change?	Score 0 to +2
29. Do those who will be affected believe there will be access to sufficient resources to support the change?	Score 0 to +2
Rewards for Change	
30. Does the reward system value innovation and change?	Score 0 to +2
31. Does the reward system focus exclusively on short-term results?	Score 0 to -2
32. Are people censured for attempting change and failing?	Score 0 to -3
Measures for Change and Accountability	
33. Are there good measures available for assessing the need for change and tracking progress?	Score 0 to +1
34. Does the organization attend to the data that it collects?	Score 0 to +1
35. Does the organization measure and evaluate customer satisfaction?	Score 0 to +1
36. Is the organization able to carefully steward resources and successfully meet predetermined deadlines?	Score 0 to +1
The scores can range from -25 to +50.	

The higher the score, the more ready the organization is for change. If the score is below 10, the organization is not ready for change and change will be difficult. Change agents can use the responses to the questions to help them detect key areas that need strengthening and carry out any actions to strengthen change readiness.

*Source:* Adapted from Deszca et al.'s (2020) Rate the Organization's Readiness for Change scale.