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Hire Education: Work Integrated Learning and Sense of Belonging for International Students

Alexandre (Sash) Querbach
Western University, aquerbac@uwo.ca

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Abstract

International students in Canadian institutions of higher education face multiple barriers to experiencing a full sense of belonging. While these barriers impact their ability to engage fully with their academic programs, they also affect opportunities for post-graduation employment. Work integrated learning has many pre- and post-graduation benefits for students, including increased opportunities for employment. In this dissertation-in-practice, the problem of practice presented explores sense of belonging through the role work integrated learning plays in international students securing post-graduation employment. It proposes an alternate program stream for international students that provides access to work integrated learning opportunities. This stream embeds targeted supports for international students and their placement employers. This proposed program stream embodies the ethics of care and community as grounding principles. Consideration for the problem of practice is through a leadership approach rooted in transformational and distributed leadership and critical reflection. I deliberately address the limitations of my middle manager role through a collaborative agency approach. Guided by activity theory, an examination of the organizational context at Career Ready College (a pseudonym) identifies implementation opportunities and barriers to the proposed change. Sense of community theory grounds the conceptual framework, and the change planning incorporates the change path model. Also included is a plan for monitoring, evaluating, and communicating the proposed change. The dissertation-in-practice concludes with recommendations for expanded work integrated learning opportunities for international students in additional programs at Career Ready College and beyond.

Keywords: international students, sense of belonging, work integrated learning, transformational leadership, activity theory, critical reflection

Executive Summary

The problem of practice (PoP) at Career Ready College (CRC, a pseudonym) explored in this dissertation-in-practice (DiP) is the misalignment between employer needs and the need to provide expanded work integrated learning (WIL) opportunities to international students (IS) as an avenue to post-graduation employment and to foster their sense of belonging in Canadian society. The conceptual framework for the PoP seeks to find parallels between core aspects of sense of community theory (McMillan & Chavis, 1986; Peterson et al., 2008; McMillan, 2011), the benefits of WIL, and common international student experiences fostering a sense of belonging.

Chapter 1 explores the PoP in detail including discussion of my leadership approach to change, the organizational context at CRC, and my leadership focused vision for change. My leadership approach incorporates principles of transformational leadership (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999; Southworth, 2002; Bass & Riggio, 2010; Northouse, 2022) framed by critical reflection (Mezirow, 2000; Cunningham, 2012; Reardon et al., 2019; Wu & Crocco, 2019) while practicing distributed leadership (Gronn, 2000; Spillane, 2005; Bolden, 2011). Utilizing activity theory (Engeström, 1987, 2000; Roth, 2004; Backhurst, 2009), the DiP describes the organizational context at CRC as generally hierarchal. This examination of the organizational context also considers my role and change agency as a middle manager within this structure. Specifically, I explore the vital role middle managers play in successful organizational change (van der Voet et al., 2016; Rydland, 2018; Birken & Currie, 2021). This includes discussion of the limitations posed by the typical role of middle managers as initiative implementers rather than direction setters (Rezvani, 2017; Buick et al., 2018). I leverage the proximity of middle managers to staff and the relationships this fosters as essential to mediating cynicism and resistance to change

among employees (Rezvani, 2017; Buick et al., 2018). One limitation to the middle manager role is that it lacks the requisite individual agency necessary to bring about change in a hierarchal organization. To address this, I incorporate a collaborative agency (Van de Putte et al., 2018; Kaufman et al., 2020; McLure & Aldridge, 2022) approach which brings together multiple actors within the organization to help bring about the proposed change.

Chapter 2 discusses planning and development for addressing the PoP including consideration of a framework for leading the change process, organizational change readiness, leadership ethics, and potential solutions. The change planning section utilizes the change path model (Deszca et al, 2019) which includes four phases: awakening, mobilization, acceleration, and institutionalization. Relevant activities for the proposed change are embedded into these four phases. The chapter goes on to explores three possible solutions, ultimately recommending a targeted WIL stream that specifically supports the unique needs of IS. This stream includes multiple cooperative education (COOP) opportunities and three specialized courses embedded over the course of the program. Within this international WIL stream are additional supports for employers to help them better integrate IS into their workplaces. This preferred solution is grounded in the ethics of community (Furman, 2004) and care (Noddings, 2008).

Chapter 3 explores implementation, communication, and monitoring and evaluation of the preferred solution. Considerations for effective change communication and knowledge mobilization (KMb) are based on Husain's (2013) three-phase communication strategy that aligns directly with Lewin's (1947) model of change and is adapted to the change path model. Knowledge mobilization includes five aspects based on the work of Lavis et al. (2003): target audience, the message, the messenger, process, and evaluation. The DiP includes a monitoring and evaluation plan using multiple plan, do, study, act (PDSA) cycles (Donnelly & Kirk, 2015).

To effectively monitor the change, a separate PDSA cycle is incorporated for each phase of the change path model.

The DiP concludes with a discussion of possible next steps and future considerations which include expanding international WIL streams to multiple programs at CRC and potentially to other institutions of higher education. The narrative epilogue explores my own doctoral journey through a reflective discussion of the deeper learning and insights I have developed over the course of the Doctor of Education program at Western University.

Acknowledgements

This work was completed on land inhabited by Indigenous peoples since time immemorial. The region in which I live is recognized by the Wampum Treaties between the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, Lenni Lenape, and allied nations to care for the resources in and around the Great Lakes. I also acknowledge the presence of the Three Fires Confederacy (Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi) and the Huron Wendat Peoples.

Many thanks to the myriad family, friends, colleagues, instructors, and especially students from whom I have learned and drawn inspiration as an educator. My mother always referred to education as a "life's work," a vocation to which one can genuinely dedicate a life. This work is an extension of that sentiment, and I am grateful to all those who have enriched my life as an educator.

A very special thank you to my partner and best friend who has listened, read, provided feedback, listened some more, and given me the requisite time and focus for this work. Kerry, this would not have been possible without you. To my Alexander and Benjamin, your love is the highest achievement of my life. Watching you grow and learn has been my greatest motivation to continue to do the same.

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Acronyms

CBIE   Canadian Bureau of International Education

CEWIL   Co-operative Education and Work-Integrated Learning Canada

CIP   Change Implementation Plan

COOP   Cooperative Education

CRC   Career Ready College (a pseudonym)

DiP   Dissertation-in-Practice

EL   Experiential Learning

IS   International Students

KMb   Knowledge Mobilization

PoP   Problem of Practice

QAO   Quality Assurance Office at CRC

WIL   Work Integrated Learning

Definitions

Collaborative Change Agency: an approach to change leadership which disrupts the belief that change agency lies solely in the individual (Van de Putte et al., 2018) through a commitment to shared, collaborative change implementation (McLure & Aldridge, 2022).

Cooperative Education: a paid experiential learning work-term during a program of study in higher education (CEWIL, 2021).

Experiential Learning: a process of learning through "cognitively, affectively, and behaviorally process[ing] knowledge, skills, and/or attitudes in a learning situation characterized by a high level of active involvement" (Gentry, 1990, p. 10).

International Students: students in Canada on a visa or refugees, neither of which have permanent residency status in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2011).

Sense of Belonging: the "feeling or sensation of connectedness, and the experience of mattering or feeling cared about, accepted, respected, valued by and important to the campus [and broader] community or others on campus such as faculty, staff, and peers" (Strayhorn, 2019, p. 4).

Work Integrated Learning: experiential learning that bridges theory and practice for students in an appropriate work or practice setting (CEWIL, 2021).

Chapter 1: Problem Posing

While there are myriad definitions and models of work integrated learning (WIL), it is most widely understood as experiential learning (EL) that bridges theory and practice for students in an appropriate work or practice setting (CEWIL, 2021). Traditional models of WIL include cooperative education (COOP), internships, practicums, and clinical placements. More recently, models of WIL have expanded to include service learning, simulations, and applied research (CEWIL, 2021; Zegwaard & Pretti, 2023). In this dissertation-in-practice (DiP), WIL refers primarily to COOP and internship opportunities. WIL has become internationally recognized as a strategy for enhancing college students' career readiness and opportunities for post-graduation employment (Braunstein et al., 2011; Peach & Matthews, 2011; Jackson, 2013; Jackson & Rowe, 2023).

This DiP addresses a problem of practice (PoP) at Career Ready College (CRC, a pseudonym): the misalignment between employer needs and the need to provide expanded WIL opportunities to international students (IS) as an avenue to their post-graduation employment and fostering their sense of belonging in Canadian society. The DiP seeks to achieve flexible WIL opportunities for IS that give them authentic work experiences while they complete their program requirements. In higher education IS experience inequitable access to WIL opportunities (Cukier et al., 2018; Andrew, 2020). Concomitantly, WIL is a recognized pathway to post-graduation employment opportunities for post-secondary students (Braunstein et al., 2011; Peach & Matthews, 2011; Jackson, 2013; Jackson & Rowe, 2023). Concerning numbers of IS feel "isolated and unwelcome" in their Canadian institutions of higher education (CBIE, 2021, p. 25). For IS securing post-graduation employment contributes to a sense of belonging within their communities (Tran & Soejatminah, 2016).

Chapter 1 begins with a discussion of my leadership position, positionality, and lens. It goes on to describe the organizational context at CRC including details about its broad political, economic, social, cultural, and equity contexts. Next is a discussion of the leadership PoP including guiding and inquiry questions. This PoP is then framed using activity theory (Engeström, 1987, 2000; Roth, 2004; Backhurst, 2009) which helps to identify the diverse, competing actors and contexts impacting the vision for change. The final section expands on this vision for change including identification of gaps between the current context and the preferred future.

Leadership Position, Positionality, and Lens

As a White, heterosexual, cisgendered, male, I make every effort to acknowledge this privilege, although by its very nature it is my backpack of tools of which I am generally unaware (McIntosh, 1988). Critical reflection aides in mediating this lack of awareness. It is not only an effective tool for acknowledging unexamined privilege but necessary for effective leadership (Reardon et al., 2019; Wu & Crocco, 2019). Khalifa et al. (2016, 2018) noted that culturally responsive leaders create welcoming and inclusive spaces for equity deserving students and break down barriers to full participation in their education. Acknowledging my privilege is an important step, interrogating the bias it generates is another. Opportunities for WIL would likely have enhanced my educational experience but were not essential to my securing employment or experiencing a sense of belonging in my community. These were advantages I took for granted because I lived, worked, and was educated in a culture that reinforced my privilege as normative. This is an important lens to the PoP because equitable access to WIL for IS provides them with opportunities that those of us with privilege typically take for granted.

Leadership Lens and Position

While theoretical underpinnings are a necessary aspect of developing an approach to leadership, in practice I understand leadership in quite simple terms. The principles and theories discussed in this chapter certainly anchor my leadership approach, but on a personal and experiential level, the foundation of effective leadership can be reduced to four basic practices. They are listed below in order of importance but are interconnected and fluid:

1. Effective leaders always, always start by looking inward. (Reardon et al., 2019; Wu & Crocco, 2019)

2. Effective leaders make others feel supported. (Day et al., 2020)

3. Effective leaders make others feel valued. (Day et al., 2020)

4. Effective leaders get over themselves. (Hougaard & Carter, 2018)

I am currently in the role of Manager of Experiential Learning and Career Supports at CRC. My background, however, is in public education where I spent more than 20 years as a teacher, school administrator, and superintendent. I bring the voice and perspective of an experienced educator but to a new environment and organizational context where I can no longer rely as much on my reputation and long-term relationships. Part of developing my leadership agency is forging new relationships in my current context.

Leadership Agency

My new role puts me in unfamiliar territory. As a school principal and then supervisory officer, I had enormous autonomy and opportunity to implement change. Currently, my role in middle management limits my direct ability to institute wide organizational change (Rezvani, 2017; Buick et al., 2018). At the same time, as the typical first contact regarding WIL opportunities for IS and employers, my department is consistently on the receiving end of their

frustrations with the lack of flexibility for these opportunities at CRC. To address these limitations in the DiP, I utilize a collaborative agency approach which is discussed in more detail in Chapter 2.

Middle managers play a vital role in change implementation and are increasingly viewed as critical to successful organizational change (van der Voet et al., 2016; Rydland, 2018; Birken & Currie, 2021). One of the challenges for middle managers is that they are often squarely in the role of implementer rather than setting organizational direction (Rezvani, 2017; Buick et al., 2018). With that said, the proximity of middle managers to staff and the relationships this fosters help to mediate cynicism and resistance to change among employees (Rezvani, 2017; Buick et al., 2018). In the case of my PoP, this proximity takes on additional value as staff in my office deal directly with employers requesting WIL placements and the IS seeking these opportunities. In terms of leadership and change agency, this is a strength but does not provide us with the direct capacity to institute change to organizational structures and policies. What we can do is look at our own procedures and practices related to IS and through more targeted support consider ways to provide them with better access to and preparation for WIL. Additionally, we can leverage our contextual understanding of the barriers IS face to promote enhancements in their WIL offerings within appropriate channels.

Theoretical Approach to Leadership

I align most closely with transformational leadership (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999; Bass & Riggio, 2010; Northouse, 2022). Transformational leadership is a response to more traditional, conservative forms of educational leadership which place leaders at the top of the expertise hierarchy in an organization. Transformational leadership focuses more on a collaborative, shared vision of organizational improvement with the leader as one of several individuals

working to shift organizational direction. As an approach, transformational leadership seeks to build leadership capacity across teams of individuals, rather than aligning it solely with positional reverence (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999; Southworth, 2002; Northouse, 2022). Transformational leadership positively impacts individual, departmental, and organizational functioning because it encourages others to work beyond the confines of job descriptions and assigned duties (Boerner et al., 2007; Budur, 2020). In this way, transformational leaders see collaboration as critical to organizational change. It is also an effective approach for those leading from the middle who require coalitions of actors (Deszca, et al., 2019) to bring about change in traditional, hierarchal organizational structures.

Transformational leadership, however, does not necessarily denote moral or ethical leadership. A leader can empower others to lead a shared vision among collaborators even when that vision is not rooted in ethical behavior (Schuh et al., 2013). For this reason, I also look to Mezirow's (2000) transformation theory which involves deeply examining individual assumptions, values, and beliefs, "assessing their contexts, seeking informed agreement on their meaning and justification and making decisions on the resulting insights" (p. 4). For Mezirow, an essential aspect of transformational learning is critical reflection of assumptions. Critical reflection of assumptions involves looking at our "contextual understandings" of the environments in which we live and work and developing "not only awareness of the source and context of our knowledge, values and feelings, but also critical reflection on the validity of [these] assumptions or premises" (p. 6). Mezirow argued that adults have a unique capacity for reflection and that adult educators must facilitate a process through which learners become "aware of how [they] come to [their] knowledge and… the values that lead [them] to these perspectives" (p. 8). He referred to Habermas' (1985) distinction between two kinds of learning:

instrumental and communicative. Instrumental learning involves an attempt to "control and manipulate the environment or other people…" (p. 8). Communicative learning is an effort to understand "what others mean when they communicate with you" (p. 8).

Communicative learning is more consistent with transformational leadership because it views meaning creation as a collaborative, interactive process. For Mezirow, this communicative learning is a central aspect of learning as a transformational process involving looking for more justified judgments by considering a wider range of perspectives and experiences. He defined reflective discourse as "dialogue devoted to searching for a common understanding and assessment of the justification of an interpretation or belief" (p. 11). Habermas' distinction assists in drawing a strong contrast between the existing leadership context at CRC which is generally hierarchal and the approach espoused in this DiP which favours collaboration and distribution. This examination of transformation theory and Habermas' distinction in which it is rooted results in the following conclusion: leaders must become aware of the assumptions at work, both individual and organizational when communicating with others.

Mezirow (2008) went on to point out that these assumptions often work as justifications for societal norms. Critical reflection challenges these justifications as a "process by which we transform problematic frames of reference (mindsets, habits of mind, and meaning perspectives)—sets of assumption and expectation—to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, reflective, and emotionally able to change" (p. 26). This process of transforming problematic frames relates well to my epistemic stance which aligns primarily with postmodernism and poststructuralism. While an increasingly vacuous term, postmodernism can be viewed as a response to positivism which presupposes the constancy and verifiability of knowledge and truth. By contrast, postmodernism presents knowledge as a construction based on

situation and context. While references to postmodernism appear earlier, the work of Lyotard (1979/1984) cemented the concept as a rejection of meta-narratives or universal truths, leaning more towards "the relative truths of location and contingency" (Hooley, 2024, p. 47). Not unlike Mezirow's view that our values, experiences, and assumptions form the foundation of our beliefs, postmodernism recognizes the "situational limitations of the knower" (Richardson, 2001, p. 35).

The origins of postmodernism can be found in in poststructuralism (Derrida, 1974/2016) which examines the relationship between language and meaning. That is, structuralism is the process by which language determines meaning through two different concepts. The signifier relates to the sound patterns and or visual appearance of the word and the signified relates to the meaning of the word as represented by the signifier. Ultimately, the signifier holds no meaning in itself but comes to have meaning through its association with the signified. As Derrida observed, the meaning of the signified is never fixed and therefore always deferred. Once meaning is deferred it can be transformed, reconceptualized, and even reinvented altering understandings that have been historically viewed as constant. As Capper (2018) noted, "With an interest in the complexities of decision-making and dissensus, a poststructural epistemology questions decision-making associated with dialogue and consensus that can oversimplify and mask power inequities and create an illusion of community" (p. 6). In the context of equity, diversity, inclusion, and decolonization this stance aligns with the imperative, discussed later in this chapter to create new and better spaces for everyone rather than relying on adjustments to status quo (Sefa Dei, 2016; Capper, 2018). For the purposes of establishing an epistemological framework, Capper considers postmodernism and poststructuralism similar in the context of educational leadership. As leaders, the task rather than working towards and end goal is to

interrogate the focus of the end-point itself. This idea aligns with the backward mapping approach (Furman, 2004) discussed in Chapter 2. I am simultaneously conscious, however, of Hooley's (2024) concern that while postmodernism and poststructuralism seek to destabilize and challenge dominant and normative power structures, this is "often from an idealist and intellectual position only (p. 49). There is a need then for a bridge between the idealistic and intellectual and the practical applications of leadership. For me, this bridge is critical reflection.

Reardon et al. (2019) provided a useful model for how critically reflective leaders, regardless of leadership style or approach operate in an organizational setting. It encompasses Donald Schön's (1983) concept of reflection-in-action. For Schön reflection-in-action contrasted the view that professional knowledge is guided strictly by "instrumental problem solving made rigorous by the application of scientific theory and technique" (p. 21). He identified the limitations to the technical-rational epistemology by suggesting that "increasingly we have become aware of the importance of the actual practice of phenomena – complexity, uncertainty, instability, uniqueness, and value-conflict – which do not fit the model of Technical Rationality" (p. 39). He argued that problem solving is the basis of technical-rational thinking but suggested that too little attention is paid to "problem setting, the process by which we define the decision to be made, the ends to be achieved, the means which may be chosen" (p. 40). This concept of problem setting is significant because it reframes the functional behaviours of leaders away from traditional top-down management. That is, leadership becomes a process of challenging existing processes and structures by asking probing questions rather than blindly capitulating to past practice (O'Neil & Nalbandian, 2018).

This problem setting in Schön's view sets the groundwork for the recognition of a different kind of professional knowledge, what he called reflection-in-action. Reflection-in-

action is "the spontaneous, intuitive performance of the actions of everyday life" which shows that professionals are "knowledgeable in a special way" (p. 49). Schön drew a distinction between pure application of knowledge and the "inherent" knowing which exists within intelligent action. He further suggested that one similar pattern is the concept of "reflective conversation with the situation" (p. 268). He argued that regardless of profession, inquiry begins with an attempt to solve a preset problem. For Schön, the act of reflection is divided into reflection-on-action which relates to the post hoc examination of an event to determine where improvements or changes might be made and the more dynamic and simultaneous process of reflection-in-action which involves modifying actions within the act itself. In other words, critically reflective leaders engage in a constant process of reflection that considers their actions, but also the foundations of their personal and organizational beliefs (Collay, 2014; Reardon et al., 2019; Wu & Crocco, 2019).

Linked to these two leadership approaches is the concept of distributed leadership which aligns with both transformational and critically reflective leadership. The term distributed leadership was first used by Gibb et al. (1954) to problematize the concept of unitary leadership. As a leadership approach, it is more of a response to the complexity of change than is it an adopted, predetermined leadership style (Harris, 2008). Similarly for Gronn (2000), distributed leadership is "holistic… fluid and emergent" (p. 252) rather than the identification of specific behaviours that influence others. Distributed leadership is rooted in leader-member exchange theory (Northouse, 2022) which presents leadership as a process centered in the "interactions between leaders and followers" (p. 157). In this way, it allows for the allocation of responsibility in response to complex development or change thus reducing individual task burden (Angelle, 2010; Hammershaimb, 2018).

It is worth noting that distributed leadership is often understood as an alternative to hierarchal, bureaucratic structures and as such a more effective and desirable leadership approach. Lumby (2019) noted that there is little empirical evidence to support these claims and that distributed leadership does not in fact result in redistribution of power. In the context of my leadership approach and the DiP, power dynamics are present but not a central consideration. That is, to achieve the preferred future, and because our office is not the place of exclusive support for IS at CRC, collaboration among all invested parties is essential. Further, there is recognition here that those with the power to institute the proposed change from an organizational standpoint are part of the wider coalition of agency required to realize the preferred future (Deszca et al., 2019). While a singular accepted definition of distributed leadership is contested, Bolden (2011) identified three characteristics that have general agreement among leadership scholars:

1. Leadership is an emergent property of a group or network of interacting individuals.

2. There is openness to the boundaries of leadership.

3. Varieties of expertise are distributed across the many, not the few. (p. 257)

Distributed leadership is not a replacement for other approaches nor a set of actions a leader undertakes; it is informed by the interactions leaders have with others (Spillane, 2005; Bolden, 2011).

My role as a manager is four steps away from senior leadership in the hierarchy of CRC (see Appendix A). These organizational change agency limitations, however, are mediated by my position on the frontlines of employer-student matching. This position allows me to bring preferred solutions forward and provides some influence on getting these recommendations to the decision-making table. Employer relationships are a significant priority to the senior

leadership team at CRC, but this team rarely engages with employers on more than a macro level. This tertiary interaction with employers creates a culture where their dissatisfaction is rarely communicated to the senior leadership team. It is, however, consistently communicated to my team. What this means is that my team's regular interaction with employers is a significant priority for the senior leadership team. Where we fall short based on the organizational context at CRC is a mechanism to directly influence organizational policy and direction as it relates to WIL. To mediate these limitations, I will employ a theoretical approach to leaderships (see Figure 1) grounded in principles of collaboration, shared responsibility, and critical reflection.

Figure 1 is a visual representation of my theoretical approach to leadership. It presents critical reflection as foundational to my beliefs about effective leadership. With critical reflection

Figure 1

Theoretical Approach to Leadership
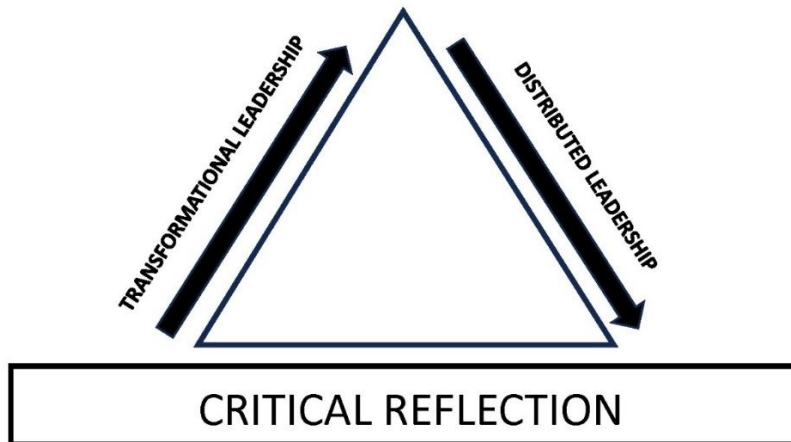
Note. Figure 1 shows that while critical reflection is foundational to my leadership approach, it is in constant interaction with transformational and distributed leadership practices. In this way, it is simultaneously grounding and interactive.

as its base my approach is consistent with the collaborative behaviours associated with transformational leadership. My execution of leadership employs distributed leadership. This visual, however, does not present the interaction of these elements as sequential. For example, a grounding in transformational leadership logically leads to distribution of responsibilities but this distribution then serves to reinforce the value of transformational leadership. At the same time, deep critical reflection is essential to an openness to empower others while examining the limiting influence of individual beliefs, assumptions, and values. Ng et al. (2019) argued that critical reflection can produce "emancipatory knowledge [that] aims to transform rather than perpetuate existing perspectives and power relations" (p. 1123). When combined with reflexivity, "recognizing one's own position in the world" to better understand and appreciate "the limitations of one's own knowing and… the social realities of others" critical reflection can inspire leaders to take action to improve "our shared social world" (pp. 1124-1125). Recognition of individual limitations and appreciating others' realities are essential to practicing a collaborative, allocative leadership style. In this way, Figure 1 establishes the complex interplay between these elements with critical reflection simultaneously grounding and interactive. This leadership approach will help with navigating the structural and systemic features of the organizational context at CRC.

<center>**Organizational Context**</center>

Formal leadership at CRC is structured very much from a conservative approach through a hierarchal structure (see Appendix A). Gutek (2013) referenced Edmund Burk's conservative belief that the function of education is the endurance of wisdom and cultural transmission from one generation to the next. The obvious critical questions that arise are: Whose wisdom? Whose culture? At CRC, there are almost as many IS as domestic. Cultural transmission from one

generation to the next as an educational priority presupposes the supremacy and constancy of the dominant culture. With an ever-growing number of IS, a more culturally relevant and responsive context is required at CRC. A fulsome examination of the organizational context at CRC requires discussion of the broad political, economic, cultural, equity, and ethics contexts.

Political and Economic

Recent changes by the Canadian government for the 2024-2025 academic year will reduce the number of approved IS visas by 35% and allocate them to provinces based on their population proportion (Rana, 2023; Friesen, 2024). This has not only made fierce competition for IS imminent but program quality and employment access more significant recruitment factors. Other colleges have expanded international WIL opportunities and supports in ways that are currently unavailable at CRC. This reality while easily viewed as a limitation also serves as a condition ripe for innovative approaches to address employer needs while simultaneously supporting wider WIL options for IS that enhance their sense of belonging.

Currently tuition for IS at CRC is about $14, 000 per year whereas domestic students pay around $4000. International students make up approximately half of the student population at CRC creating a financial boon for the institution to which it has become dependent. The Ontario Government's 2024 budget showed a $3.1 billion revenue loss for Ontario colleges. To address this only a $1.3 billion increase in post-secondary funding was announced (Crawley, 2024). The financial implications for CRC are evident as fewer international study visas will be granted. As legitimate pathways to post-graduation employment are an identified recruitment factor for IS (Scott et al., 2015), these financial implications make more urgent the need to examine expanded WIL opportunities for IS. These potential program enhancements, however, are dependent on working within the cultural context at CRC.

Cultural

At CRC significant value is placed on the supremacy of its hierarchal structure. Ironically, those in positions to implement change often have a limited vantage point due their role. Positional reverence and institutional hierarchy are powerful norms (Crawford & Mills, 2011) at CRC that function as barriers to meaningful, organizational change. These norms echo the work of Burrell and Morgan (1979) who described the functionalist paradigm as rooted in the "sociology of regulation" (p. 25) and characterized by a concern for status quo and social order. Additionally, an apparent lack of accepted change model within the organization often leads to reactionary decision making. This is not indicative of a lack of will to do better but a kind of organizational paralysis rooted in past practice and routine (Blackler, 1993; Wadhwani et al., 2018; Faroughi et al., 2020).

While the foundations of the organizational structure at CRC are structural functional, there is evidence of an interpretivist shift. The interpretivist paradigm looks to the subjective context of individuals in an organization to establish understanding of their experiences but leans towards regulation rather than radical change (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). Mezirow (1996) noted that interpretivists view understanding as a "social" not a "biological" exercise (p. 160). That is, norms rather than instincts drive behaviour. Capper (2018) acknowledged the "participation and human relations" aspects of the interpretivist epistemology but argued that because this view still seeks to maintain status quo and ignores "privilege, power, identity, oppression, equity and social justice" it cannot be "oriented towards equity" (p. 4).

This conflict is evident at CRC. There is recognition of the changing student demographic, specifically the influx of IS and the needs of this group. For example, there is a dedicated support office for IS, an equity, diversity, and inclusion committee, a new residence to

accommodate IS' housing needs, and targeted tutoring services for IS. Additionally, there is a mentorship program that pairs new IS with current CRC students before and after their arrival on campus to help with the transition to this new environment. While these initiatives at their core were undertaken to support IS, they are not structural or systemic changes. In this sense they are "laid on top of the broken structural functional education… and ignore the assimilationist culture and oppressive system of schooling" (Capper, 2018, p. 60). This reluctance to make structural changes is at the core of my PoP. There has been little movement at CRC towards considering more accessible and flexible WIL options but more importantly an apparent hesitancy to make an institutional connection between opportunities for WIL and sense of belonging for IS. Like many organizations ordered under interpretivist principles, at CRC stagnation (in developing targeted WIL options for IS) is not a conscious effort to do harm. Rather, it is an organizational norm that favours what has always been done over what the current student population needs.

WIL placements benefit not only students' employability and career readiness but also enhance their chances of securing post-graduation employment in their field of study (Braunstein et al., 2011; Peach & Matthews, 2011; Jackson, 2013; Jackson & Rowe, 2023). Given the limited WIL offerings at CRC and increasing employer requests for student placements that cannot be accommodated, the retention and protection of status quo emerges as not only a barrier to IS but a potential harm to the organizations' bottom-line. Additionally, the limitations in WIL offerings can be seen as antithetical to the social context at CRC.

Social

CRC's stated vision speaks to excellence in all aspects of the organization with a mission to change the course of students' lives through accessible educational experiences rooted in career preparation, creativity, and life-long learning. CRC espouses the values of accessibility,

accountability, collaboration, diversity, inclusivity, integrity, quality, respect, sustainability, and transparency. As stated earlier, almost half the student population at CRC is international; many seek permanent employment after graduation. This is consistent with findings by Scott et al., (2015) that IS in Canada "expressed a strong desire to transition into the Canadian labour force after graduation" (p. 10) and that supporting community connection and sense of belonging is essential to this transition. On an organizational level, there is misalignment between the stated mission and values at CRC and the opportunities for WIL available to IS.

Equity and Ethics

There is some dated Canadian research which suggests that in certain fields there are increased employment opportunities and income premiums for students who participate in WIL during their post-secondary studies (Darch 1995; Walters & Zarifa, 2008). However, little research exists about whether this link exists in the same way for IS. In fact, there is a noted lack of empirical research on the delivery and types of WIL available to IS (Patrick et al., 2008; Gribble, 2014, 2015). One of several factors impacting IS' decisions to remain in Canada is the prospect of quality post-graduation employment opportunities (Holley, 2017; Netierman et al., 2022). Fakunle et al. (2022) noted that there are "enduring legacies of colonization embedded in the structures of higher education institutions" (p. 26). Increasing the numbers of IS at an institution may expand its diversity but does not constitute inclusion or decolonization. "Inclusion is not bringing people into what already exists; it is making a new space, a better space for everyone" (Sefa Dei, 2016, p. 36).

Accordingly, efforts to decolonize higher education must upset the status quo (Sefa Dei, 2016). Inequitable access to WIL opportunities for IS in higher education (Cukier et al., 2018; Andrew, 2020) and at CRC is the status quo. It is a barrier to their full educational inclusion that

does not exist for domestic students. International students report that they are aware of supports in their institutions, but few tend to access these services (Tran & Soejatminah, 2016; Lau et al., 2018; Rivas et al., 2019; CBIE, 2021). This speaks to a need for targeted academic and career support services for IS. Simply offering the same services to all students and then leaving it to them to access these supports does not align with principles of equity. Rather, it results in maintenance of the status quo.

As noted, a significant barrier for IS is access to quality employment opportunities upon graduation (Dauwer, 2018; CBIE, 2021). Recent data indicates that one in four IS in Canada plan to work after graduation with the goal of securing permanent residency (CBIE, 2021). In fact, opportunities to secure work during and after their educational programs is a significant pull factor for IS to Canada (Scott et al., 2015; CBIE, 2018). At the same time, significant numbers of IS in Canadian institutions of higher education do not feel a sense of belonging (CBIE, 2021). Nel Noddings (1988) spoke of a "relational ethic" (p. 219) as the basis for the moral obligation to show care to others. As an established need for IS, sense of belonging is central to their experience of care (Phua & Jin, 2011; Chen & Zhou, 2019). Ultimately, providing WIL opportunities to IS is an act of care because it has the potential to improve their employment prospects and sense of belonging. In this way, access to these opportunities is not only consistent with commitments to equity, inclusion, and the relational process of care but the stated mission and values at CRC.

Leadership Problem of Practice

Work integrated learning is increasingly a priority in post-secondary institutions across Canada (Galarneau et al., 2020). At the core of WIL is partnership between the educational institution and employers. This partnership requires flexibility in program offerings to provide

meaningful WIL opportunities for students and to meet the needs of employers (Zegwaard & Pretti, 2023). Potential placement employers often want sector-specific COOP or internship placements for students in programs at CRC that do not provide these options. For example, an employer may want a full 15-week work-term COOP for an office administration student but that program offers only a three hour per week study-term placement during students' final semesters. This is a common issue at CRC. Most programs have EL components and in many cases these take the form of WIL. These components, however, are often heavily prescribed and only for a few hours per week in a specific semester. This inflexibility routinely results in employer WIL opportunities being unavailable to IS at CRC.

The Canadian Career Development Foundation supports organizations in the career development of their clients through training and advocacy. While this organization does not support higher education exclusively, it does advocate WIL as an effective approach to helping students identify appropriate careers, refine their learning goals, develop specific competencies related to their career objectives, and establish a network of post-graduation contacts (Bell & Benes, 2012). Given, the high number of IS at CRC, the need to provide WIL opportunities is even more urgent. Access to viable, program-related employment after graduation contributes to IS experiencing a sense of belonging and ultimately deciding to remain in Canada (Dauwer, 2018; Glass, 2018). Senior leadership and management at CRC continue to prioritize employer and industry connections as essential to providing meaningful EL and post-graduation employment to students but this has not translated into expanded WIL opportunities for IS. In my role as Manager of Experiential Learning and Career Supports, the PoP explored here is the misalignment between employer needs and the need to provide expanded WIL opportunities to

IS as an avenue to their post-graduation employment and fostering their sense of belonging in Canadian society.

Guiding and Inquiry Questions

The PoP is guided by the following four questions:

1. To what degree do IS at CRC feel that their existing WIL opportunities provide them with sufficient experience, career readiness, and employment opportunities?

2. To what degree do employer partners at CRC feel its existing WIL options effectively integrate IS into their workplaces and address their human resource needs?

3. What conditions and supports benefit IS' sense of belonging at CRC and in the surrounding community?

4. How will enhanced, flexible opportunities for WIL help IS at CRC experience a greater sense of belonging?

This first question speaks to the importance of accessing the voices of IS in discussions about enhancing opportunities for WIL at CRC. Student voice and agency can be influential forces in setting policy and direction in educational organizations (Cook-Sather, 2020). The second question speaks to the essential role employer needs plays in addressing the PoP. To this point, there has been no concerted effort at CRC to deeply examine whether graduates, specifically IS are in fact meeting employers' needs. Additionally, the question of integration into Canadian workplaces has not been adequately addressed and the starting point for this discussion is exploring employer attitudes about how well IS are making this transition. The third question is more holistic than the last because it speaks to the range of supports institutions must provide to ensure IS experience a sense of belonging. As noted in the previous section, some genuine steps have been taken at CRC to enhance supports for IS but no

significant structural changes have occurred. The final question ultimately acknowledges the substantial change in the make-up of the student population at CRC and considers the need for comparable enhancements to WIL opportunities for IS. This question goes to the heart of the PoP. It is foundational to the central argument in this DiP that opportunities for secure, quality post-graduation employment are essential to IS experiencing a sense of belonging in their adopted communities.

Framing the Problem of Practice

Although critiqued as too static a model to capture the complexity of organizational change (Roth, 2004), activity theory (see Figure 2) offers a useful framework for identifying factors impacting the change process (Engeström, 1987, 2000; Roth, 2004; Backhurst, 2009). Activity theory seeks to address "[t]he persistent dichotomy between micro-level processes and macro structures" (Engeström, 2000) and the ability to move beyond things as they are to an outcome more aligned with organizational goals.

Figure 2 demonstrates the interaction and influence of different organizational and external factors on the preferred future helping to frame more clearly the organizational context at CRC. It identifies not only barriers to change planning and implementation but opportunities to build a coalition of actors in support of the proposed change (Deszca, 2019). Further, it helps me to better understand both the strengths and limitations in my own and my team's change agency within the larger organizational structure. For example, as Figure 2 shows, there is a desire among the senior leadership team and Quality Assurance Office (QAO) to retain existing and recruit new employer relationships. Due to their roles, they have a high degree of change agency but lack the day-to-day interaction with students and employers. The question of whether IS' and employers' needs are being met while certainly a key organizational priority is largely

Figure 2

Problem Framing Using Activity Theory
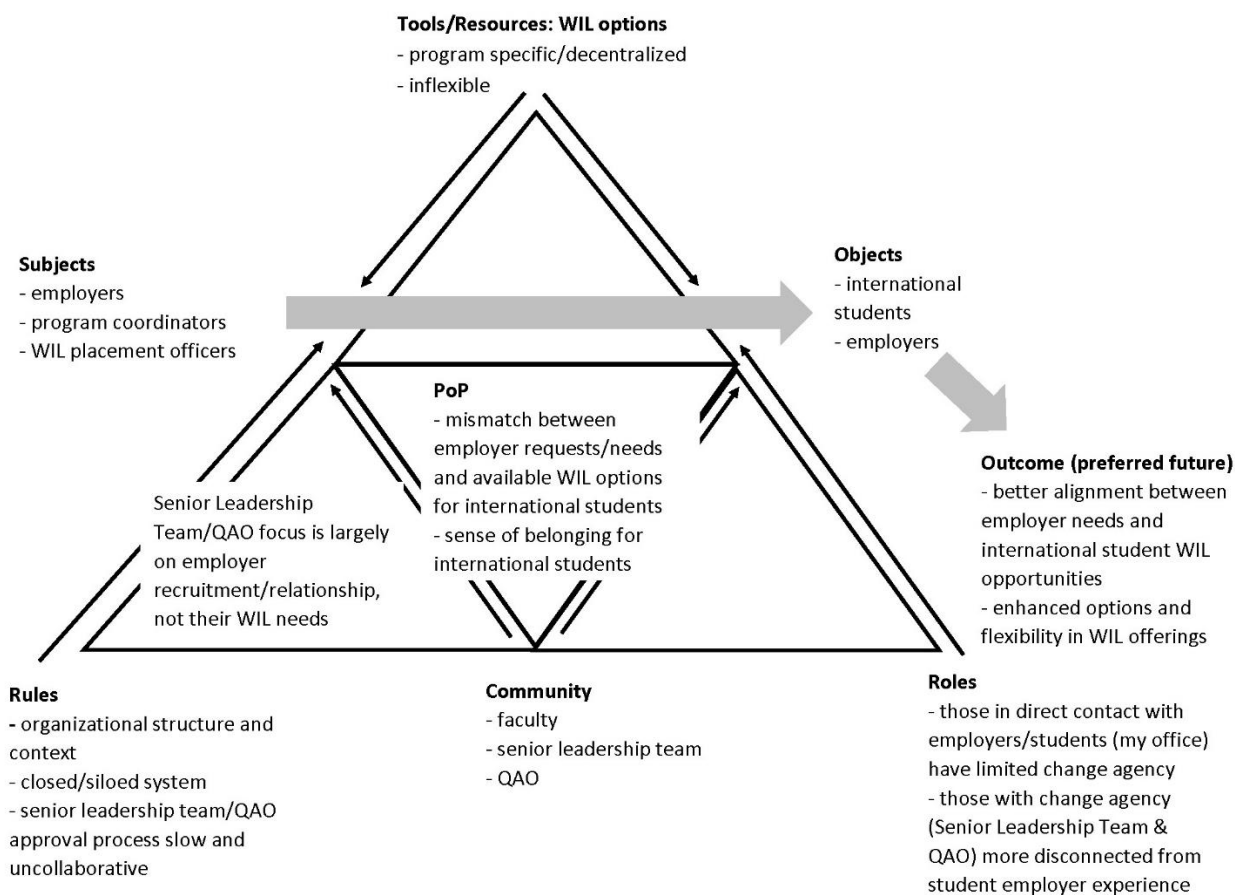
Note. Adapted from "Activity theory as a framework for analyzing and redesigning work," by Y.

Engeström, 2000, *Ergonomics*, *43*(7), p. 962 (https://doi.org/10.1080/001401300409143).

Copyright 2000 by Taylor and Francis; and "Activity theory and education: An introduction," by

W. M. Roth, 2004, *Mind, Culture, and Activity*, p. 3

(https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327884mca1101_1). Copyright 2004 by Taylor and Francis.

outside of their situational context. This disconnect negatively influences progress towards the

preferred future because it effectively masks a growing problem with employer satisfaction and

international student access to WIL. Additionally, it exacerbates the commodification of IS as

objects of revenue and recruitment (Buckner et al., 2023) making a focus on their sense of belonging a secondary priority to their fiscal contribution.

Community Membership as Sense of Belonging

McMillan and Chavis (1986) defined sense of community as, "… a feeling that members have of belonging. A feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members' needs will be met through their commitment to be together" (p. 9). For the purpose of this DiP, sense of belonging for IS is achieved through experiencing membership within the CRC and wider communities. An essential aspect of this membership is the opportunity to access necessary supports and opportunities to secure post-graduation employment. Sense of community as a framework includes four primary domains: membership, influence, emotional connection, and needs fulfillment (Peterson et al., 2008). These four domains relate to both the benefits of WIL and IS' sense of belonging (see Table 1). Positive student outcomes related to feeling part of a community are opportunities for collaboration, opportunities for agency and leadership, and increased academic engagement (Peterson et al., 2008).

Essential to membership in a community is a sense of belonging which supports positive mental health and well-being (Baldwin & Keefer, 2020). Strayhorn (2019) defined sense of belonging for students in higher education as "a feeling or sensation of connectedness, and the experience of mattering or feeling cared about, accepted, respected, valued by and important to the campus community or others on campus such as faculty, staff, and peers" (p. 4). For this DiP, others on campus also includes employers who are central to learning outcomes supported by WIL. Sense of belonging can even impact higher education students' intention for program completion (Hausmann et al., 2007). Additionally, IS who experience less discrimination and a

greater sense of belonging are more likely to remain in the host country after graduation (Duru & Poyrazli, 2011; Scott et al., 2015).

As noted earlier, this sense of belonging for IS is in part fostered by their ability to obtain stable employment after graduation (Dauwer, 2018; Glass, 2018). This connects to the two-fold purpose of the PoP. First, it seeks to address the misalignment between the kinds of WIL opportunities employers are requesting and the options available in programs at CRC. Second, it addresses barriers for IS to WIL opportunities which support career readiness and can lead directly to permanent employment (Braunstein et al., 2011; Peach & Matthews, 2011; Jackson, 2013; Jackson & Rowe, 2023). Secure employment supports a sense of belonging in a community. This sense of community as established by McMillan and Chavis (1986), Peterson et al. (2008), and MacMillan (2011) anchors the DiP's conceptual framework (see Table 1).

Conceptual Framework for the Problem of Practice

There are several factors that influence students' sense of belonging in Canadian post-. secondary institutions. Chen and Zhou (2019) identified four primary factors that can bolster or inhibit sense of belonging in IS: culturally diverse campuses, familiarity with the English language, campus characteristics, and the quality of information sharing. Chen and Zhou's factors align well with those influencing sense of community (McMillan & Chavis, 1986; Peterson et al., 2008; McMillan, 2011).

The first factor relates to feelings of membership within a community which describes a decision to invest oneself in a community and consequently the right to belong. Within membership is a sense of belonging which involves a feeling that one has a place within their community. This includes feelings of acceptance by the group and a willingness to sacrifice for it. For students in higher education, academic and social engagement are key to experiencing a

sense of belonging (Young & Davis, 2020). Students experience a greater sense of belonging when they experience both academic and life success during their higher education experience. Another domain of community is influence. This is a two-fold experience where an individual must feel that they can influence the community but are open to its influence as well. For IS, this community influence is unavoidable and is not a question of individual agency. Access to secure employment increases self-determination and helps to tip this scale towards a more balanced relationship between being influenced and influencing.

A third factor, emotional connection has at its core a sense of "shared history" (Peterson et al., 2008). This does not mean that all members of the group have experienced this history only that they identify with it (McMillan & Chavis, 1986, p. 13). For higher education students this relates to the importance of surroundings, specifically finding cultural connections between students' home and adopted communities (Young & Davis, 2020). Integration and fulfillment of needs involves the ways that "togetherness" is promoted through rewarding, "individual-group association" (McMillan & Chavis, 1986, p. 12). Related to this factor is the importance of personal spaces which includes, "students' self-esteem and identity" (Young & Davis, 2020, p. 630). That is, individual identity plays a role in feeling accepted within the larger community. These four factors all culminate in a sense of community: a collective meeting of needs resulting from a decision to come together (McMillan & Chavis, 1986).

Table 1 demonstrates a conceptual framework for the PoP. It seeks to find parallels between core aspects of sense of community theory (McMillan & Chavis, 1986; Peterson et al., 2008; McMillan, 2011), the benefits of WIL, and common international student experiences fostering a sense of belonging. For each criterion demonstrating that an individual belongs to a community, there is a related benefit of WIL, and a common international student experience.

With a working framework reinforcing the need for changes to WIL opportunities at CRC, it is also necessary to consider how to lead that change.

Table 1

Conceptual Framework for the Problem of Practice

Sense of Community Theory	Work Integrated Learning Outcomes	International Students' Sense of Belonging
Membership I feel like a member of this community. I belong in this community. (Peterson et al., 2008)	• opportunity to develop much-needed professional identity (Trede et al., 2012)	• IS' perceptions indicate that WIL enhances their social connectedness and enables their growth as a 'full' human being (Tran & Soejatminah, 2016)
Influence I have a say about what goes on in this community. People in this community are good at influencing one another. (Peterson et al., 2008)	• better informed decisions about their career direction and greater certainty about career choices (Zegwaard & Coll, 2011)	• a need to move beyond simply providing educational services to creating productive conditions and external opportunities for IS to act with agency and to participate in various aspects of the host society (Tran & Vu, 2018)
Emotional Connection I feel connected to this community. I have a strong bond with others in this community. (Peterson et al., 2008)	• connections made during work placements (Ferkins, 2002)	• social capital helps to bond IS in creating meaningful connections (Phua & Jin, 2011)
Needs Fulfillment I can get what I need from this community. This community helps me fulfill my needs. (Peterson et al., 2008)	• direct and faster entry into the labour market (Calway & Murphy, 2000; Valadkhani et al., 2001; Braunstein et al., 2011; Jackson & Rowe, 2023).	• IS often do not have the requisite work experience to be considered for jobs after graduation (Flynn & Arthur, 2013)

Leadership Focused Vision for Change

Moran and Brightman (2001) defined organizational change as "the process of continually renewing an organization's direction, structure, and capabilities to serve the ever-

changing needs of external and internal customers" (p. 111). One essential aspect of implementing change is developing a rationale and vision for change.

Rationale and Vision for Change

My change vision sees employers more authentically integrating IS into their workplaces so both groups can experience the benefits these opportunities offer. At present, there are multiple WIL opportunities across programs at CRC, but they often do not provide full workplace integration for an extended time-period. In many cases, they are placements that occur one day a week over the course of a semester. The envisioned future state involves expanded opportunities for IS to participate in formal COOP.

This vision for change also addresses organizational inequities as domestic students do not face the same barriers to WIL and its subsequent employment opportunities compared to IS. The preferred future seeks to address inequitable access to WIL for IS (Cukier et al., 2018; Andrew, 2020) at CRC. These types of WIL opportunities improve IS' confidence in their workplace capabilities (Jorre de St Jorre & Oliver, 2018). Part of the reason for this is that WIL provides IS with both intentional and organic learning experiences including building networks and developing a sense of professional identity (Gibson & Busby, 2009; Tran & Soejatminah, 2016). Additionally, WIL improves career readiness and opportunities for post-graduation employment (Braunstein et al., 2011; Peach & Matthews, 2011; Jackson, 2013; Jackson & Rowe, 2023).

For IS, securing post-graduation employment contributes to a sense of belonging in their institution and wider community (Tran & Soejatminah, 2016). From this perspective, the preferred future puts special emphasis on diversity, equity, and inclusion principles. McGraw Hill (2023) developed the *Equitable Education Framework* (see Appendix B) for higher

education. This framework is useful in supporting a rationale for CRC to better serve its IS through changes to WIL offerings. The framework establishes three domains that support equitable educational practices in higher education:

1. Access and Achievement: the ability to have the necessary resources and supports to excel in higher education.

2. Being and Belonging: the students' beliefs that they can be themselves and are a valued member of the institution's community.

3. Cause and Career: the student's need to find and pursue their purpose while also being prepared for the real world. (McGraw Hill, 2023)

There is a list of questions in each domain that assists institutions in rating their practices against the framework's equity criteria. For example, the first domain includes a question about the autonomy of administrators and faculty to accommodate students' needs. Given the limited WIL options at CRC, this is a critical question, particularly for IS. The framework's second domain includes the question, "Are opportunities for formal and informal networking and community building being fostered?" (McGraw Hill, 2023). More accessible and flexible WIL options certainly enhance networking opportunities for IS. The final domain in the framework considers whether employer connections are actively offered and if there is enough flexibility in programs to allow students to explore non-traditional careers. Opportunities to network, try out different careers, and connect with employers are all established benefits of WIL (Braunstein et al., 2011; Peach & Matthews, 2011; Jackson, 2013; Jackson & Rowe, 2023). The framework supports these WIL benefits as consistent with imperatives for offering equitable higher education. In this sense, expanded, flexible WIL options support equitable educational outcomes for IS.

WIL has three primary benefits for IS. First, it fills a noted gap in opportunities to secure Canadian work experience and network with potential employers (Arthur & Flynn, 2013). This relates well to the third domain of the McGraw Hill framework because WIL provides experiences where workplace skills can be enhanced while simultaneously filling the lack of Canadian work experience gap. A second barrier that WIL addresses for IS is that it offers opportunities for identity exploration and recognition of individual competencies. Canadian colleges tend to perpetuate a deficit narrative related to IS (Buckner et al., 2023) but this seems to extend also to IS' perception of themselves. While more prominent in females, IS report having difficulty appropriately describing and feeling confident about their skills (CBIE, 2021).

International students also report challenges securing employment due to difficulties navigating the expectations of Canadian employers (CBIE, 2021). WIL provides opportunities to better prepare IS for the Canadian workplace through bolstering their existing skills and competencies while demystifying workplace norms. This relates well to the first domain of the McGraw Hill (2023) framework as this type of support provides opportunities for students to "excel in higher education." A third benefit of WIL is that it provides direct access to community connection through workplace experience thus strengthening student connection and belonging. Engaging employers in better serving IS' needs will assist in creating welcoming and inclusive WIL experiences (CBIE, 2021). This aligns with the second domain of the McGraw Hill framework as engaging with employers supports IS in feeling they are valued members of the institutional and wider community.

Current versus Preferred Future

There are multiple barriers faced by IS. Not all can be addressed through expanded, targeted, and supported WIL opportunities. With that said, WIL provides numerous benefits for

experiencing a deeper sense of community belonging. The current state of WIL at CRC is not well-positioned to maximize these benefits for IS. While there are extensive opportunities for EL, not all allow for direct workplace experience. Additionally, WIL opportunities at CRC often follow a placement model where students are integrated into workplace settings one day a week for a single semester. In far fewer cases, there are opportunities for COOP or internship for full semesters, but in only some cases are these opportunities paid. Additionally, there are few direct supports built into these opportunities that specifically address barriers faced by IS and proper preparation for employers. The preferred future sees the implementation of programming that addresses the current gaps in WIL opportunities for IS. Chapter 2 includes detailed discussion of potential solutions to realize this preferred future.

Chapter 1 Conclusion

There is a subtle narrative related to IS that operationally circumvents their identification as an equity deserving group. That is, IS are often viewed as having travelled overseas by choice to access a Canadian education. It is a narrative that renders IS as others in system initiatives designed to support equity. In short, in many higher education institutions, the financial boon of increased international enrollment does not result in a reciprocal level of support to ensure these students integrate into Canadian society in an authentic and meaningful way. As a middle-manager working in the area of student WIL placements, this discrepancy presents itself daily. The desperation to secure employment is palpable for IS; the few opportunities for them to access paid work within their educational programs only exacerbates this urgency. WIL has the potential to profoundly impact the experience of belonging for IS. More than anything it is an ethical imperative. International recruiters and higher education institutions have much to gain by marketing the Canadian educational experience. At the same time, selling a pathway to

employment as a recruiting tool requires institutions to ensure this pathway exists. WIL has the

potential to fulfill this promise. The response to the PoP proposed here seeks to disrupt and

problematize this approach to international student recruitment. The DiP on the most basic level,

is a plan to fulfill the promise of legitimate employment opportunities for IS. Chapter 2 discusses

the planning and development of a response to the PoP. This includes discussions of my

leadership approach to change, the framework for leading the change process, organizational

change readiness, leaderships ethics, and proposed solutions to address the PoP.

Chapter 2: Planning and Development

Chapter 2 expands on the problem of practice (PoP) and organizational context described in Chapter 1. It considers my leadership approach to change and discusses its appropriateness for addressing the PoP. Next, it provides a detailed discussion of the change path model as a framework for planning the delivery of expanded work integrated learning (WIL) opportunities to international students (IS) at Career Ready College (CRC). It goes on to apply two organizational change readiness tools to the context at CRC. A discussion of the ethical foundations of the proposed change follows. The chapter concludes with a detailed discussion of potential solutions to the PoP and the identification of a preferred solution, the implementation of which will be discussed in Chapter 3.

Leadership Approach to Change

My approach to change aligns with my theoretical approach to leadership discussed in Chapter 1. It is constructed from a commitment to transformational leadership (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999; Southworth, 2002; Bass & Riggio, 2010; Northouse, 2022) framed by critical reflection (Mezirow, 2000; Cunningham, 2012; Reardon et al., 2019; Wu & Crocco, 2019) while practicing distributed leadership (Gronn, 2000; Spillane, 2005; Bolden, 2011). The concept of critical reflection is essential to effective leadership (Reardon et al., 2019; Wu & Crocco, 2019) and is a necessity for those leaders who seek to engage in practitioner research (Cunningham, 2012). When applying critical reflection to a collaborative approaches like transformational and distributed leadership, there is potential for collective reflexivity which assists in navigating the inevitable uncertainties and need for ambiguity tolerance during innovative change implementation (Wei, 2024). Further, Sim and Nicolaides (2024) argued that critical reflection combined with enactivism, the idea that understanding results from interaction between living

things and their environments results in the synergy of "multiple ways of knowing" creating a "more dynamic and fluid approach to learning as transformation" (p. 108).

Distributed leadership in particular is an effective approach in promoting ambidextrous innovation (Rao-Nicholson et al., 2016; Fu et al., 2018; Berraies, et al., 2021). While rooted more in the realm of business innovation, ambidextrous refers to the capacity within organizations to simultaneously engage in exploitive and exploratory approaches to change (Nie et al., 2022). Exploitive innovation refers to honing existing practices and procedures, and exploratory innovation involves investigating new methods and mechanisms (March, 1991). This ambidextrous capacity is relevant to the PoP and the enhancement of WIL opportunities as its proposed solution. That is, there are already multiple forms of WIL in place at CRC to which IS have access. There are also myriad opportunities to expand these opportunities and even create new ones to better support post-graduation employment outcomes. In this way, the response to the PoP requires and ambidextrous leadership approach.

Leaders by necessity must focus on change with strong will, modesty, and commitment to long-term ownership of change initiatives (Fullan et al., 2005). Like Fullan, I see change as a moral imperative specifically as it relates to dismantling oppressive structures that create barriers for underserved students. Like many institutions, higher education plays a key role in reproducing normative structures that perpetuate colonial practices (Stein & de Andreotti, 2016). International students are drawn to Canadian colleges in part by a desire to secure employment and remain in Canada (Holley, 2017; Jafar & Legusov, 2021; Netierman et al., 2022). While decolonization is not central to the equity framework of this dissertation-in-practice (DiP), it bears mention. Pathways for IS to equitably access WIL, experience its benefits, and secure post-graduation employment do not structurally exist at CRC. The status quo is a patchwork of

programs and procedures that at times results in post-graduation employment for IS but does not reflect intentional programming specifically designed for this purpose. In this sense the proposed change upsets the status quo and in so doing helps to decolonize (Sefa Dei, 2016) existing practices at CRC.

As an approach to leadership, I am committed to the success I can inspire in others (Mintzberg, 2004). This refers to my general commitment to IS at CRC but also the organization's ability to offer them more flexible and available WIL options. These options will offer greater access to the workforce for IS and by extension a deeper sense of inclusion and belonging in Canadian society. Leaders who practice honest interrogation of organizational practices (Collins, 2001) through critical reflection act as catalysts for continuous improvement and lasting change. As Gorton et al. (2006) noted, "People don't change unless their leaders model seriousness about the change" (p. 176). My leadership approach is grounded in equity, dismantling normative structures that cause oppression, and modelling the need for ethical change initiatives.

Leadership Approach and Organizational Context

One benefit of my leadership approach within the organizational context of CRC is that it can help to disrupt the status quo by embedding collaboration into existing siloed, compartmentalized practices. Notably, communities of practice across departments can help to foster cooperation among silos (Forsten-Astikainen et al., 2017). "Communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly" (Wenger, 2011, p. 1). Leaders with a transformational, critically reflective, and distributed leadership style are committed to creating collaborative cultures.

The implementation of this DiP will involve the identification of a single program which is well situated for expanded WIL opportunities with faculty committed to providing these opportunities for IS. This will be an opportunity to bring this small community of practice together through its commitment to a common goal. Working across silos and forging new collaborative approaches to change at CRC will be a small step to building a broader collaborative culture. Through collaborative agency our group will be simultaneously improving opportunities for IS and developing the organization.

Collaborative Change Agency

As discussed in Chapter 1, my role in middle management creates individual change agency limitations (Rezvani, 2017; Buick et al., 2018). To address this barrier, I utilize collaborative agency by leveraging not only the relationships in my immediate department but with those at CRC who are invested in the overall success of our IS. Given the increasingly public urgency to better support IS in Canadian higher education institutions, developing collaborative agency should be prioritized with the same urgency. In my specific context this requires the engagement of my direct supervisor who is responsible for academic operations and their colleague who oversees the IS program. This step will aid in the disruption of the siloed organizational norms at CRC and begin a shift towards more collective responsibility.

Van de Putte et al. (2018) disrupted the traditional responsibility-blame dichotomy to undermine the oft taken for granted assumption that agency lies solely in the individual. They argued, not unlike Mezirow (2000) that an "assemblage" of agency "open[s] the capacity for thought and the capacity to reconfigure the world" (p. 898). Kaufman et al. (2020) recommended wide engagement of actors within an educational organization. McLure and Aldridge (2022) identified a lack of coherence between national/provincial directives, strategic organizational

priorities, teachers, students, and leaders as a major barrier to successful change implementation. To counter this barrier a concerted effort must be made to align potentially disparate priorities, practices, and behaviours. Where agency is shared, commitment to change implementation improves, resulting in greater potential for sustainability (McLure & Aldridge, 2022). Collaborative agency is a key strategy to mediate my positional limitations in responding to the current circumstances driving change at CRC.

Lewin's model of change (1947) speaks to unfreezing while Deszca et al. (2019) describe a need for awakening. Both models of change require a level of urgency as the genesis to a process of organizational change. I have argued that the context at CRC and its organizational structure are not conducive to recognizing the urgency of providing pathways for employment to IS. Given the current political climate related to international recruitment, this urgency has arrived at CRC. Stagnation in appropriately responding to the influx of IS is not sustainable. One of the causes of this stagnation is a siloed organization with limited collaboration among faculties and departments supporting IS. Employing a transformational and distributed approach to leadership is an intentional choice to help break down these silos and mobilize collaborative agency in support of IS.

Framework for Leading the Change Process

Moran and Brightman (2001) defined organizational change as "the process of continually renewing an organization's direction, structure, and capabilities to serve the ever-changing needs of external and internal customers" (p. 111). In the context of this PoP, the term customers aligns with the various internal and external invested parties in the CRC community. Specifically, the customers are the students themselves. On its surface, Moran and Brightman's definition of change appears incongruent with Lewin's three stage model for change. Lewin's

notions of unfreezing, changing, and refreezing can appear too singular, simplistic, and neat to capture the complexity of deep, organizational change. On the other hand, these three stages are not necessarily linear and can occur multiple times over the course of a change initiative. In the same way that a freeze-thaw cycle can occur multiple times during a season, change through Lewin's model is dynamic and continuous.

Lewin's Model of Change

Lewin's model of change (1947) offers a potential, appropriate framework for implementing a response to the PoP addressed in this DiP. Lewin established three phases of change: unfreeze, change, refreeze. "Unfreezing focuses on the need to dislodge the beliefs and assumptions of those who need to engage in systemic alterations to the status quo" (Deszca et al., 2019, p. 45). Historically, WIL options at CRC have been determined by faculty in individual programs through program development in the Quality Assurance Office (QAO). This compartmentalized approach has resulted in little effort to create more standard, accessible WIL options for students across programs. To unfreeze this historical practice a new vision of WIL as critical to post-graduation employment and sense of belonging for IS must be established (Arthur & Flynn, 2013; Scott et al., 2015).

Lewin's theory posits that when unfreezing occurs, conditions become ripe for meaningful change. This shift to the second phase of this change model seems obvious enough but does not suggest that the unfreezing of existing attitudes about program autonomy and protectionism is simple. When it comes to disrupting historic organizational structures, unfreezing can be the most challenging part. With that said, change in this context will come in the form of new and expansive WIL opportunities for IS. The hope is that once these

opportunities are established, they will eventually become embedded so that "systems, structures, beliefs and habits can refreeze in their new form" (Deszca et al., 2019, p. 45).

Lewin's model of change is helpful in framing the basic change sequence needed for expanded WIL opportunities at CRC but is insufficient in capturing the complexity of the requisite change phases. With that said, Burnes (2020) argued that Lewin's model is in fact an iterative process by design, presupposing that learning leads to action which leads to new learning. Moreover, "Lewin's democratic and iterative approach depends on the collaboration of change recipients, and that a solution emerges during the consulting process" (Endrejat & Burnes, 2024, p. 107). In this way this model is theoretically aligned with the need for collaborative agency as described in this DiP. This focus on collaboration with change recipients also makes Lewin's model effective in mitigating resistance to change (Anjum et al., 2024; Sharma et al., 2024). In utilizing Lewin's model as a starting point, the basic change requirements become clearer. To begin planning the change, however, a more detailed and comprehensive model is required. For this reason, I look to the change path model, rooted in Lewin's work as conceived by Deszca et al. (2019).

Change Path Model

In their change path model, Deszca et al. (2019) aligned the principles of multiple models of organizational change. They established a four-step process beginning with awakening which involves leaders looking at their internal and external environments and identifying forces for and against a particular organizational change. This process also involves an internal analysis of the organizational context and the ways varied factors will impact a proposed change. In the context of IS at CRC, the concept of awakening is certainly relevant. The definition provided, however, has some limitations given the emerging external pressures related to international

student recruitment. The application of activity theory (Engeström, 1987, 2000; Roth, 2004; Backhurst, 2009) as shown in Figure 2 is an attempt to apply this process of awakening to the identified PoP.

One of the limitations of activity theory like the change path model is that it places more emphasis on internal over external sources of awakening. In the case of CRC and as discussed in the section on change drivers, internal awareness of the need for more targeted supports for IS have been insufficient to drive meaningful change. Now that there are significant external pressures both federally and provincially, the need to mobilize change is more urgent.

The mobilization process in the change path model also applies well to the PoP. A key aspect of mobilization for the PoP is embracing collaborative agency (Van de Putte et al., 2018; Kaufman et al., 2020; McLure & Aldridge, 2022) by bringing others into the conversation about the needed change. The existing organizational gap in the misalignment between employer needs and WIL options is not perceived by program coordinators or the senior leadership team as a significant problem. Contributing to this are the historical departmental silos that exist at CRC. One benefit to my role is that I was hired to lead an office that will centralize WIL allowing previously unseen gaps to be more visible. The very identification of this PoP is a result of this centralized work. Implementation of a new platform for organizing WIL at CRC began in January 2024. This improvement will further centralize all WIL placements and bring a new cohort of program coordinators into the conversation about gaps in available WIL opportunities.

When looking at other colleges in the province, it appears CRC is significantly behind in terms of WIL options available to students. A gap analysis (Parasuraman et al., 1985; Kim & Ji, 2018) of where CRC is relative to other colleges in terms of WIL offerings will help to further support the need for expanded WIL opportunities for IS. This information will serve as important

data for the mobilization phase. Consideration must be given to the way status quo as it pertains to WIL will eventually impact recruitment and retention of students, especially as the reality of limited international visas continues to emerge. Framing the PoP within this context is essential to illustrating the significance of the problem and to help mobilize the senior leadership team.

The next process in the change path model is acceleration which refers to action planning and implementation. With an understanding that managing transitions can be onerous and without the individual agency to initiate large-scale organizational change, implementation of the preferred solution will start with employing collaborative agency (Van de Putte et al., 2018; Kaufman et al., 2020; McLure & Aldridge, 2022). In the brief time that I have been engaged in my DiP work, the conversation about the need for expanded COOP opportunities at CRC has already moved from my department to multiple faculty chairs, the directors of academics, and international education, and even the incoming president. I note this to suggest that the challenges of finding a program to initiate expanded WIL for IS have reduced because this issue has moved closer to the forefront of operational priorities at CRC. As a result, through collaboration with these groups, acceleration will involve the selection of a single program with a large international student population and a high degree of change readiness within program faculty and staff.

Finally, institutionalization refers to the end of the transition and a period of working in the preferred future where new opportunities for WIL targeted specifically at IS become entrenched in organizational practice. Monitoring and measurement are critical not only during this transition phase but in assessing the success of the preferred future and opportunities for further change. Monitoring and evaluation will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3. Having

selected a framework for leading the change process, it is important to consider CRC's readiness for the proposed change.

<div align="center">**Organizational Change Readiness**</div>

Given my position in middle-management and resulting agency limitations, organizational change readiness at CRC is difficult to fully observe. With that said, I do see a protectionist mentality among program faculty and suspicion about the motives of expanding WIL opportunities. There is some fear that this is an attempt to centralize this work to reduce faculty positions. This tendency towards territorialism is also evident in the QAO which is responsible for new program development and program changes. Consequently, this is an office with which collaborative agency must be established. Faculty skepticism and QAO protectionism are important considerations in assessing organizational readiness for changes in WIL offerings to IS.

Change Readiness

Leaders often fail to make sense of the need for change, and this contributes to the failure of change initiatives (Skea, 2021). One aspect of making sense of the need for change is assessing the organization's change readiness. A common pitfall for organizational change initiatives is that readiness is often not considered until the process of change has begun (Napier et al., 2017). Holt et al. (2010) defined change readiness as, "[T]he degree to which those involved are individually and collectively primed, motivated, and technically capable of executing the change" (p. 50). Simpson (2002) identified two primary indicators of organizational change readiness: motivation, indicating that staff both desire and see a need for the change, and resources related to the organization's willingness to commit fully to the change.

Holt et al. (2010) devised a change readiness framework that looks at the individual and the organization on the horizontal axis and psychological and structural factors of change on the vertical (see Appendix C). Psychological factors include commitment and efficacy. Structural factors include appropriate skills for individuals to enact the change and a climate of resource support. Assessing change readiness at CRC requires an examination of both organizational and individual factors. Holt's identification of organizational and individual factors for organizational change are evident in Stewart's (1994) change readiness assessment. It looks at both the individual and organizational levels of change readiness and considers both psychological and structural factors. For a visual representation of the alignment between Stewart's assessment and Holt's change readiness framework see Appendix E.

After completing Stewart's assessment based on my perceptions of change readiness at CRC, I received a score indicating a low level of change readiness (see Appendix F). One weakness in Stewart's tool is its clear bias for hierarchal organizational structures that assumes stronger efficacy of senior management to implement change. While the ultimate approval for the implementation of my DiP lies with the senior leadership team, it is collaborative agency that will have the greatest influence. In addition to the individual and organizational, assessing change readiness at CRC's program level will help to identify spaces where enhanced WIL opportunities are more likely to be supported. Progress towards successful change builds and sustains momentum, especially in the preliminary stages (Jansen, 2004). While readiness may be lacking in certain areas at CRC, successful implementation of enhanced WIL offerings in some programs has the potential to generate momentum and improve this readiness. Internal influences on change readiness are important, but in the current context at CRC, external readiness factors carry greater weight.

External Readiness Factors

As the media has increasingly focused on uncovering potential exploitation of IS in Canadian higher education institutions, emphasis on moral purpose and ethical responsibility to these students has emerged. This is evident through the development of the *Standards of Practice for International Education* (2023) which includes quality assurance criteria for Ontario colleges. Still, like many quality assurance processes this one is problematic in its less than covert preference for performativity over substance. For example, the standards require colleges to provide employment services to recent international student graduates. Nowhere in the document, however, is the term employment services operationalized.

The quality assurance mechanisms that ensure the existence of these undefined services are as follows:

- mechanisms to show how the information on employment services is made accessible to graduating international students

- mechanisms to ensure that employment services are offered consistently as communicated

- mechanisms for reviewing employment services for graduating international students (Ontario College Quality Assurance Service, 2023, p. 8)

Noted here is the obvious emphasis on ensuring communication of available services with far less focus on ensuring the services themselves meet the needs of IS. When digging deeper into this document, examples of these mechanisms speak to communicating accurate information about available employment services for IS. There is little to no reference to what services are required or how to determine what services IS need. The emphasis is heavily on ensuring that the existence of these supports is communicated. Recent findings note that in many Canadian college

international education strategy documents, targeted supports for IS are linked directly to recruitment and retention goals (Buckner et al., 2023). Taken together there is an air of performativity to these standards of practice that speak more to colleges creating optics of expansive supports while effectively maintaining status quo. There are myriad challenges to ensuring equitable availability of WIL opportunities for IS. To fully support IS in accessing the opportunities a full range of supports must be embedded into the WIL offerings themselves. For example, IS require skills like resume and cover letter writing, interview skills, and understanding Canadian workplace norms. Additional supports would not only be required for IS but for employers as well (Jackson et al., 2017; Gribble et al. 2015). While there have certainly been enhancements to available supports for IS at CRC, these types of career-focused supports have yet to be sufficiently developed.

Often organizational change towards equity does not disrupt the current state but makes additions or enhancements to existing structures (Capper, 2018). Enhancing that which exists is change in its simplest sense but in addressing the PoP it is not the type that will amount to meaningfully removing barriers for IS. This echoes the need stated earlier to upset the status quo to create "a better space for everyone" (Sefa Dei, 2016, p. 36). International students face challenges related to cultural differences, linguistic racism, and inequitable access to supports necessary for a successful WIL placement (Jackson, 2017; Dovchin, 2020). Creating WIL opportunities that genuinely addresses these challenges and provide meaningful and equitable experiences for IS requires more than add-on initiatives. It requires an innovative approach to programming that promotes assets over deficits; authenticity over performativity; equity over neutrality; ethics over bottom-lines.

Leadership Ethics in Organizational Change

Furman (2004) saw educational leadership as "fundamentally a moral endeavor" (p. 215). For Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005/2016), an understanding of ethical paradigms assists in decision making by providing leaders options to step out of their typical responses by viewing circumstances through divergent ethical lenses. Wood and Hilton (2012), rooted in the work of Shapiro and Gross (2008) and Shapiro and Stefkovich recommended four ethical paradigms for "community college leaders to employ… when constructing and considering alternative courses of action in decision-making processes" (p. 197). The ethic of justice is rooted in the concepts of fairness through the application of just rules, policies, and procedures. The ethic of critique serves as a mediating force to the ethic of justice as it is rooted in identifying moral issues within established rules. The ethic of the profession requires adherence to obligations grounded in professional codes, duties, and behaviours. The ethic of care is again viewed within the context of the ethic of justice in that it requires that the needs of people be placed above and considered within established rules.

Pulling from the work of Furman (2004), Wood and Hilton (2012) added a fifth ethical paradigm called the ethic of local community. The ethic of local community is "grounded in the notion that community colleges must serve the needs, interests, and public good of the local community" (p. 206). For example, this lens requires that leaders value local decision-making over provincial or federal. While IS are not members of the local community in a traditional sense, they become embedded within it during their studies and as post-graduation members of its workforce. In many cases IS seek permanent community integration as residents (Scott et al., 2015). WIL is one way to support IS in receiving the care necessary to feel a part of their adopted local communities.

This DiP is rooted in the argument that employment is central to IS' sense of belonging in their school and post-graduation communities. Opportunities for WIL improve prospects for post-graduation employment not only because they provide sector-specific skills and on the job training but allow students to network and build relationships with employers (Braunstein et al., 2011; Peach & Matthews, 2011; Jackson, 2013; Jackson & Rowe, 2023). For these reasons, this DiP is grounded in the ethics of community and care. The ethic of community involves seeing community building as the genesis from which organizational policies, practices, procedures, and programs should develop (Furman, 2004). The ethic of care (Noddings, 1988) considers the role "relational ethic" (p. 219) plays in building and establishing organizational culture. Specifically, showing care simultaneously meets the needs of others while establishing and reinforcing that the giver also deserves care. As established earlier, the context at CRC leans towards siloed, hierarchal approaches to organizational culture. While certainly not devoid of care and community, positional reverence is valued over collaborative engagement and community building. Grounding this DiP in the ethic of care not only contributes to the ethical framework of the PoP but provides another avenue to interrogate and provide alternative approaches to the organizational culture at CRC.

Ethics of Care and Community

At the core of the conceptual framework for the PoP (see Table 1) is sense of community theory (McMillan & Chavis, 1986; Peterson et al., 2008; McMillan, 2011) which details the required conditions for members to experience a sense of belonging. Furman (2004) noted that the at the centre of moral agency in an educational institution is the ethic of community. That is, greater good must be prioritized over the individual and ultimately facilitates the development of community. She echoes the backward curriculum design of Wiggins and McTighe (1998, 2005)

and applies it to the practice of moral leadership. In backward curriculum design the goal is to start with the end in mind in terms of what students must learn. This end goal then informs the practices, strategies, and outcomes that drive curriculum design.

For Furman (2004), leading with moral purpose works much the same way. "If we 'backward map,'" she noted, "from the moral purpose of creating social justice in schools, … we discover that democratic communal processes are at the heart of working toward this valued end" (p. 230). In the case of the PoP, this end-in-mind approach is equally valid. Related to securing post-graduation employment, obtaining permanent residence status in Canada is a strong pull factor for IS to Canadian colleges. (Arthur & Flynn, 2013; Scott et al., 2015; Jafar & Legusov, 2021). Many IS arrive at CRC with permanent residency and the opportunity to live and actively engage in Canadian society as the end goal. This end goal is not merely foundational to the PoP but CRC's stated mission. As stated earlier, CRC's values espouse accessibility, accountability, collaboration, diversity, inclusivity, integrity, quality, respect, sustainability, and transparency. These are all values inherent in the ethics of community and care. In this sense, all members of the CRC community including faculty, staff, administration, and senior leadership have the ethical obligation to promote these values in their service to IS.

Tomkins and Bristow (2023) caution against favouring the general over specific when discussing the ethic of care. They argue that care as a principle of practice should not be "subsumed into 'what works'" but to something that has value "on its own terms" (p. 136). They articulate an argument against organizational tendencies to value perceptions of effective polices and strategies in terms of outcomes. Instead, they call for intentional focus on things that truly matter. In many ways this echoes the backward design approach advocated by Furman (2004). If care, like community is the starting point then organizational policies, practices and programs

should be designed with these two principles in mind. Barnes (2019) noted that an overemphasis on personalization in social care adversely impacts a sense of collective responsibility. That is, in accessing social care focused on the individual, the very foundation of care, greater good is essentially abandoned. This sentiment is echoed by Bass (2010) who advocated for communal over individual needs in the reciprocal relationship between school and community. This relates clearly to the PoP. International students align a sense of community with opportunities for employment; WIL provides a direct line to these opportunities. Moreover, WIL enhances IS' sense of community and feeling of being completely human (Tran & Soejatminah, 2016).

In the context of the PoP, it seems arbitrary to separate the ethics of community and care. Care is community and community is care (Barnes, 2019). International students travel from all over the world, uprooting their lives and even their families to seek opportunity, safety, and security in Canada. In making this move, they also abandon the natural care that comes with immersion in community. A significant aspect of accessing a caring community is opportunities to gain work experience and post-graduation employment. To fully integrate into an adopted society, one must feel a part of it.

Solutions to Address the Problem of Practice

The basic rationale for change related to the PoP is the need to offer expanded and more flexible WIL opportunities to IS. This can be achieved through a variety of approaches, some more systemic and structural than others. The following section outlines possible solutions to address limited WIL offerings at CRC. They are presented in sequence starting with those that require the least amount of structural change, and accordingly include the least degree of direct, targeted support for IS. The solutions all presuppose successful collaborative change agency as discussed above and the cooperation of necessary actors to implement the change. All proposed

solutions involve the implementation of COOP because it is a 420-hour immersive WIL experience and by definition must be paid (CEWIL, 2021). A significant barrier to all of the proposed solutions is that government wage subsidies are typically not available to employers offering COOP to IS. However, participation in all qualifying COOP programs at Ontario institutions of higher education allows employers to receive a tax credit of 25-30% for expenses incurred through hiring students including IS (Government of Canada, 2022). COOP offers valuable workplace experience, a recognized pathway to post-graduation employment, and the opportunity to earn money while completing program requirements (Braunstein et al., 2011; Peach & Matthews, 2011; Jackson, 2013; Jackson & Rowe, 2023).

Change Drivers

"The most powerful drivers for change tend to originate outside organizations" (Deszca et al., 2019, p. 53). This is certainly true as it pertains to my PoP and DiP. Enrollment was down 5% overall in Canadian colleges for the 2022-23 academic year, representing a 3.7% and 7.4% drop for domestic and IS respectively (Statistics Canada, 2022). Opportunities for WIL are a significant pull factor for IS because these experiences significantly enhance their likelihood of post-graduation employment (Scott et al., 2015). This is an external change driver because IS recruitment has become a dependent source of revenue for many colleges across Canada including CRC. As an internal change driver employer COOP opportunities often go unfilled due to a lack of appropriate WIL program offerings at CRC. Without the infrastructure to accommodate these requests, opportunities will go elsewhere potentially further impacting enrollment and recruitment at CRC.

The current strategic priorities at CRC speak to improved student success and opportunities for EL. With about 50% of the student population international, the need for more

supportive pathways to employment is not only a recruitment necessity but an ethical imperative. While the relationship between CRC and regional employers remains strong, CRC is increasingly unable to place students due to outdated and restrictive WIL requirements. As opportunities and need for flexible WIL grow for employers these relationships are at risk of becoming strained. As stated, these employer relationships are a priority for the senior leadership team and as such maintaining them is a significant change driver at CRC.

Recently, Colleges Ontario released the *Standards of Practice for International Education* (2023) which among other things requires colleges to provide graduating IS with employment services. This speaks to a growing narrative within the media of institutional exploitation of IS. Even more recently, as reported by Global News on December 7, 2023, the immigration minister announced that the federal government will double the required amount of money IS must possess to be approved for study visas. The current amount is $10, 000. "He [immigration minister] is also threatening that if provinces and post-secondary institutions fail to act, he will look at 'significantly limiting visas'" (Rana 2023). This threat became a reality with the January 2024 announcement that visa approvals for IS will be cut by 35% for the 2024-2025 academic year (Friesen, 2024). This policy change is in response to post-secondary education institutions failing to provide adequate supports to IS including housing and employment services. As a driver of change, the current landscape of IS in higher education is shifting. Whether internally driven or externally imposed there is increasing urgency to better address gaps in supports and services for IS in Canadian colleges.

Solution 1: Universal Cooperative Education Course

This solution requires minimal program changes at CRC through the creation of a universal COOP course that is accessible to students in multiple programs in the event they are

able secure a placement. This solution requires collaboration with the QAO, the support of my

direct supervisor who oversees academic operations, and the ultimate approval of the senior

leadership team. The only required resources are human and given the ease with which a new

course can be created these are minimal. There are already COOP courses that exist at CRC so

learning outcomes are easily transferred to a new course. There are also marketing and

promotion costs to inform employers and students of these expanded opportunities, but these

mechanisms are already in place at CRC and would not need to be developed. This solution can

move forward as a stand-alone organizational first-order change (Bartunek & Moch, 1987) or as

an initial step to a more robust strategy for enhancing WIL opportunities. Currently, COOP is

offered in a handful of programs at CRC. This solution quickly and with minimal effort

significantly expands these opportunities.

There is a caveat to the term universal as this COOP course cannot be applied in all

programs. Certain programs are not well-suited to expanded COOP opportunities (Ferns &

Arsenault, 2023). Where current structures are designed to result in a specific accreditation at

program's end there is less organizational flexibility to modify WIL. For example, nursing

students have mandated clinical placements which provide the required hours that are part of

their full professional accreditation. This is similarly true for programs like early childhood

education or developmental support worker. Because these programs through their very design

equip graduates with the necessary certification to go directly to work in a specific field they are

not good candidates for expanded WIL as defined in this DiP.

The new course would be available if students are able to secure a COOP placement,

allowing them to remain full-time students while accessing the benefits WIL placements provide.

This is especially significant for IS because their study visas routinely include a two to three-year

work visa after graduating from a program that is a minimum of two years (Government of Canada, 2024b). The length of the program, however, does not take away from the number of available work visa years. The advantages to this approach for IS are that they will gain valuable work experience which will improve their prospects for post-graduation employment, earn money to offset their schooling costs, and build relationships with potential employers who will have extended exposure to them during a full semester work-term (CBIE, 2018, 2021).

One disadvantage of this approach is that most programs at CRC run courses in the fall and winter semesters with no offerings during the spring/summer session. This increases the number of students trying to secure COOP placements during this single semester creating fierce competition for a finite number of opportunities. With this solution, students are not precluded from accepting a fall or winter COOP but doing so may have implications for program completion due to required courses not offered in multiple semesters. This creates the potential for employer COOP opportunities routinely going unfilled as is the current issue at CRC.

Solution 2: Cooperative Education Program Streams

Many post-secondary programs in Ontario offer multiple streams, one provides opportunities for COOP and the other allows completion of required courses only. In both cases, students leave with a diploma or degree but those in the COOP stream have completed the accreditation with COOP. While this is a common model across universities and colleges, there are no programs at CRC that utilize this approach. There are implementation challenges with this approach but also many advantages.

One of the advantages to this approach that addresses issues with Solution 1 is that it allows for students to access COOP opportunities during multiple semesters throughout the sequence of their program. COOP semesters are spaced out throughout the program so that

semester sequence differs from the straight course-based program but progress towards completion is unaffected. A second advantage is that WIL is embedded throughout theoretical learning allowing students to reflect on their work experience and apply it consistently as they acquire new competencies and skills (Sykes & Dean, 2013; Jackson, 2015; Murray et al., 2020; Jackson & Rowe, 2023). Current COOP models at CRC require students to wait until each spring/summer semester, limiting opportunities for reflection and theory application. This approach also allows students to earn money at multiple stages throughout their education without sacrificing the benefits of being in school full-time. This is of particular concern for IS who consistently struggle to find adequate employment during and after graduation (CBIE, 2018, 2021). Offering expanded COOP opportunities to IS is an avenue to better post-graduation employment outcomes (Scott et al., 2015). It also allows employers to secure student COOP placements over an entire academic year, creating more options and better flexibility in meeting their recruitment needs.

One disadvantage of this approach is that it requires far more program restructuring than Solution 1 (see Table 3). Because most programs at CRC are based on a traditional two-semester (fall and winter) model, many programs do not have the flexibility to offer required courses outside of the assigned semester in the program sequence. The spring/summer session is a relatively new addition to the CRC calendar and as such many programs have yet to offer a full slate of courses. However, faculty do work during this session and in some cases have no teaching time. Human resource costs being the primary investment in adding additional course sections, there is potential to offer a COOP stream in programs with limited or no course offerings during spring/summer. Some areas are already well-situated to implement this change. In the Faculty of Business Studies for example, there are fall and winter intakes and first year

courses are common to all programs. These structures provide more flexibility to offer a COOP stream in business programs.

Implementation of Solution 2 must be gradual starting with one program that has the flexibility to offer courses in different semester sequences for the COOP stream without adding significant human resource costs. It is imperative to offer solutions to the senior leadership team that involve minimal costs to the institution particularly given external policy pressures impacting recruitment of IS. The recent federal government announcement that only 292, 000 international student visas will be approved for the 2024-25 academic year (Friesen, 2024) only exacerbates these fiscal concerns. Currently at CRC, the few COOP programs that do exist require students to pay a course fee of approximately $130 to participate. This is a nominal fee for students that is easily recouped through their full-time employment over the semester. COOP courses do not typically have assigned faculty and are managed by staff in my office who are already employees. This means that there is no significant expense to offering expanded COOP and some revenue generated from the course fee.

Solution 3: Work Integrated Learning Stream for International Students

The delivery of Solution 3 from an operations standpoint is guided by the approach described in Solution 2 with a separate COOP stream specifically for IS. As argued earlier, supports for IS are often for optics and consequently exist as primarily performative. For example, in one study at a Canadian university IS reported that supports were adequate during the first year of higher education but waned in subsequent years particularly when it came to transitioning to employment (Scott et al., 2015). More specifically,

> [International students] were realistic about their expectations for finding work in their
> field, lamenting a lack of professional development opportunities during their study. In

particular, IS expressed concern that they were not afforded the same opportunities for

networking and off-campus employment as domestic students… IS in our sample

believed a lack of co-operative education opportunities and ways to connect with industry

professionals contributes to their relative under-preparedness for working in Canada after

graduation. As one participant put it, it's about "who you know, not what you know,"

when it comes to finding work in Canada. (Scott et al., 2015, p. 10)

Additional comments from IS in this study, those that did secure post-graduation employment,

suggested that connections with employers during their education were instrumental in securing

their jobs. There is a clear desire by IS for more opportunities to connect with employers through

WIL opportunities. Institutional supports for making these connections bolsters students'

"confidence for pursuing career goals" (Arthur & Flynn, 2013, p. 32). Solution 3 addresses these

gaps by providing necessary supports not only for IS but also the employers with whom they are

placed.

Central to the development of this program are the voices of IS (Buckner et al., 2023). As

scrutiny over institutional practices related to IS grows, the value placed on the voices of these

students must grow at a similar rate. To this point, these voices have not been sufficiently

appreciated in the creation of policies, practices, and services supporting IS (Tran &

Soejatminah, 2016). It is essential that the trend of student voices as historically performative

and on display to give the appearance of collaboration (Fielding, 2001; Hall, 2017) is not

perpetuated.

Conceptual Framework for Solution 3

Table 2 presents the conceptual framework grounding Solution 3. From a leadership

standpoint through a process of collaborative agency (Van de Putte et al., 2018; Kaufman et al., 2020; McLure & Aldridge, 2022), the emphasis is on disrupting status quo responses (Sefa Dei, 2016) to supporting IS that fail to acknowledge their specific needs (Jones, 2017). Achievement and career readiness are embedded as essential program principles. Opportunities for post-graduation employment and sense of belonging are the ethical end-goals from which the program will backward-map (Furman, 2004). Solution 3 is grounded in the principles of equity as framed by Appendix B, *Equitable Education Framework* (McGraw-Hill, 2023) and Appendix D, *Culturally Responsive School Leadership Framework* (Khalifa, et al., 2018).

Table 2

Conceptual Framework for Solution 3

Culturally responsive leaders …	Equitable higher education …
Challenge Whiteness and hegemonic epistemologies in school (Theoharis & Haddix, 2011)	Promotes being and belonging: the students believe that they can be themselves and are a valued member of the institution's community (McGraw Hill, 2023)
Engage in reforming the school curriculum to become more culturally responsive (Sleeter, 2012; Villegas & Lucas, 2002)	Provides access and achievement: the ability to have the necessary resources and supports to excel in higher education (McGraw Hill, 2023)
Promote a vision for inclusive instructional and behavioral practices (Gardiner & Enomoto, 2006; Webb-Johnson, 2006; Webb-Johnson & Carter, 2007)	Facilitates cause and career: the students find and pursue their purpose while also being prepared for the real world (McGraw Hill, 2023)

Note. This framework presents the grounding principles embedded in the different features of the international WIL stream. It highlights related behaviours of culturally responsive leaders and equitable institutions of higher education.

Possible Program Structure

Solution 3 incorporates current curriculum by creating a new international WIL stream in an existing program (see Table 3). The structure of the program is almost identical to the approach described in Solution 2 but with a separate program stream specifically for IS. Table 3 shows the structural differences between a typical three-year program at CRC and the proposed WIL stream for IS.

Table 3

Proposed Program Structure for International WIL Stream

	Existing Program			International WIL Stream		
	Fall	Winter	Spring Summer	Fall	Winter	Spring Summer
Program Year						
Year 1	**Study**	**Study**	**Off**	**Study**	**Study** (Elective course replaced by COOP preparation course)	**Work**
Year 2	**Study**	**Study**	**Off**	**Study** (Elective course replaced by COOP reflective seminar)	**Work**	**Study**
Year 3	**Study**	**Study**		**Work**	**Study** (Elective course replaced by career readiness course)	**Study**

Note. This ideal model offers a work period in each academic year. For cost savings, Year 3 can be modified to study in fall and winter so that students in both streams finish at the same time. This would also reduce the number of off-semester course offerings to one in spring/summer of Year 2 reducing additional faculty costs.

Program Highlights

Solution 3 maximizes EL and earning opportunities for IS and provides flexibility for

employers through offering COOP in multiple semesters. There are two primary features of

Solution 3 that set it apart from solutions previously discussed. It embeds consistent support

rooted in an assets-based model including wrap-around employment services for IS from the

beginning of the program to graduation. It also includes education, training, and support for

COOP employers and CRC faculty.

International Student Supports

Built into the programing are three specialized courses that replace existing elective

courses (see Table 3). The specialized courses are designed to address established barriers for IS.

These barriers include workplace discrimination, communicative and technical language

development, networking and skill promotion, career readiness supports like resume

development and interview skills, and cultural competency and workplace norms (Smith &

Khawaja, 2011; Gribble & McCrae, 2017; Anttila, 2022). Before going out in their first work-

term, students receive a comprehensive COOP preparation course which covers basic career

readiness elements like resume and cover letter writing, interview and networking skills, and job

search strategies. In addition, this course includes modules on specific employability skills

sometimes called soft skills, co-created by IS and employers.

Data already exists in my department that shows multi-year employer evaluation data

identifying consistent employability strengths and skill gaps in CRC students. This data is not

disaggregated by domestic and IS but could be used as a starting point. Over time, program

specific data will be collected to inform instruction and monitoring and evaluation strategies.

Additionally, participating employers will be invited into this preparation course to network with

students and discuss what they see as the biggest sector needs in terms of technical and employability skills. Student and employer feedback data will drive the content in the preparation course to ensure that appropriate and meaningful learning occurs.

In addition to the preparation course, a reflective seminar course replaces an elective in the Year 2 fall semester after the initial work placement. Reflection on WIL placements is an essential aspect of the process and allows students to connect theory to practice through examination of individual workplace experiences (Sykes & Dean, 2013; Jackson, 2015; Murray et al., 2020; Jackson & Rowe, 2023). This course is an opportunity for students to reflect on their WIL experience, celebrate their successes, and address areas for growth in their technical/job specific and employability skills. Again, employer and student feedback drive the learning in the reflective seminar course.

The final specialized course occurs in Year 3 winter before the final spring/summer semester. This is by design; while students are completing their final semester of study they are actively seeking post-graduation employment. This addresses another barrier specific to IS. Student visas in Canada typically include a two-to-three-year work visa after program completion (Government of Canada, 2024b). Many IS seek secure post-graduation employment as a pathway to permanent residency (Arthur & Flynn, 2013; CBIE, 2018, 2021). This process is a far smoother and attainable when consistent employment is demonstrated (Scott et al., 2015). While this approach does not ensure post-graduation employment, it serves to mediate the possibility that students will spend precious months of their work visa allocation searching for post-graduation jobs. The final specialized course is focused on each student's individual development based on their demonstrated strengths and areas for growth. In it they create an inventory of the job-specific and employability skills in which they are confident and those that

still require development. Faculty support students in creating individualized skill development plans based on their specific needs. Resumes and cover letters are refined based on the three work placements. For these resumes, COOP placements provide Canadian work experience, another significant barrier to post-graduation employment for IS (CBIE, 2018, 2021).

Another feature of the program is that students have the same professor for each of the specialized courses. García et al. (2019) found that sense of belonging in IS is enhanced when students have strong faculty relationships. Assigning the same professor to all specialized courses creates continuity and fosters strong relationships with students, enhancing their sense of belonging and community. This professor is also assigned to all COOP courses to maintain consistent relationships with students and employers during placements. This embedded, wrap-around support brings assistance directly to IS, mitigating their reluctance to access available campus services (Tran & Soejatminah, 2016; Lau et al., 2018; Rivas et al., 2019; CBIE, 2021).

Employer Supports

The ideal in this program is to have employers self-select to take IS for COOP placements. Employers are recruited based on their willingness to support the growth and career readiness of IS. This is a notable and not understated challenge but given that so few programs at CRC provide flexible, multi-semester COOP options, there is leverage to recruit employers who have significant employment needs that can be addressed through targeted programs at CRC. Additionally, there are already multiple employers with existing CRC relationships that have experienced great success integrating IS into their workplaces. These partnerships will also be leveraged during employer recruitment.

Employers who choose to be part of the program also benefit from specialized training through CRC about strategies for working effectively with IS. Again, student and employer

voices are central features of this training and form the foundation of the topics covered. For example, there could be sessions on students' biggest fears about entering a Canadian workplace and by extension, where employers have the greatest challenges. By having consistent faculty assigned to these students for their specialized and COOP courses, they build strong working relationships with employers which not only enhance support but contribute to program sustainability. Finally, the hope is that the level of employer support will assuage existing concerns about taking IS and create a broader community culture of employer engagement with IS at CRC.

The Preferred Solution

Ethical and equity considerations and challenges are interwoven and similar for both Solutions 1 and 2. Specifically, these approaches do not provide opportunities to adequately leverage IS' strengths, competencies, and experiences in securing COOP opportunities. Additionally, while certainly open to IS, they do not provide targeted supports that address barriers to employment IS students face. In fact, Canadian colleges often fail to target supports directly to IS. Supports are typically offered equally to domestic and IS rather than based on need and situation including visa status (Jones, 2017). It is unsurprising then that IS are trepidatious about accessing institutional supports if they choose to use them at all (Tran & Soejatminah, 2016; Zhang, 2016; Lau et al., 2018; Rivas et al., 2019; CBIE, 2021). To be successful in WIL opportunities, IS require tailored supports that leverage their skills, training, and experience to address their specific employability needs (CBIE, 2018, 2021). One concerning trend in Canadian colleges is that even when targeted supports and strategies exist for IS, they are often articulated through a deficit lens (Buckner et al., 2023). In some cases, higher education institutions leave out language about IS altogether in policies and procedures directed

towards supporting equity, diversity, and inclusion (Tamtik & Guenter, 2019). Although efforts are being made to address them, these research findings remain consistent with many policies and practices at CRC.

Solution 3 is the preferred solution because it addresses the limitations including equity and ethical challenges inherent in Solutions 1 and 2. This not only includes providing expanded WIL opportunities for IS but embedded supports before during and after placements. While necessary supports for students are essential, this is also true for placement employers. Solution 3 embeds WIL supports that educate employers about the specific needs of IS but also their vast assets as potential employees. The deficit narrative about IS must be disrupted and dismantled so that employers see the value of engaging IS in WIL. Through responding to these limitations, Solution 3 allows IS to fully immerse themselves in the workplace community and fulfill employer recruitment needs that are currently going unmet. On a broader scale, Solution 3 will help to disrupt narratives of otherness within the wider community and create opportunities for IS, as noted by Capper (2018) that are more "oriented towards equity" (p. 4).

The planning and development of Solution 3 discussed in detail in Chapter 3 involves a single change cycle with one pilot program. However, one cycle in the CRC context is not sufficient to achieve full institutionalization. With more than 120 programs, it will take years to refine, improve, and introduce similar changes to multiple programs. In this sense this one change cycle can be perceived as the awakening phase for a much larger organizational shift. My hope is that once students, faculty, and employers experience the benefits of expanded WIL for IS, it will awaken the desire in others to embark on similar changes. This hope is consistent with transformational and distributed leadership and will require continued commitment to

collaborative agency. In this way there will be multiple mobilizations leading to deeper and more comprehensive institutionalization.

Chapter 2 Conclusion

Ethical imperatives are rooted in a sense of moral purpose; change in the service of others is the manifestation of that purpose. CRC is not alone in its responsibility to ethically serve the needs of their IS. Indeed, this onus is on all higher education institutions in Canada. What the PoP seeks to illuminate is that there are steps, some more disruptive to the status quo and costly than others which can be taken to provide more consistent and equitable opportunities to IS. It is no secret that many IS seek permanent residency and secure employment after graduation. Indeed, international recruiters (Arthur & Flynn, 2013) and administration at CRC are aware of this as well. WIL is not a panacea to all the challenges that come with uprooting a life and moving to a new and strange country. It is, however, a tangible strategy to connect IS with Canadian employers, provide opportunities for Canadian work experience, and offset educational costs along the way. WIL also has the potential to authentically enhance sense of belonging for IS in Canadian society. These are significant barriers facing IS at CRC. The progressive removal of them through expanded WIL is but one of many avenues to helping them realize their goals and aspirations in their adopted home. Chapter 3 presents the implementation plan for Solution 3 including discussion of effective communication, knowledge mobilization, monitoring, and evaluation.

Chapter 3: Implementation, Communication, and Evaluation

Chapter 3 outlines the plan for instituting the preferred solution detailed in Chapter 2. It begins with a change implementation plan (CIP) with timelines including, short, medium, and long-term goals. The CIP includes a discussion of the appropriateness of my leadership approach to the change model, including potential implementation challenges and limitations that may arise. The chapter moves on to a discussion of the communication plan, including considerations for knowledge mobilization (KMb) at Career Ready College (CRC). Next is a section on monitoring and evaluating the change before, during, and after implementation. The chapter concludes with a discussion of next steps before a narrative epilogue presenting reflections on my own experience with the doctoral journey.

Change Implementation Plan

The CIP focuses on one cycle of implementation of the preferred solution in a single program at CRC. Because this type of cooperative education (COOP) program will be the first of its kind at CRC, only a single program change will be considered in this CIP. The hope, discussed in more detail in the next steps section is that this program change will serve as a model for other programs. As an example of the ways work integrated learning (WIL) can break down barriers to post-graduation employment for international students (IS), it is not intended as a one-time intervention. It should serve as a roadmap for other post-secondary programs at CRC and beyond. The CIP is guided by the change path model (Deszca et al., 2019) and a leadership approach rooted in transformational (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999; Bass & Riggio, 2010; Northouse, 2022) and distributed leadership (Gronn, 2000; Spillane, 2005; Bolden, 2011; Northouse, 2022). Additionally, these leadership approaches frame my collaborative agency approach through a lens of critical reflection (Mezirow, 2000; Cunningham, 2012; Reardon et

al., 2019; Wu & Crocco, 2019). The current context at CRC and indeed all post-secondary institutions in Canada is one of anticipation due to recent announcements by the federal government. International student visas have been capped and redistributed across all provinces. Now more than ever direct post-graduation employment supports for IS at CRC are essential.

Change Path Model

The CIP is guided by the change path model (Deszca et al., 2019). Below is an application of this model to the PoP and the preferred solution selected in Chapter 2. Table 4 presents this application visually. One full cycle of the change path model will take two full academic years each from September to August. For each step there is an identified timeline starting in Year 1 and discussion of the different activities that will take place to support the proposed change.

Step 1 – Awakening (Year 1: September - December)

Awakening is already underway about the need to better support post-graduation employment for IS at CRC. As noted by Deszca et al. (2019), the most significant motivators leading to the awakening period emerge from outside the organization. This could not be truer at CRC in relation to IS. In March 2023, colleges across Ontario launched *Standards of Practice for International Education* which among other things requires institutions to provide graduating IS with employment services. The document has been shared with administration at CRC but to date no direction from the senior leadership team has been launched to ensure organizational compliance. Like many institutions, the current narrative associated with IS at CRC is rooted in discussions of recruitment, commodification, and the benefits of internationalization for domestic students (Buckner et al. 2023). In December 2023, the federal immigration minister announced that IS must have approximately $20, 000 to be approved for study visas (Rana,

2023). Speculation about limiting visas became a reality with the January 22, 2024,

announcement that the total number of approved international student visas in Canada will be

capped at 292, 000 (Friesen, 2024), a 35% reduction from current levels. Visas will be allocated

provincially based on population percentage resulting in fewer visas for some provinces like

Ontario and more for others. Other changes like the removal of post-graduation work permits on

some international student visas are also slated for September 2024 (Government of Canada,

2024a).

The introduction of standards of practice and the limiting of visas by province indicates a

need for awakening about available supports for IS at CRC. To this point, the connection

between these external changes and the gaps in service provisions at CRC have not been

sufficiently linked. This is the primary task of the awakening period. Through collaboration with

my supervisor, the director of academics and their colleague, the director of international

education, my office will develop a strategy highlighting proposed employment services for IS.

This strategy will identify common employment barriers faced by IS, services currently provided

by CRC, and gaps in those services that must be addressed. The need for international COOP

streams as described in the preferred solution will be a key element of this strategy. A vision for

change will emerge about the need to target WIL opportunities for IS to better support their

readiness for and ability to secure post-graduation employment.

Supported by federal policy changes and increasing urgency to create more fulsome

supports for IS, the most important task during the awakening phase will be creating a coalition

of support including the senior leadership team. The awakening phase will be guided by the

realization that a pilot international COOP stream is a unique and innovative approach to

supporting IS. It is also a clear response to the lack of post-graduation employment services and

opportunities for IS as outlined in the *Standards of Practice for International Education* (2023). This communication will occur through presentation of the strategy, developed during the fall semester of Year 1, to the senior leadership team. This detailed presentation will highlight key barriers to employment for IS and the gaps at CRC in addressing them. Additionally, showcasing international alumni who have successfully secured employment in their chosen field through WIL will reinforce the necessity of the proposed change. The success of the change initiative hinges on the ability of my team, including the directors of academics and international education to appropriately frame the preferred solution. It must emerge as a response to the growing criticism Ontario colleges face about their failure to properly support IS (Buckner et al. 2023) and a way to market CRC's innovative response.

Step 2 – Mobilization (Year 1: January - April)

The challenge during the mobilization phase will be to effectively leverage collaborative agency (Van de Putte et al., 2018; Kaufman et al. 2020; McLure & Aldridge, 2022). As discussed in Chapter 1, middle managers' proximity to staff can help to offset employee cynicism and resistance to change (Rezvani, 2017; Buick et al., 2018). In this sense, middle managers are essential to successful organizational change (van der Voet et al., 2016). The traditional role of middle managers in hierarchal organizations like CRC, however, is to disseminate rather than create strategic direction. As a result, this vision for change and its urgency must run through my direct supervisor and the senior leadership team.

Discussions with the senior leadership team, Quality Assurance Office (QAO), and program chairs will commence to select an appropriate pilot program for the international COOP stream. Program consideration will be based on several factors including size of international enrollment, flexibility in mandatory course offerings, common year courses, multiple intakes,

and existing employer engagement. Additionally, this is a period of employer recruitment for the COOP stream. Once the program is selected, data will be collected from faculty, my office, and other CRC departments about employers who have demonstrated a capacity and willingness to fully support IS during WIL. By bringing together like-minded employer partners, faculty, and administrators, a coalition of support can be harnessed to support successful change implementation. One advantage I have from an agency perspective is my direct connection with employers through WIL placements. These relationships are unique to my office as we are the gateway for all employer engagement with CRC. This intimate knowledge of and relationships with employers allow us to centre ourselves in a coalition of support for better post-graduation services and employment outcomes for IS.

By the end of the Year 1 winter semester, a plan of action for the first cohort of international COOP students will be completed. The first cohort of students will begin this program structure in the Year 2 fall semester. The plan of action will include program sequencing, development of targeted student and employer supports, and identification of available COOP opportunities.

Step 3 – Acceleration (Year 1: May - August)

The spring to summer session at CRC offers an optimal time to fulfill the acceleration outcomes in the change path model (Deszca et al. 2019). Specifically, it allows opportunities to "empower others in support" and "develop needed new knowledge, skills, abilities, and ways of thinking that will support the change" (p. 55). Major foci of this period will be curriculum development for the specialized courses and networking between faculty and employers. Learning sessions will be developed and delivered to both faculty and employers about the major

barriers IS face in securing employment. The specific barriers to employment for IS (Scott et al., 2015; Gribble & McCrae, 2017; Anttila, 2022) to be addressed are as follows:

1. Discrimination in the workplace: employers and faculty will learn about the inherent racism that hampers IS' access to employment. Topics related to systemic and structural racism, and unconscious bias will be addressed.

2. Language support: in addition to learning about the need for general English language support, employers will assist in identifying job and sector specific language for the development of occupation-specific language training for IS.

3. Asset versus deficit mindset: employers and faculty will be engaged in exercises that promote the strengths and qualifications IS brings rather than focusing on deficit mindsets.

4. Cultural competency: IS typically do not possess understanding of Canadian workplace habits and norms. Supports in this area will include assisting employers and faculty to integrate IS into the Canadian workplace while still respecting their cultural practices and heritage.

5. Career readiness supports: Faculty teaching this specialized course will learn about resume and cover letter development, interview and networking skills, and job search strategies.

A fundamental aspect of the acceleration phase is employer and faculty education about the unique and specific employment needs of IS. At the same time, this phase is an opportunity to build enthusiasm and momentum about the coming fall cohort of students to the new COOP stream.

Step 4 – Institutionalization (Year 2: September - August)

As noted in Chapter 2, full institutionalization of the preferred solution will require multiple cycles of the change path model. The CIP described here is based on one change cycle resulting in the implementation of a single international COOP stream in a selected program. This discussion refers to institutionalization during one academic year in a single program. As described in Chapter 2, the preferred solution has multiple structures built in to monitor the change through targeted supports for employers and students. This includes three strategically timed specialized courses built into the international COOP stream. These courses include a career preparation course before the initial COOP placement, a reflective seminar during the second year, and an employability skills course before the final study semester. These specialized courses offer ideal environments to "assess what is needed" and gauge student progress (Deszca et al., 2019, p. 55). Another key aspect of the institutionalization phase will come through existing quality insurance measures already in place at CRC, including cyclical program reviews.

Deszca et al. (2019) described the importance of the stability of change in a "transformed organization" (p. 55). In the case of CRC, this stability comes in the form of additional programs establishing WIL opportunities directly targeted at IS. An important aspect of institutionalizing this change is the promotion, marketing, and celebration of the international COOP stream to members of the senior leadership team, faculty chairs, and other college staff. Updates will occur at monthly all administrator meetings during the acceleration and mobilization phases and continue after the initial institutionalization. Introduction of the new program will occur during the Year 2 fall semester all staff meeting with updates and successes provided in subsequent faculty meetings. See Table 5 for a comprehensive communication framework.

Table 4

Change Implementation Plan

Step	Timeline	Criteria (Deszca et al., 2019, p. 55)	Activities
Awakening	Year 1: September – December	1. Identify need for change and confirm problem and opportunities that incite the need for change 2. Explain the gap in performance between the present and preferred state 3. Develop and communicate a vision for change 4. Communicate vision for change through multiple channels	- Wide communication of external change drivers requiring significant enhancements to employment service for graduating IS - Development of strategy communicating barriers for international student employment and the gaps in appropriate support services at CRC - Collect relevant program data
Mobilization	Year 1: January – April	1. Assess power and cultural dynamics and build coalitions 2. Engage invested parties and communicate change organization-wide 3. Leverage change agency	- Selection of appropriate pilot program - Employer recruitment - Build faculty, employer, administration coalitions - Develop plan of action for international COOP stream
Acceleration	Year 1: May-August	1. Engage and empower others in planning and implementation 2. Develop new knowledge, skills, and abilities 3. Manage the transition	- Employer and faculty networking - Learning sessions for employers and faculty - Specialized course development
Institutionalization	Year 2: September-August	1. Track the change, assess what is needed, make modifications 2. Develop and deploy new structures and processes 3. Create change stability	-Built in specialized courses to monitor student/employer experience - Regular updates at all administration meetings - Annual update to all faculty - Exploration of additional programs for international COOP streams

The CIP describes a best-case scenario in terms of implementation. It relies heavily on my capacity to mobilize collaborative agency (Van de Putte et al., 2018; Kaufman et al., 2020; McLure & Aldridge, 2022). It is understood that no CIP flows seamlessly; there are always limitations and challenges.

Potential Limitations and Challenges

Change implementation always comes with limitations and challenges (Leis & Shojania, 2016). While emergent limitations and challenges are inevitable to any change process, at this point two are most visible. First and most glaring is my ability to effectively leverage agency at other levels of the organization to bring about the proposed change. Deszca et al. (2019) noted, "Having the authority to act makes certain aspects of the job of change agent easier than working from the middle" (p. 298). Historically, middle managers are tasked more with implementation of mandated change than setting direction. It is worth noting, however, that the limitations of middle managers are organization specific (Rezvani, 2017; Buick et al., 2018). At the same time, the increasingly volatile context surrounding the international student debate leaves ripe opportunities to offer solutions that will better serve their needs. My position also places me in a direct collaborative relationship with the office of academic operations which directly influences the QAO and the department of international education.

A second potential challenge is engaging employers in a COOP stream directly targeted at IS. Deficit attitudes associated with IS (Buckner, 2023) not only extend to faculty and employers, but IS' perceptions of themselves (CBIE, 2021). Again, my office is uniquely positioned to mediate this challenge. Our mandate is to engage in front-line communication with industry partners and in certain programs to directly match students to employers for WIL. This advantage is two-fold. First, we have successfully placed IS with employers many times and the

success of these experiences has opened many employers to the skills, experiences, and competencies they bring. Second, we provide direct career readiness supports to IS and this provides opportunities to help them disrupt their own deficit narratives. Specifically, we work with IS to highlight the skills they already possess and how to articulate their transferability to Canadian employment contexts. Additionally, we now have an identified group of employers who have had multiple successful WIL experiences with IS. These employers form the core group to target at the outset of implementation for the international WIL stream.

While it is difficult to speculate all the potential challenges and limitations to the CIP, it is worth noting that there are significant external factors driving the current international student debate in Canada. These factors are the very reason the *Standards of Practice for International Education* (2023) were established in the first place. Our office has been tasked with bolstering employment services for graduating IS at CRC. This mandate provides significant leverage to promote innovative solutions. This promotion will be achieved through effective KMb and communication.

Communication Plan and Knowledge Mobilization

Schulz-Knappe et al. (2019) advocated collaborative dialogue between organizations and staff as opposed to top-down communication. This communication philosophy is not only foundational to the communication and KMb strategies discussed in this chapter but aligns closely with transformational and distributed leadership, and collaborative agency. Practically speaking, this requires leaders to communicate not only the proposed change but their detailed change plan. Further, affected members of the organization should be involved in the change dialogue from the beginning of the process to the end. Barrett (2002) advocated for strategic change communication by identifying change agents at diverse levels of the organization. This

practice relates well to transformational and distributed leadership approaches and my role in middle management.

Communication Strategy

Husain (2013) developed a three-phase communication strategy that aligns with Lewin's (1947) model of change but can be adapted to the change path model as developed by Deszca et al. (2019) to form the communication strategy for the dissertation-in-practice (DiP). Husain's three phases are as follows:

1. Communication during the unfreezing stage or readying the organization. In this phase the need or reason for the change is communicated as a means of overcoming change resistance. This phase aligns with the awakening step of the change path model.

2. Communicating during the move stage refers to communication during change implementation. It involves ensuring that attention is paid to communicating change information and updates to those not directly involved in the change initiative. The goal is to minimize misinformation and rumours. This phase aligns with the mobilization and acceleration steps of the change path model.

3. Communicating during the refreezing stage centres on answering questions from invested parties, and publicly celebrating the success of the change. Middle management becomes more critical at this phase as information flow is more multi-dimensional. Middle managers, given their proximity to front-line staff can better mitigate cynicism and resistance to change (Rezvani, 2017; Buick et al., 2018). This phase aligns with the institutionalization step of the change path model.

As discussed in the problem framing section of Chapter 1, relationships with employers are a visible priority for the senior leadership team at CRC. However, this has not been connected organizationally to the limitations presented by our current WIL offerings for IS. The DiP communication strategy must involve establishing with the senior leadership team that there is indeed an urgent problem and that IS are missing enhanced learning and employment opportunities, ultimately diminishing their sense of belonging. Additionally, employers' needs are consistently going unmet because of these limitations. When considering the change path model (Deszca et al., 2019), this will be a critical time of organizational "awakening" (p. 53) for invested parties and decision makers alike.

Decision Makers and Invested Parties

The three primary WIL invested parties are IS, industry or employer partners, and the educational institution (Zegwaard, 2014). Communication with invested parties is important because it reduces the likelihood of misinformation or incomplete understanding of the goals of organizational change (Eldridge & Mason, 2010). Communicating the why of the PoP from an employer and IS perspective to skeptical faculty, staff, and administration is an essential priority in the DiP. As discussed earlier, the role of middle management is ideal for this task due to the relationship and proximity to staff, students, and employers (Rezvani, 2017; Buick et al., 2018). The PoP lends itself well to a gap analysis approach (Parasuraman et al., 1985; Kim and Ji, 2018). This focus on analyzing gaps between the WIL options IS and employers expect and what is currently available at CRC will further frame the urgency of the PoP. Concomitantly, identifying gaps in services to mediate barriers to employment for IS is central to this communication strategy. This gap analysis strategy provides useful communication in the initial

stages of the CIP and helps to inform the process of KMb. Table 5 demonstrates the intersection between the communication framework and KMb.

Knowledge Mobilization

The Knowledge Institute (2023) noted that KMb activities include "knowledge synthesis, dissemination, transfer, and exchange" with "the goal of making evidence accessible, clear, and useful for those who need it" (p. 4). Even with the size of CRC, decisions are often reactionary based on the way things have always been done. Lavis et al. (2003) advocated for the development of "actionable messages for decision makers" (p. 245). In other words, KMb means that the necessary knowledge must be given to the right people at the appropriate time (Knowledge Institute, 2023). It is not typical practice at CRC to research and learn when problems arise; rather, solutions are often reactionary using established practices and procedures. While this approach rooted in organizational memory (Foroughi et al., 2020) can limit innovation, it is common among large organizations and not unique to CRC. For example, Malik (2020) in a study of different organizational approaches to KMb found that organizations often struggle to apply research to practices and policy development. This is one possible reason that CRC has fallen behind other colleges in offering expanded WIL opportunities like COOP to its IS. At the same time, this is not due to a lack of value placed on research but challenges with communicating knowledge to the right audiences using appropriate messaging (Malik, 2020). The increasingly transparent realities for IS in Canada render KMb related to this PoP essential. Cooper et al. (2018) noted that "researchers are under increasing pressure to disseminate research more widely with non-academic audiences" (p. 1). The dissemination of the research grounding this DiP to the wider CRC community will simultaneously challenge existing practices, acknowledge gaps in service for IS, and offer potential solutions.

The primary strategy in the KMb plan is educating faculty, staff, and leadership at CRC about multiple aspects of the international student experience in Canadian institutions of higher education. Specifically, KMb will follow the conceptual framework presented in Chapter 1 (see Table 1). It is important that the dissemination of knowledge to the wider CRC community is rooted in the conceptual foundation of this DiP: a key aspect of IS experiencing a sense of belonging in their adopted communities is access to meaningful post-graduation employment. WIL provides demonstrable access to these opportunities.

At the same time, the goal of the KMb plan is not merely delivery but engagement (Knowledge Institute, 2019). Lavis et al. (2003) asked five guiding questions to frame a KMb plan:

1. What should be transferred to decision makers (the message)?
2. To whom should research knowledge be transferred (the target audience)?
3. By whom should research knowledge be transferred (the messenger)?
4. How should research knowledge be transferred (processes and infrastructure)?
5. With what effect should research knowledge be transferred (evaluation)? (p. 222)

The Message

CRC's mission statement speaks to changing the course of students' lives and strengthening their place in the community through meaningful educational experiences that support career preparation. IS make up almost half the student population at CRC. For IS, a sense of community is rooted in opportunities for meaningful post-graduation employment. WIL experiences provide an avenue to securing these opportunities.

The Target Audience

There are two primary audiences at CRC to which messaging must be delivered: decision makers, and faculty and staff. As the primary decision makers, the senior leadership team has the ultimate say in program enhancement and development. By connection this includes the QAO and the directors of academics and international education. Additionally, knowledge dissemination to faculty and staff is critical. Although unconscious at times, the deficit narrative often aligned with IS (Buckner, 2023) is alive and well at CRC. Engaging in KMb with faculty and staff will simultaneously begin to dismantle this narrative and illuminate barriers to employment for IS.

The Messenger

Multiple messengers are required but this is a departure from typical CRC practice. At times, my role will be that of messenger but will also be to leverage collaborative agency when other voices including those of the senior leadership team are required. Like many large organizations, messaging at CRC is often untimely, sporadically distributed, and not reinforced. It is easy to lay responsibility for weak messaging on the senior leadership team, but this does little to address current communication limitations at CRC. That is, in the face of inconsistent top-down communication practices, other approaches must emerge. Within this context, the credibility of the messenger is key (Lavis et. al, 2003). There is a greater chance of buy-in and engagement by faculty and staff if the messaging comes at the level of managers and faculty chairs. Their proximity to front-line staff provides a greater level of trust, influence, and access (Rezvani, 2017; Buick et al., 2018).

Processes

Lavis et al. (2003) noted that "passive processes are ineffective" (p. 226). Email memos or information sessions at administrative and staff meetings while necessary do not engage in the same way as contextual KMb. For example, showcasing WIL experiences that have led to post-graduation employment for IS creates an opportunity to demonstrate praxis. This can be done through short videos, monthly student profiles, or staff workshops. Structurally, the messaging should follow a three-part model of inquiry-based engagement. Sessions will begin with a review of the research connections between sense of belonging for IS and WIL (see Table 1), followed by a featured story about a successful WIL to employment experience for an international student, then a consolidation period of discussion about how the research and student experiences are aligned and whether there are gaps. This consolidation is critical to promoting active engagement over passive knowledge reception.

Evaluation

Lavis et al. (2003) stated that research knowledge "may be used in instrumental, conceptual, or symbolic ways" (p. 228). Instrumental evaluation strategies have greater relevance later in this chapter when approaches to monitoring and evaluating the proposed change are discussed. At the same time, KMb about the need for enhanced WIL for IS has the potential to motivate faculty to consider similar changes in their programs. This qualifies as instrumental use of the research knowledge presented in this DiP. Because the link between sense of belonging and employment exists differently for IS, it has the potential to alter conceptual assumptions among faculty and employers. That is, recipients of the research knowledge may alter beliefs rooted in their own experiences about the necessity of WIL for IS. On a symbolic level, engagement with the research reinforces justifications for equitable access to educational

services as an organizational priority. Currently, most services at CRC are available equally to domestic and IS, valuing neutrality over individual need. The disruption of this mindset over time will serve as a strong indication of the value of the research knowledge. The KMb plan is a key component of the communication framework (see Table 5).

Communication Framework

Table 5 presents the communication framework for the proposed change and guides the communication process for a single change cycle as presented in the CIP. This framework consolidates Hussain's (2013) three-phase communication strategy, the change path model (Deszca at al., 2019), and the knowledge transfer strategy (Lavis et al., 2003). The communication framework while designed to ensure active, consistent, and engaging communication through the initial and subsequent change cycles also integrates key elements of monitoring and evaluation.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Program monitoring and evaluation are critical throughout the implementation of a change initiative. While certainly interrelated, monitoring and evaluation are complementary but not synonymous concepts. Evaluation deals with measuring the success of a change against an established metric or "forming judgments about program performance" (Markiewicz & Patrick, 2016). Take for example, an increase in post-graduation employment opportunities for IS after participating in COOP. This would suggest that the CIP has successfully achieved one if its primary aims. By contrast, the focus of monitoring is assessing change implementation and progress (Markiewicz & Patrick, 2016). Monitoring still involves the collection of data which can be used for evaluation but also informs progress and decision making during the change

Table 5

Communication Framework

Communication Phase (Husain, 2013)	Change Path Model Phase (Deszca et al, 2019)	Change Implementation Activities	Knowledge Mobilization Priorities (Lavis et al., 2003)	What is communicated?	Communication Processes and Methods
Readying the Organization - Reason for change communicated - Overcome initial change resistance	**Awakening** (Year 1: Sept.-Dec.) - Identify need for change - Explain gap between current and preferred state -Develop and communicate vision for change	- Wide communication of external change drivers requiring significant enhancements to employment service for graduation IS. - Development of strategy communicating barriers for international student employment and the gaps in appropriate support services at CRC - Collect relevant program data - Employer/WIL gap analysis	Message Target Audience Messenger	- Connections between WIL, post-graduation employment, and sense of belonging for IS	- All college staff meeting presentation - All administration meeting presentation - Chair meetings with program coordinators - Information resources for employer partners - Weekly department meetings with my staff
Move - Communicate change information to those not directly involved - Minimize rumours and misinformation	**Mobilization** (Year 1: Jan.-Apr.) - Assess power and cultural dynamics -Engage invested parties -Organization wide communication -Leverage change agency	- Selection of appropriate pilot program. - Employer recruitment - Build faculty, employer, administration coalitions - Develop plan of action for international COOP stream	Message Target Audience Messenger Processes	- Connections between WIL, post-graduation employment, and sense of belonging for IS - Plan and structure for International WIL stream	- All college staff meeting presentation - All administration meeting presentation - Chair meetings with program coordinators - Information resources and workshops for employer partners - Three-part lesson workshops for program administration, chairs, program coordinators, and faculty -Weekly department meetings with my staff
	Acceleration (Year 1: May-Aug.) - Engage and empower others in planning and implementation - Develop new knowledge and skills - Manage the transition	- Employer and faculty networking - Learning sessions for employers and faculty - Specialized course development		- Connections between WIL, post-graduation employment, and sense of belonging for IS - Plan and structure for International WIL stream -Barriers to employment for IS	
Communicating During Refreezing - Answer questions from invested parties -Celebrate successes -Information flow is multi-dimensional	**Institutionalization** (Year 2: Sept.-Aug.) -Track the change, assess what is needed, make modifications - Develop and deploy new structures and processes - Create change stability	-Built in specialized courses to monitor student/employer experience - Regular updates at all administration meetings - Annual update to all faculty - Exploration of additional programs for international COOP streams	Processes Evaluation	- Employer feedback on placements and students International student feedback on WIL experiences - Rates of post-graduation employment for students - Placement challenges for employers and students	- Employer feedback surveys and focus groups - Student feedback surveys and focus groups - Faculty and department feedback

process. For example, program data collected in the awakening phase of the CIP will be critical to examine potential pilot programs. During the mobilization phase, this data will inform the selection of one pilot program where there is a greater degree of change readiness, a high international enrollment, significant employer engagement, and flexibility in course offerings. Where evaluation measures the success of a change initiative, monitoring is key to successful implementation.

Monitoring and Evaluation Plan

Markiewicz and Patrick (2016) noted that, "Evaluation questions that are organized under the five domains of appropriateness, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability… guide the collection and analysis of monitoring data as they do evaluation data" (p. 2). The foundational evaluation questions below consider employer and international student attitudes about WIL experiences. The purpose of the evaluation and monitoring framework is to not only pay attention to potential pitfalls but also to identify small successes to be celebrated during implementation (Markiewicz & Patrick, 2016). In this way the monitoring plan also aligns with the CIP, specifically in developing new organizational knowledge and "assessing what is needed" to both mobilize and sustain the change (Deszca et al., 2019, p. 55). The monitoring and evaluation plan will play a key role in KMb at CRC which in turn supports institutionalization. For example, as noted in the discussion of organizational context in Chapter 1, CRC is made up of a series of siloed, closed systems. The QAO office that oversees program development and quality assurance has little communication with my office which is responsible for matching and placing students for WIL opportunities. Further, employer and student needs are not considered deeply enough when determining types of WIL in new and current programs leading to reliance on existing experiential learning practices and structures based on familiarity rather than need.

Institutionalization of multiple new international WIL streams can be bolstered by monitoring and evaluation data. If IS are securing employment and employers are reporting satisfaction with WIL experiences then a compelling case for program expansion emerges. The PoP begins to be addressed more on an institutional level when these two data points coalesce consistently. Ultimately, monitoring and evaluation is not only essential to determining the success of the proposed change but will act as the catalyst to consider WIL expansion in additional programs.

Monitoring and Evaluation Data

Depending on the invested parties and the data desired, different tools for data collection are required. For questions related to IS and the role their WIL experience played in fostering a sense of belonging, more qualitative tools are required. For example, interviews allow for greater participant agency unconstrained by the perspective of the researcher (Cresswell 2008; Creswell & Creswell, 2023). Open-ended questions allow for more authentic communication of the participant experience. Focus-groups are really a sub-set of the interview approach and work well in circumstances where participants communicate similar or parallel experiences (Creswell, 2008; Creswell & Creswell, 2023). In addition to tools aligned with qualitative, anecdotal data collection, more traditional quantitative data collection tools are useful.

Surveys are appropriate for data collection from faculty and employers. They can also collect instances of post-WIL employment for IS. Surveys allow for standardization of questions and more control over what information is obtained (Creswell, 2008; Creswell & Creswell, 2023). For example, asking which programs want to explore enhanced WIL opportunities can help to identify the pilot group. Additionally, data demonstrating that COOP is improving post-graduation employment opportunities for IS will not only show success of the proposed change

but bolster arguments for expansion to new programs. Similarly, scale questions on satisfaction from employers are useful in identifying in which programs employers would like to see enhanced WIL. Similar scale analysis on satisfaction with WIL options can be completed with students to help identify potential programs.

Whether through surveys, interviews, or focus groups, the questions in Table 6 inform the monitoring and evaluation data at different stages of the change implementation. They are organized under Markiewicz and Patrick's (2016) five domains: appropriateness, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability. As part of monitoring and evaluation, these questions are integrated into the plan phase of the various PDSA cycles in the CIP.

Table 6

Monitoring and Evaluation Questions

Domain	Question(s)
Appropriateness:	1. What programs are best positioned for expanded WIL opportunities?
Effectiveness:	1. Are employers satisfied with IS in WIL placements? 2. Are IS satisfied with their WIL placements?
Efficiency:	1. Are IS and employers satisfied with current WIL opportunities at CRC?
Impact:	1. Are IS receiving employment offers because of WIL placements? 2. What/how many WIL opportunities resulted in post-graduation employment for IS? Why? 3. What/how many WIL opportunities did not result in post-graduation employment for IS? Why? 4. Did opportunities for WIL positively impact IS' sense of belonging?
Sustainability:	1. Did IS secure employment post-WIL at comparable rates to domestic students?

Note. Monitoring and evaluation questions are iterative and must be modified as needed to ensure relevant and appropriate data are collected.

To ensure the CIP is manageable it represents one cycle of change which ends after the first year of the enhanced program. This provides challenges from an evaluation standpoint because measuring how many IS secured post-graduation employment is a key indicator to the overall success of the program. While this data will certainly be tracked as part of the overall evaluation of the new program, it cannot be reasonably included in the evaluation plan at this phase. To address this limitation, the institutionalization phase and final PDSA cycle will form the evaluation mechanism for this initial change cycle.

Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA) Cycles

Plan, do, study, act (PDSA) cycles (Donnelly & Kirk, 2015) offer a valuable tool for monitoring and evaluating the proposed change (see Figure 3). PDSA cycles for monitoring and evaluation can increase the likelihood of embedded organizational improvement (Leis & Shojania, 2016). Laverentz and Kumm (2017) found PDSA cycles useful in maintaining internal consistency during quality improvement monitoring. In the case of this DiP, a full PDSA cycle is embedded into each step in the change path model (Deszca, et al., 2019) as described in the CIP. The PDSA cycle assumes the need for modifications and enhancements to the original plan throughout the change process. It is disingenuous to implement PDSA cycles "if the original idea remained roughly unchanged throughout the project" (Leis & Shojania, 2016, p. 572). Figure 3 is a visual representation of the elements of each stage in the multiple PDSA cycles embedded in the monitoring and evaluation plan. This is followed by discussion of the specific actions for PDSA steps in each stage of the change path model as described in the CIP.

Figure 3

PDSA Cycle

Plan

Goal Articulation:
1. Set objectives
2. Collect baseline data/information
3. Set targets and measurement/monitoring processes

Act

Sustain Effectiveness:
What modifications are necessary?How can these modifications be implemented?
What is the level of readiness for the next change?

Do

Monitor:
1. Collect relevant data
2. Document problems and challenges
3. Establish "run chart"

Study

Analyze data:
1. Was the outcome close to the goal?
2. What are the lessons learned?

Note. Adapted from "Use the PDSA model for effective change management," by P. Donnelly, and P. Kirk, 2015, *Education for Primary Care*, *26*(4), p. 279 (https://doi.org/10.1080/14739879.2015.11494356). Copyright 2015 by Taylor and Francis.

PDSA Cycles for the Change Implementation Plan

The following sections explain the use of individual PDSA cycles (see Figure 3) for each step in the CIP. Leis and Shojania (2016) developed a framework for organizing multiple PDSA cycles. Table 7 visually adapts this framework to communicate the different PDSA cycles within the CIP.

Table 7

PDSA Monitoring Cycles for Change Implementation Plan

CIP Phase	Plan	Do	Study	Act	Timeline
Awakening	Collect baseline data on programs well-suited for expanded COOP. Gather international student satisfaction data on WIL offerings at CRC. Gather existing and new employer satisfaction data on current WIL offerings at CRC.	Identify barriers to employment for IS. Identify gaps in services at CRC to address these barriers. Communicate barriers and gaps, including access to COOP to senior leadership team, administration, faculty chairs, and identified program coordinators. Develop strategy to address service gaps.	How were barriers perceived by invested parties? Was the goal and need for change clearly articulated? Was their pushback based on perceived inequality? Is there more required training at the outset on the need for the change based on equity commitments?	Expand data sources as necessary. Revise presentations and messaging to correct communication concerns. Embed equity training at the outset of the awakening phase. Celebrate successes!	Year 1: Sept.-Dec.
Mobilization	Select a program that is suited for a new COOP stream. Ensure faculty and program coordinator are committed to the change.	Selection of appropriate pilot program. Employer recruitment Build faculty, employer, administration coalitions. Develop plan of action for international COOP stream	Were employers eager to participate in this program? Did faculty and employers form a coalition behind the goal? Did the plan of action appropriately account for challenges and limitations?	Implement recommended changes to employer recruitment strategies. Redesign coalition building activities. Revise plan of action to address challenges and limitations. Celebrate successes!	Year 1: Jan.-Apr.
Acceleration	Research from strategy to inform learning session content. Survey or focus group data collected on employer faculty needs/requests for networking sessions.	Feedback collected from employers and faculty on, Employer and faculty networking and learning sessions.	How were learning and network sessions received? What was valuable? What improvements, additions were recommended?	Revise networking and learning sessions based on recommendations for use in next cycle. Celebrate successes!	Year 1: May-Aug.
Institutionalization	Monitor by semester student, faculty, and employer experiences.	Collect faculty and student feedback on COOP preparation course. Collect employer and student satisfaction data on first COOP placement.	How prepared did students feel for their initial COOP placement? What were employer perceptions of students' preparedness?	Adjust preparation course. Implement necessary changes to make COOP placement more successful for employers and students. Celebrate successes!	Year 2: Sept.-Aug.

Note. Adapted from "A primer on PDSA: Executing plan-do-study-act cycles in practice, not just in name," by J. A. Leis and K. G. Shojania, 2016, *BMJ Quality and Safety*, *26*, p. 573 (https://qualitysafety.bmj.com/content/26/7/572). Copyright 2016 by group.bmj.com

Plan

In the plan step the problem is identified including an "aimed statement" (Donnelly &

Kirk, 2015, p. 279) which articulates the goal. Each step in the CIP has different goals that guide

its individual PDSA cycle. In the awakening phase goals include collecting data on programs

well-suited to expanded WIL. The goal of mobilization is to use the awakening PDSA cycle to

select an appropriate program for the international WIL stream. During mobilization, the goal is

to develop learning and networking sessions for faculty and employers based on their focus

group and survey feedback. The goal for the institutionalization step is more aligned with

evaluation than monitoring and as such has a full academic year timeline. It measures the success

of the initial specialized course and COOP placement through data collected from employers,

faculty, and students.

Do

The do step involves implementation of the goal and collecting relevant information and

data to monitor and measure its success. This calls for the use of a "run chart" (Donnelly & Kirk,

2015, p. 280) which plots a time scale on one axis and a quality measurement on the other.

Again, there is a do phase for each step in the CIP. During awakening, a strategy for dismantling

barriers to employment for IS is developed. The strategy will identify gaps in services at CRC to

address these barriers including lack of access to COOP opportunities. The mobilization step

involves the building of appropriate coalitions between employers, faculty, and administration.

During acceleration, feedback from employers and faculty on the networking and learning

sessions is collected. Finally, the institutionalization phase focuses on student, faculty, and

employer experiences and perceptions about the initial specialized preparation course and COOP

placements.

Study

The study step involves analyzing the collected data, assessing whether it reflects the desired outcome of the change, and what additional lessons can be learned (Donnelly & Kirk, 2015). During awakening, this includes discussions of how invested parties responded to the barriers presented in the strategy and whether more training on equitable educational access and outcomes for IS is required. The mobilization phase focuses on the success of coalition development and unaccounted for challenges and limitations in the action plan. Similarly, the acceleration phase considers questions about the learning and networking sessions by faculty and staff and where improvements and additions can be made. The institutionalization phase considers feedback on preparedness for the initial COOP placement by students, faculty, and employers.

Act

The act step involves implementing modifications and improvements to the initial plan. It also involves "asking questions about the state of readiness to make another change" (Donnelly & Kirk, 2015, p. 280) which requires a new PDSA cycle. In the awakening phase this might involve expanding data sources as necessary and revising initial presentations and communication materials. It might also consider equity training for staff and administration at the outset of the CIP. Mobilization could require changes to employer recruitment strategies, enhanced coalition building activities, and a revised plan of action. Acceleration actions include revisions to training and networking sessions based on faculty and employer feedback. The act phase for institutionalization provides the opportunity to revise the preparation course and make necessary changes in supports for students and employers during COOP placements. Essential to

the act phase in all PDSA cycles is the celebration of successes during implementation and considerations for next steps.

Chapter 3 Conclusion

Chapter 3 presents the CIP for the preferred solution identified in Chapter 2. It also includes plans for communicating, monitoring, and evaluating this proposed change. The PoP identifies a lack of flexible models of WIL to meet both employer and international student needs at CRC. The DiP proposes a new international student COOP stream that addresses this gap in WIL offerings. Recognizing that attaining the preferred future is an iterative process, the CIP focuses on a single change cycle over two academic years. This creates limitations in fully evaluating the success of the change but still provides for multiple feedback and data collection loops to both monitor and evaluate progress. As the PoP identifies, WIL opportunities are not only an important pathway to employment for IS but help to foster their sense of belonging in Canadian society. The research connections between WIL, and sense of community and belonging for IS are strong. To properly address the PoP, a tethering of these elements must be maintained. The CIP plan reflects this commitment: enriching a sense of belonging for IS through supported and enhanced access to authentic work experiences.

Next Steps and Future Considerations

The most glaring limitation to the proposed change process is that it does not see the first cohort of IS from the new program to graduation. To do this would require a four-year change cycle. On its surface this might appear limiting to the possibility of implementing similar changes to additional programs at CRC. On the other hand, there is ample opportunity to demonstrate success built into the communication and monitoring plans and the CIP. Discussing next steps is an uncomfortably aspirational exercise for me because it presupposes success of the

proposed change in this DiP. At the same time, the preferred future presented here has the potential to serve as a model for other institutions facing the same challenges supporting IS.

From my own contextual lens, the ideal next step at CRC is the expansion of COOP streams for IS to other programs. Without any consideration for IS, CRC is already behind other Ontario colleges in available COOP offerings. This gap may appear as a weakness but exists simultaneously as an opportunity. In many ways it creates a blank slate to envision truly unique and innovative approaches. From an ambitious lens, the proposed change described in this DiP could be adapted and refined to address the needs of IS at institutions of higher education across Ontario, Canada, and beyond. The equity and ethical considerations explored in the sections above form the basis of reframing an international student discussion that is demonstrably anchored in the language of recruitment, market share, commodification, and revenue (Buckner et al., 2023). In this sense, future considerations are not exclusively operational but also aligned with humanity. One of the challenges of discussing next steps is that they tend to favour action over principle, performance over substance. Substantively, this proposal envisions a future that provides visible, targeted supports for IS that disrupt neutrality in the name of ensuring the core needs of IS are met. With full recognition of the messiness and discomfort that comes with such a stance, for me, this is the essence of a considered future.

The Canadian context of the PoP has shifted significantly in the brief time I have examined this issue. It has gone from a place of relative silence on the growing numbers and consequential challenges for IS to a full-blown media frenzy replete with finger pointing, personal attacks, and fiscal anxiety for educational institutions. Lost in all of this are the foundational responsibilities that all educational institutions share: the success, well-being, and development of students. This gives way to another future consideration. Through its disruption,

it is time to shift this narrative. Secure employment is not merely a desired outcome of higher

education. It is a core element of belonging in a community, a sense of self-worth, and individual

identity. Employment is too often considered on a purely quantitative and economic level, rather

than a human one. My hope is that this work will play a small part in the evolution of this

narrative to a place of deeper consideration for the human elements embedded in the experience

of finding a good job.

I have argued in this DiP that WIL creates opportunities for employment and that

employment creates a sense of belonging for IS. I have also argued that WIL is not a panacea to

address the myriad challenges IS face. What this DiP does is offer a tangible, implementable, and

research-focused strategy to improve the educational experiences and employment opportunities

for IS. This simple conclusion articulates the future considerations discussed above but also my

perceived next steps: implementing international student focused WIL in additional programs at

CRC and beyond.

Narrative Epilogue

When I applied to the Doctor of Education program at Western University I was a secondary school principal. When I started the program, a superintendent of education at a public school board. As I draw to the close of the journey, I am in middle management at an institution of higher education facilitating WIL and career readiness for students. The evolution of my PoP has a followed a thematically similar path to my contextual changes. I began with an interest in fostering deeper critical reflection in administrative and teaching staff. My interest then shifted to the importance of student voice and enhancing mechanisms to capture it authentically. I have landed in the world of international education examining employment barriers for students. As I write this, however, I am struck less by the drastic shift in my positional location over a short period of time and more by the consistency of my educational philosophy throughout.

I have always believed that all students have the capacity to learn in meaningful ways. I have never believed that an educator's primary role is expertise or authority. For me, the through-line for my experiences as an educator has been the need to act as a facilitator building necessary scaffolds for students. This belief has not waned from my time as a green classroom teacher, to school and system administrator, to higher education middle-manager. On its surface this would be an appropriate example of irony for a classroom lesson from my early years; I have completed a doctoral degree only to learn what I have always known.

At the same time, I do not define learning this way. I have come to understand that knowledge is not binary in that there are only things one already knows and those they have yet to learn. This experience like all learning has been an opportunity to develop more "dependable beliefs" (Mezirow, 2000, p. 4). It has been a process of continuously suspending what I have

always known just long enough to engage meaningfully with new perspectives thus challenging, adjusting, and ultimately strengthening existing understandings.

Having reached a stage in my life where additional qualifications have little impact on my career trajectory, there is beauty in the purity of this experience. I used to spend considerable time in discussions about intrinsic versus extrinsic motivation with my students. Admittedly, I see now that I unconsciously favoured the former aligning a kind of deficit stance with the latter. The ebb and flow of my own motivation during the doctoral journey has led me to a place where I no longer see a need to draw this distinction. I use this anecdote to illustrate one of the wonderful outcomes of the doctoral journey: the muddling of beliefs and understandings that I once understood as secure and constant. Or in the immortal words of Bob Dylan (1964), "I was so much older then. I'm younger than that now."

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Appendix A: Organizational Structure at CRC
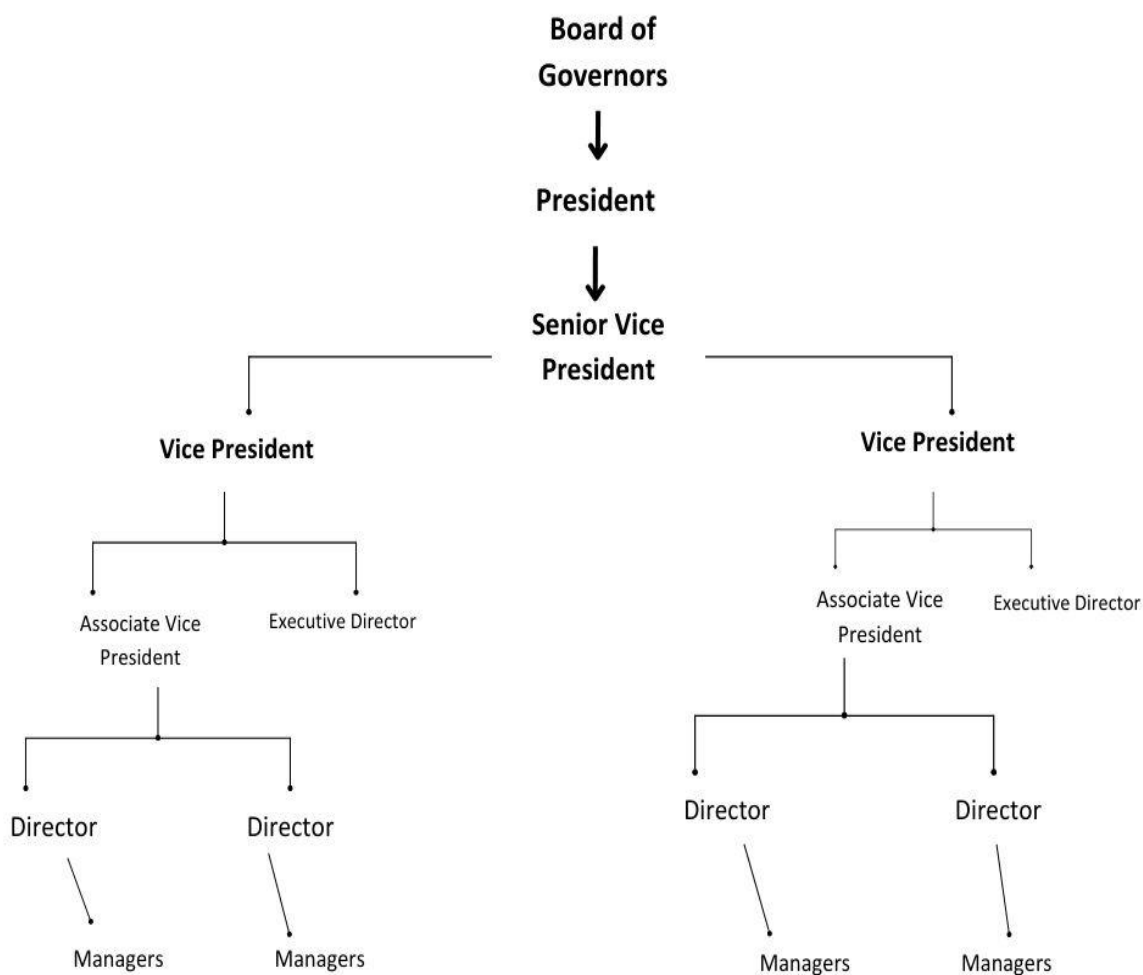
Note. This is not an exact representation of the organizational structure at CRC but shows the type of hierarchy it employs. Appendix A also denotes my organizational position in the role of manager.

Appendix B: Equitable Higher Education Framework

The Equitable Higher Education Framework is comprised of three building blocks that can help institutions take a holistic view of every learner's needs as they work to implement initiatives and empower them to truly pave the way for Equitable Education.	**1. Access and Achievement**—referring to the student's ability to be admitted, have the financial support and required materials for, and excel academically in higher education. **2. Being and Belonging**—focusing on the students' beliefs that they can be themselves and are a valued member of the institution's community. **3. Cause and Career**—recognizing the student's need to find and pursue their purpose while also being prepared for the real world.

Access and Achievement

Is your institution making consistent and measurable strides to make access to education available to as many students as possible?

- Are administrators and faculty empowered to make accommodations for students with different academic or lifestyle needs? Is that ability publicized?
- Is every student provided with a learning path that allows them to reach graduation in a timely fashion?
- Are programs that give students easy, immediate, and low-cost access to course materials adequately leveraged?
- Is your institution working on increasing access to education for diverse groups of students?

Being and Belonging

Is accommodation being made for students who have limited time or resources to participate in extracurricular activities?

- Is the diversity of the faculty and administration reflective of the diversity of the student population? • Are different cultural perspectives and norms equally promoted and respected?
- Are opportunities for formal and informal networking and community building being fostered?
- Do the course materials reflect the diverse range of achievements and experiences of both the student and instructor populations?

Cause and Career

Is there enough flexibility in academic programs that can help students explore non-traditional careers?
- Are students trained in how to identify—and potentially monetize—their passion projects?
- Are internships, career counseling, and employment plans mandatory components of the curriculum?
- Are students given a set of realistic expectations of compensation levels for jobs related to various majors in a timely enough fashion, so they can make informed career decisions?
- Are students' job skills and availabilities highlighted to employers, and are connections to them actively fostered?

Note. Reproduced from "Equitable education: Partnering to achieve success for all in higher education," by McGraw Hill, 2023 (Equitable Education Framework Download | McGraw Hill (mheducation.ca)). Copyright 2023 by McGraw Hill Canada.

Appendix C: Readiness for Change Factors

Table 1. Summary of the Psychological and Structural Factors of Readiness at the Individual and Organizational Level and Key Dimensions Within Each

	Readiness for change factors	
Level of analysis	*Psychological factors* Factors that reflect the extent to which the members of the organization are cognitively and emotionally inclined to accept, embrace, and implement a particular change	*Structural factors* Factors that reflect the extent to which the circumstances under which the change is occurring enhance or inhibit the acceptance and implementation of change
Individual	*Appropriateness*—belief that a specific change is correct for the situation that is being addressed *Principal support*—belief that formal and informal leaders are committed to the success of the change and that it is not going to be another passing fad *Change efficacy*—belief that the individual can successfully *Valence*—belief that the change is beneficial to the individual	*Knowledge, skills, and ability alignment*—extent to which the organizational members' knowledge, skills, and abilities align with the change
Organizational	*Collective commitment*—shared belief and resolve to pursue courses of action that will lead to successful change implementation *Collective efficacy*—shared belief in their conjoint capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to implement change successfully	*Discrepancy*—an understood difference between the current state or practice and a more desirable state (without a particular change to address this issue in mind) *Support climate*—sufficient tangible (e.g., funding, reward and incentive systems) and an encouraging intangible environment (i.e., culture and climate) to support implementation *Facilitation strategies*—a set of clearly articulated goals and objectives that are supported by a detailed implementation plan defining roles and system to measure progress

Note. Reproduced from "Are you ready? How health professionals can comprehensively conceptualize readiness for change," by D. T. Holt, C. D. Helfrich, C. G. Hall & B. J. Weiner, 2010 (doi: 10.1007/s11606-009-1112-8). Copyright 2010 by Springer Link.

Appendix D: Culturally Responsive Leadership Framework

Muhammad Khalifa, University of Minnesota
Mark Anthony Gooden, University of Texas
James Earl Davis, Temple University

Critically Self Reflects on Leadership Behaviours	Develops Culturally Responsive Teachers
Is committed to continuous learning of cultural knowledge and contexts (Gardiner & Enomoto, 2006) **Displays a critical consciousness on practice in and out of school; displays self-reflection** (Gooden & Dantley, 2012; Johnson, 2006) **Uses school data and indicants to measure CRSL** (Skrla, Scheurich, Garcia, & Nolly, 2004) **Uses parent/community voices to measure cultural responsiveness in schools** (Ishimaru, 2013; Smyth, 2006) **Challenges Whiteness and hegemonic epistemologies in school** (Theoharis & Haddix, 2011) **Using equity audits to measure student inclusiveness, policy, and practice** (Skrla et al., 2004) **Leading with courage** (Khalifa, 2011; Nee-Benham, Maenette, & Cooper, 1988) **Is a transformative leader for social justice and inclusion** (Alston, 2005; Gooden, 2005; Gooden & O'Doherty, 2015; Shields, 2010)	**Developing teacher capacities for culturally responsive pedagogy** (Ginsberg & Wlodkowski, 2000; Voltz, Brazil, & Scott, 2003) **Collaborative walkthroughs** (Madhlangobe & Gordon, 2012) **Creating culturally responsive PD opportunities for teachers** (Ginsberg & Wlodkowski, 2000; Voltz et al., 2003) **Using school data to see cultural gaps in achievement, discipline, enrichment, and remedial services** (Skrla et al., 2004) **Creating a CRSL team that is charged with constantly finding new ways for teachers to be culturally responsive** (Gardiner & Enomoto, 2006) **Engaging/reforming the school curriculum to become more culturally responsive** (Sleeter, 2012; Villegas & Lucas, 2002) **Modeling culturally responsive teaching** (Madhlangobe & Gordon, 2012) **Using culturally responsive assessment tools for students** (Hopson, 2001; Kea, Campbell- Whatley, & Bratton, 2003)
Promotes Culturally Responsive/Inclusive School Environment	Engages Students, Parents, and Indigenous Contexts
Accepting indigenized, local identities (Khalifa, 2010) **Building relationships; reducing anxiety among students** (Madhlangobe & Gordon, 2012) **Modeling CRSL for staff in building interactions** (Khalifa, 2011; Tillman, 2005) **Promoting a vision for an inclusive instructional and behavioral practices** (Gardiner & Enomoto, 2006; Webb- Johnson, 2006; Webb-Johnson & Carter, 2007) **If need be, challenging exclusionary policies, teachers, and behaviors** (Khalifa, 2011; Madhlangobe & Gordon, 2012) **Acknowledges, values, and uses Indigenous cultural and social capital of students** (Khalifa, 2010, 2012) **Uses student voice** (Antrop-González, 2011; Madhlangobe & Gordon, 2012) **Using school data to discover and track disparities in academic and disciplinary trends** (Skiba et al., 2002; Skrla et al., 2004; Theoharis, 2007)	**Developing meaningful, positive relationships with community** (Gardiner & Enomoto, 2006; Johnson, 2006; Walker, 2001) **Is a servant leader, as public intellectual and other roles** (Alston, 2005; Gooden, 2005; Johnson, 2006) **Finding overlapping spaces for school and community** (Cooper, 2009; Ishimaru, 2013; Khalifa, 2012) **Serving as advocate and social activist for community-based causes in both the school and neighborhood community** (Capper, Hafner, & Keyes, 2002; Gooden, 2005; Johnson, 2006; Khalifa, 2012) **Uses the community as an informative space from which to develop positive understandings of students and families** (Gardiner & Enomoto, 2006) **Resists deficit images of students and families** (Davis, 2002; Flessa, 2009) **Nurturing/caring for others; sharing information** (Gooden, 2005; Madhlangobe & Gordon, 2012) **Connecting directly with students** (Gooden, 2005; Khalifa, 2012; Lomotey, 1993)

Note. Reproduced from "Culturally responsive school leadership framework," Khalifa, M. A.,

Gooden, M. A., & Davis, J. E., 2018, *Organization Leadership, Policy, & Development*

(https://www.cehd.umn.edu/assets/docs/policy-breakfast/UMN-Culturally-Responsive-School-Leadership-Framework.pdf). Copyright 2018 by University of Minnesota.

Appendix E: Aligning Readiness for Change Factors

	Readiness for Change Factors	
Level of Analysis	*Psychological Factors*	*Structural Factors*
Individual	Sponsorship Leadership	Rewards Communication Innovation
Organizational	Motivation Customer Focus Morale Decision-Making	Direction Measurements Organizational Context Processes/Functions Competitor Benchmarking Organization Structure Organizational Hierarchy

Note. Adapted from "Are you ready? How health professionals can comprehensively

conceptualize readiness for change," by D. T. Holt, C. D. Helfrich, C. G. Hall & B. J. Weiner,

2010 (doi: 10.1007/s11606-009-1112-8). Copyright 2010 by Springer Link; and "Rate your

readiness to change," by T. Stewart, 1994, *Fortune*, *129*(3), p. 106-110 (https://search-ebscohost-

com.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=9401277556&site=ehost-live).

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Appendix F: Rate Your Readiness to Change Quiz

A Quiz

THE LEFT-HAND COLUMN lists 17 key elements of change readiness. Rate your organization on each item. Give

three points for a high ranking (``We're good at this; I'm confident of our skills here''); two for medium score

(``We're spotty here; we could use improvement or more experience''); and one point for a low score (``We've had

problems with this; this is new to our organization''). Be honest. Don't trust only your own perspective; ask others

in the organization, at all levels, to rate the company too. The consultants at Symmetrix believe -- no surprise -- it

helps to have an outsider do the assessment with you.

CATEGORY

SPONSORSHIP: The sponsor of change is not necessarily its day-to-day leader; he or she is the visionary, chief

cheerleader, and bill payer -- the person with the power to help the team change when it meets resistance. Give

three points -- change will be easier -- if sponsorship comes at a senior level; for example, CEO, COO, or the head

of an autonomous business unit. Weakest sponsors: midlevel executives or staff officers. **SCORE = 3**

LEADERSHIP: This means the day-to-day leadership -- the people who call the meetings, set the goals, work till

midnight. Successful change is more likely if leadership is high level, has ``ownership'' (that is, direct responsibility

for what's to be changed) and has clear business results in mind. Low-level leadership, or leadership that is not

well connected throughout the organization (across departments) or that comes from the staff, is less likely to

succeed and should be scored low. SCORE = **1**

MOTIVATION: High points for a strong sense of urgency from senior management, which is shared by the rest of

the company, and for a corporate culture that already emphasizes continuous improvement. Negative: tradition-

bound managers and workers, many of whom have been in their jobs for more than 15 years; a conservative

culture that discourages risk taking. SCORE = **1**

DIRECTION: Does senior management strongly believe that the future should look different from the present? How

clear is management's picture of the future? Can management mobilize all relevant parties -- employees, the

board, customers, etc. -- for action? High points for positive answers to those questions. If senior management

thinks only minor change is needed, the likely outcome is no change at all; score yourself low. SCORE = **2**

MEASUREMENTS: Or in consultant-speak, ``metrics.'' Three points if you already use performance measures of the sort encouraged by total quality management (defect rates, time to market, etc.) and if these express the economics of the business. Two points if some measures exist but compensation and reward systems do not explicitly reinforce them. If you don't have measures in place or don't know what we're talking about, one point. SCORE = **1**

ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT: How does the change effort connect to other major goings-on in the organization? (For example: Does it dovetail with a continuing total quality management process? Does it fit with strategic actions such as acquisitions or new product lines?) Trouble lies ahead for a change effort that is isolated or if there are multiple change efforts whose relationships are not linked strategically. SCORE = **2**

PROCESSES/FUNCTIONS: Major changes almost invariably require redesigning business processes that cut across functions such as purchasing, accounts payable, or marketing. If functional executives are rigidly turf conscious, change will be difficult. Give yourself more points the more willing they -- and the organization as a whole -- are to change critical processes and sacrifice perks or power for the good of the group. SCORE = **2**

COMPETITOR BENCHMARKING: Whether you are a leader in your industry or a laggard, give yourself points for a continuing program that objectively compares your company's performance with that of competitors and systematically examines changes in your market. Give yourself one point if knowledge of competitors' abilities is primarily anecdotal -- what salespeople say. SCORE = **1**

CUSTOMER FOCUS: The more everyone in the company is imbued with knowledge of customers, the more likely that the organization can agree to change to serve them better. Three points if everyone in the work force knows who his or her customers are, knows their needs, and has had direct contact with them. Take away points if that knowledge is confined to pockets of the organization (sales and marketing, senior executives). SCORE = **1**

REWARDS: Change is easier if managers and employees are rewarded for taking risks, being innovative, and looking for new solutions. Team-based rewards are better than rewards based solely on individual achievement. Reduce points if your company, like most, rewards continuity over change. If managers become heroes for making budget, they won't take risks even if you say you want them to. Also: If employees believe failure will be punished, reduce points. SCORE = **1**

ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE: The best situation is a flexible organization with little churn -- that is, reorganizations are rare and well received. Score yourself lower if you have a rigid structure that has been unchanged for more than five years or has undergone frequent reorganization with little success; that may signal a cynical company culture that fights change by waiting it out. SCORE = **2**

COMMUNICATION: A company will adapt to change most readily if it has many means of two-way communication that reach all levels of the organization and that all employees use and understand. If communications media are few, often trashed unread, and almost exclusively one-way and top-down, change will be more difficult. SCORE = **1**

ORGANIZATIONAL HIERARCHY: The fewer levels of hierarchy and the fewer employee grade levels, the more likely an effort to change will succeed. A thick impasto of middle management and staff not only slows decision-making but also creates large numbers of people with the power to block change. SCORE = **1**

PRIOR EXPERIENCE WITH CHANGE: Score three if the organization has successfully implemented major changes in the recent past. Score one if there is no prior experience with major change or if change efforts failed or left a legacy of anger or resentment. Most companies will score two, acknowledging equivocal success in previous attempts to change. SCORE = **2**

MORALE: Change is easier if employees enjoy working in the organization and the level of individual responsibility is high. Signs of unreadiness to change: low team spirit, little voluntary extra effort, and mistrust. Look for two types of mistrust: between management and employees, and between or among departments. SCORE = **2**

INNOVATION: Best situation: The company is always experimenting; new ideas are implemented with seemingly little effort; employees work across internal boundaries without much trouble. Bad signs: lots of red tape, multiple signoffs required before new ideas are tried; employees must go through channels and are discouraged from working with colleagues from other departments or divisions. SCORE = **1**

DECISION-MAKING: Rate yourself high if decisions are made quickly, taking into account a wide variety of suggestions; it is clear where decisions are made. Give yourself a low grade if decisions come slowly and are made by a mysterious ``them''; there is a lot of conflict during the process, and confusion and finger pointing after decisions are announced. SCORE = **1**

IF YOUR SCORE IS 41-51: Implementing change is most likely to succeed. Focus resources on lagging factors (your ones and twos) to accelerate the process.

28-40: Change is possible but may be difficult, especially if you have low scores in the first seven readiness

dimensions. Bring those up to speed before attempting to implement large-scale change.

17-27: Implementing change will be virtually impossible without a precipitating catastrophe. Focus instead on (1)

building change readiness in the dimensions above and (2) effecting change through skunkworks or pilot programs

separate from the organization at large.

Note. The score for CRC based in my perceptions is **25** putting it at the low end of the scale but

approaching the possibility of change. Reproduced from "Rate your readiness to change," by T.

Stewart, 1994, *Fortune*, *129*(3), p. 106-110 (https://search-ebscohost-com.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=9401277556&site=ehost-live).

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