

Eradicating Systemic Discrimination: Advancing Democratic Leadership in Canada's Education System

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Abstract

Social Justice Leadership, Critical Race Theory, and 21st Century Teaching bring forth the imperative need to nurture inclusivity and address systemic inequities in educational settings. It is educators and leaders who can knowingly help create such an area that is preoccupied with equity, justice, and social issues. The ability to function and integrate technology in schools demonstrates a key competence for 21st-century leadership, while critical thinking, collaboration, and flexibility are being developed in students. This article calls for a paradigm shift away from the more conventional ways of leadership to adopting a framework in leading towards social justice. In its support for the creation of critical spaces and dialogues at the community level, this article argues that such an approach is necessary in empowering communities by planting the practice of social justice right at the core of all educational institutions. Using literature from social justice leadership, critical race theory, and the best practices of teaching today, there are four identified critical areas that need to be taken with regard to leadership action: visionary leadership, instructional leadership, organizational leadership, and collaborative leadership. These areas are recommended for principals and assistant principals to take proper action as a measure toward mitigating or overcoming the racial discipline gap. The proposed strategies for educational leadership will be aimed at reflecting the principles of social justice and the transforming power of contemporary teaching and learning practices with the purpose of bringing a more inclusive and equitable learning environment.

1. Introduction

In the section that follows, within our extensive literature review, a deep dive is taken into four interwoven domains that together define the complex landscape of modern educational leadership. These together powerful domains, in coming together, cultivate a subtle understanding of the multi-faceted nature of effective leadership in the domain of education. Our work in the series focuses on a small number of

critical themes: Social Justice Leadership, Critical Race Theory, 21st Century Teaching, Learning, and Leading, and The Department of Defense Education Activity. Each of these themes represents a different critical dimension to the changing face of educational leadership. By taking a deep dive into these themes, we seek to unravel the complexities, obstacles, and possibilities that comprise the contemporary landscape of educational leadership. From inclusive policy to the recognition of systemic inequity, and from the call for innovative educators in the 21st century, our literature review synthesizes an enormous volume of knowledge to give an overall understanding of the myriad facets shaping effective educational leadership. This way, we not only attempt to take a close look at each of these aspects but also the interrelation that may exist between these themes. In diverse dimensions, we strive to disclose insights that light paths for improvement in leadership practices in fostering learning environments which are academically sound but sensitive to the peculiar challenges of an educational context in the Department of Defense.

2. Social Justice Leadership

Social justice leadership is a transformational educational administration cornerstoned on equity, inclusivity, and fairness. This kind of leadership would make conscious efforts to build learning environments that surely guarantee academic excellence, catering to diversified needs for the inclusion of every student, whatever the socio-economic status, race, ethnicity, gender, or other factors may be.

Social justice leadership involves the commitment to equal opportunities in education. Leaders engage in a lot of effort as they work to ensure that inequities associated with access to quality resources, extra-curricular activities, and advanced coursework are stalled [11]. They also try to create an inclusive school culture in which the students' backgrounds form part of their identity and therefore should be celebrated. Such an environs provides an atmosphere where students are valued and respected and develop a sense of belonging.

Other critical elements of social justice leadership encompass culturally responsive teaching. This means that the instructional practices are differentiated to represent the students' cultural variability to make learning relevant and engaging [5]. To this end, leaders emphasize professional development for educators in working out implicit biases, understanding systemic inequalities, and practicing inclusive teaching methods. Social justice leaders also take proactive steps to eradicate disparities in student achievement and disciplinary outcomes. They embed data-informed decision-making as the way to conduct critical analyses of achievement data, discipline records, and other metrics when identifying and eradicating systemic bias. In addition, leaders will involve the wider community—such as parents, families, and local organizations—in making decisions and setting policy to ensure that needs and aspirations are met at all levels of the school community [13]. It also includes advocating on behalf of students who are marginalized, and, therefore, challenging policies that are discriminatory to some groupings, while promising to commit the resources needed to the underserved segments, so opening opportunities for every student to be successful.

3. Critical Race Theory

Critical Race Theory, originally developed in legal studies, is an applied framework to education. Employing CRT in schools enables the investigation and critique of systemic racism in schools by challenging how race impacts policies, practices, and outcomes in education. It dares people to think deeply about systemic racism in educational structures and introduces critical examination of dominant discourses that maintain racial inequalities [8]. CRT puts emphasis on intersectionality, elaborating how different categories of social aspects intersect to form the experience based on race within the education system. Another central aspect of CRT in education relates to challenging the biases that may be implicit in the educational setting, alongside microaggressions. In relation hereto, educators are implored to be aware of these insidious forms of discrimination daunting students of color and to proclaim them. Moreover, CRT calls for an increase of underrepresented voices inside the educational system so that the latter would be open to all perspectives in diverse learning environments. The authors further argue that through activism, such activists continue to advocate for policies combating structural inequalities by encouraging reform in the financing of schools, standardized testing processes, and discipline policies with disproportionate impacts on specific races or ethnicities [17]. It postulates that, in education, CRT presents the premise that racism is inbuilt and racial inequality develops into "a logical and predictable result

of a racialized society in which discussions of race and racism continue to be muted and marginalized" [9].

However, it is beyond reasonable doubt that with the influence in schools, it creates debates that are highly criticized on whether CRT should be integrated into the curricula. Various views have been thrown in because of the aspect of evolving discussions on the implications of CRT in educational institutions; these stand between the scholarly views raised and are argued over continuously within the field.

British Columbia

The Ministry of Education within British Columbia has incorporated aspects of social justice and anti-racism education into the curricula. This includes a review of systemic injustices and understanding the impacts of racism, though it may be poorly defined as CRT.

Ontario

The education system in Ontario possesses a number of frameworks and resources that implement equity and inclusion into the schools. These discussions on racism and privilege may permeate various subjects; often, it's done to create an inclusive environment rather than explicitly teaching CRT itself [16].

Alberta

There have been similar debates on what should be taught in schools in Alberta, with some schools discussing systemic racism and historic injustices. There are different approaches, and there are diverse opinions regarding the framing of such discussions.

4. 21st Century Teaching, Learning, and Leading (CTLL)

The notion of "21st Century Teaching, Learning, and Leading" is representative of a modern method of education that is oriented toward dynamic needs from education in the present century. It takes into consideration the enormous influence of technology, globalization, and change in society on education; thus, it requires a transformational shift in methodology regarding teaching, learning, and leading [21]. This is 21st Century Teaching in teaching: the use of technology, development of critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication. The philosophy focuses on the use of digital tools, project-based learning, and adaptive teaching to help students prepare for the challenges in the modern world.

About learning, 21st Century Learning deals with the acquisition of those skills relevant to the contemporary landscape. In other words, that is digital literacy, problem-solving, adaptability, and global perspective.

The aim herein would be to empower the learner with competencies needed to sail through the increasingly complex, interconnected world. With regard to leadership, 21st Century Leading in education concerns visionary and adaptive leading practices within education. According to, the educational leadership shall create an enabling environment that promotes innovation, collaboration, and continuous improvement [21].. They have influential roles in shaping the future direction of education through effective integration of technology and a student-centered and inclusive approach.

CTLL is one such holistic, forward-looking educational approach aimed at adequately preparing students for success in a rapidly changing world. It integrates modern teaching methods, learning outcomes, and leadership practices that respond to the call for 21st-century needs.

5. The Department of Defense Education Activity (DODEA)

Critical agencies involved within the United States Department of Defense include the Department of Defense Education Activity, whose aim is to offer educational services to the dependants of U.S. military personnel abroad. It facilitates a wide network of schools, in which an all-rounded education is given, starting from pre-kindergarten classes to 12th grade [21]. With schools spread across the world, military-connected students enjoy a rigorous, consistent school system as their families relocate due to military assignments. DODEA has followed U.S. national curriculum standards that best prepare students for academic success and support smooth transitions between schools, even across countries. Realizing that military families face unique difficulties, the DODEA goes even beyond teaching to provide resources and support that will help students and parents cope with the demands of military life. It attempts to consider a holistic approach to this complex challenge of sustaining continuity in education toward support and well-being for military-connected students.

Apart from a strong education program, DODEA ensures professional development of educators as well in order to equip them with various challenges linked with the schoolchildren of military personnel. DODEA has been working in tandem with military commands to provide structure for its educational services because the demands are different due to its military aspects [21]. In fact, this teamwork benefits not only students in reaching academic success, but also has a positive impact on the readiness and resiliency of U.S. service members and their families stationed throughout the world.

Commitment to educational excellence by DODEA itself is one of the major driving forces behind the

encouraging and supportive setting that surrounds military-connected students. The DODEA 21st Century School Leader shall skillfully demonstrate excellence in the following four roles.

6. Visionary Leadership

The visionary leadership style is dynamic and influential, rested on the ability of the leader to articulate and implement an exciting vision of the future. In its very core, visionary leadership will be about the ability to inspire and mobilize others by painting a vivid and commanding picture of what lies ahead [21]. This style of leadership places great importance on long-term goals, innovation fosterage, and thinking creatively within the culture of the membership.

Another major characteristic of visionary leadership involves the leaders having a clearly articulated vision of something to be achieved in the future. They present their vision to the people in such a manner that the people are directly connected with it. This makes it all the more understandable as it consolidates everyone to a single cause.

The clarity provides the direction while being a driving force, too, to urge the people to give in their ultimate efforts towards the realization of a shared goal. More so, visionary leaders are inspirational because they express passion and enthusiasm and belief in what the shared vision is [10].

First, the sense of direction or purpose which the visionary leaders instill goes beyond the daily grind by persuading others to commit their effort to valuable ends. The second characteristic is an innovative environment because the leaders themselves welcome changes and consider any challenges as chances for growth and improvement. It is all about creating a culture that is innovative and change-friendly.

Further, strategic thinking, regarding the development and implementation of plans according to the long-term vision, is done with great skill by the visionary leader [21]. In a structured manner, the leaders guide their teams step by step toward the future and ensure that strategic decisions are taken which may lead to the fulfillment of generalized goals. Apart from this, inclusiveness may be considered an inherent part of visionary leadership.

The leaders allow others to take part in the process of making the vision, and hence diverse thinking, along with the teamwork culture, flourishes accordingly. Inclusive approaches mean a collective effort brings about richer ideas for a better outcome of every cause, thus reinforcing the collaborative nature of visionary leadership [9].. Basically, it would seem that their place at the helm of affairs is assured, through their ability to inspire and innovate, in strategic guidance towards the accomplishment of shared vision for sustained success.

7. Instructional Leadership

Instructional leadership is an active type of educational management that focuses on the process of enhancing teaching and learning with a focus on achieving high student performance. This usually happens to be undertaken through persons holding the office of school principal or any other educational administrator; hence, instructional leaders bear a lot of influence in developing and sustaining effective instructional practices [17]. The leaders ensure that there is an enabling environment for effective teaching, learning, and overall achievement of students' success. In other words, it is an intensive collaboration with the teachers over the development and delivery of effective instructional strategies." Instructional leaders guide teachers through critical support, resource distribution, and professional growth opportunities on methods to continuously improve teaching, use best practices, and access current educational research [21]. This leadership style strives to create a culture of continuous improvement whereby teachers are provided with opportunities for reflection regarding professional practices and embracing innovative approaches for the enrichment of student learning outcomes.

Other critical roles of instructional leadership are curriculum development and assessment management. In collaboration with teachers, the leadership ensures the orientation of the curriculum to meet educational standards and relevance in students' needs to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills [21]. Furthermore, instructional leadership undertakes the role of managing student assessments; it provides meaning to the data it gathers and uses them to inform instructional decisions, further refining teaching strategies. Beyond these, the instructional leader contributes positively to building a strong school culture that prioritizes student success and would help teachers build a very supportive and collaborative environment in which the teachers would feel empowered toward successfully carrying out their instructional roles [11]. Other facets of instructional leadership that work toward building cohesion within the educational community set on academic excellence include effective communication, mentorship, and a focus on professional growth.

8. Organizational Leadership

Organizational leadership is the multi-faceted process of commanding and leading influence among members of a group or organization in the direction of the goals of the organization. It has several key dimensions, including strategic planning, decision-making, communication, and team management. One of the most paramount aspects of organizational leadership involves articulation of a clear and compelling vision

agreed upon with regard to the organization's core values and objectives [24]. This visionary direction acts to stir up the organizational members to work together as a team for common objectives.

Leaders in organizations have to become definitely decisive upon complex issues that should play a big role in the development of the whole organization. In fact, they analyze information, weigh options, and reach decisions which not only fall within the organizational mission but also adapt to the dynamic nature of the business environment. The decision-making process of leaders affects the capability of an organization to go through specific challenges and opportunities. Another crucial ingredient of organizational leadership is communication [21].

The leader needs to clearly communicate organizational vision, expectations, and goals in a way that each group member understands his or her role and their responsibility. Good and transparent communication lays the base for good organizational culture and helps build trust between members of the same team. It will also help the leaders, through active communication, to highlight challenges, acknowledge successes, and create conditions for continuous improvement [25]. Overall, organizational leadership concerns a balance between these dimensions in order to maintain a work environment that is harmonious and productive.

9. Collaborative Leadership

Collaborative leadership is a revolutionary approach wherein decision-making and problem-solving are considered the pivotal activities for the group. Unlike traditional hierarchical models, the collaborative model of leadership draws from diverse knowledge bases within a team or organization and seeks to create an environment in which individuals are intrinsically motivated to engage in shaping direction and outcomes [19], [21]. From the inclusive perspective, this type of leadership gives value to each of its member's contributions and recognizes that diverse standpoints elicit far better and more creative solutions.

It essentially concentrates on open communication and teamwork. Leaders who practice collaborative leadership foster an environment where people are free to express their thoughts and opinions, and thus be more attached and committed to the team as a whole [2, 19]. Collaborative leaders break down hierarchical barriers and build an environment of mutual trust and cooperation, which becomes essential to tackle multi-dimensional challenges characteristic of modern fast-moving work environments.

Thirdly, collaborative leadership surpasses the internal team dynamic. Leaders applying this style seek

partnership and collaboration from external stakeholders by recognizing that most of the modern issues are interconnected. Good relationships among other organizations, communities, and relevant entities build better impacts and effectiveness within efforts of addressing bigger challenges collectively [2]. Collaborative leaders understand that so many times, the realization of their causes depends on marshaling diversified perspectives and resources from internal and external sources..

10. Discussion

In Canada, a country that prides itself on multiculturalism and progressive values, critical race theory and social justice leadership are deeply ingrained in the conversations of its population. Under this veneer of progressiveness lies painful historical realities-most from the 19th century but relevant today-of church-run educational institutions playing significant roles in forcibly separating Indigenous children from their families. The period of assimilation and causing deep harm to these children becomes a sobering reminder that deep reflection and systemic change are in order. Into the early years of the 21st century, Canadian educational policy-makers have sought to come to terms, in active fashion, with this legacy. In their efforts, they go far beyond mere acts of acknowledgement through work to develop an inclusive, equitable model of educational leadership. These efforts not only deal with historical injustices but also reveal a steadfast commitment to building an education system that advances diversity, equity, and social justice. The continued discussion and development of educational leadership within a historical context are testament to Canada's unyielding commitment toward redressing past wrongs and the perpetuation of a more inclusive and just future for all its citizens.

Reconciliation Efforts: From Recommendations to Action

The seminal 1996 Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples provided a multi-volume series of recommendations to the Canadian government related to residential schools, one component of which was the response to the legacy of residential schools. Canada's 1998 Statement of Reconciliation to survivors and the creation of the Aboriginal Healing Foundation represented early healing measures. However, the 2003 Dispute Resolution plan was an underachievement for the expectations of Indigenous Peoples and a class action suit was pursued by the Assembly of First Nations under the leadership of Grand Chief Phil Fontaine against the federal government in 2005. This subsequently led to the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement

(IRSSA) that was signed in 2006; thus it formed a new beginning in the history of Canada relating to its Indigenous Peoples. The IRSSA also took effect on September 19, 2007, and contained schedule "N," which established the mandate for a TRC. The TRC formally launched its operations on June 1, 2008, and was considered to be the hallmark of the IRSSA in the promotion of healing, education as well as the establishment of an comprehensive report that contains recommendations regarding the IRS system. The TRC released an interim report in May 2015, and a final report in January of 2016 that contained 94 calls to action.

Despite the United Nations adopting the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 2007, Canada refused to sign on. It was not until June 11, 2008, that Prime Minister Stephen Harper rose in the House of Commons and apologized for residential schools being part of a larger policy designed to make Indigenous peoples cease to be Indigenous. Every major federal political party and province stood up and applauded. In fact, it was not until May 2016 that Canada's status as an objector to the Declaration was finally removed by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau in what was broadly seen as a meaningful opportunity for the nation to reimagine its approach to Indigenous rights and reconciliation [10], [18].

In August of 2017, an RRCAP recommendation led the federal department in charge of Indigenous affairs in Canada to be restructured into two departments: Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada and Indigenous Services Canada. While these changes in organization are needed, there is still one glaring gap in the form of an overall mechanism that could deal comprehensively with the perennial problems facing the Indigenous communities in Canada traced from the historical policy of forced assimilation. There is still a continued need for effort to make up this gap and ensure actual progress toward reconciliation and social justice for Indigenous Peoples in Canada. It requires not only structural changes but also serious dedication and commitment from all strata of society, so that Indigenous communities will have their rights and dignity respected. Without well-thought-out and consistent activism, Canada cannot face up to the past and move toward a more just and inclusive future.

Institutionalizing Social Justice Leadership and Combatting Racism

The Canadian educational structure should integrate the application of the 21st-century leadership models into practice to institutionally create a culture of fighting racism within the education system and help develop a social justice leadership culture. Of the models, one of the strongest practices is Visionary leadership. Leaders who take on the style of Visionary leadership create or

articulate and then work toward an inspiring vision of the future with others, providing the motivation to work toward that communal purpose. They create the environment that is fostered in innovation, creativity, and adaptability, all held together by a clear long-term vision. They can also present the vision in such a way that it would evoke passion and motivation among team members to embrace change on the road toward growth. The visionary leader effectively uses strategic planning and inclusiveness in leading the team toward attainment of general objectives, encourages positive change, and ensures continued success. Having a clear vision for education in Canada is critical, as it is a country formed through immigration, with thousands arriving each year from all parts of the world. This helps in envisioning correctly the educational needs for all students, measuring involvement by all parties concerned, and framing appropriate policies for education.

Now consider the work of Dr. Michael Fullan, one of the most influential education leaders of our time because of his work in transforming education systems throughout his career. His model of leadership speaks to the development of a shared vision in pursuit of the future of education. Fullan's model supports setting a compelling clear-cut vision addressing equity and inclusivity, which is instrumental in guiding systemic change. This would, in practice, mean that the educational leadership of Canada has to paint a vision of the future where fighting racism and ensuring social justice lie at the heart of their goals. For example, a visionary leader might implement a coordinated strategy made up of anti-racist curriculum development, ongoing professional development regarding equity issues for educators, and working with diverse communities so that their voices are represented in shaping policies within education.

Optimizing Instructional Leadership for Student Achievement

Adequacy in education could be defined as the utilization of sufficient resources to create opportunities leading towards desired educational outcomes, such as a minimum passing score on state achievement tests. Instructional leadership—which has to do with the role played by school principals and other educational administrators in managing teaching and learning processes to improve students' achievement—works in close coordination with teachers for refining instructional techniques, providing advice, and offering necessary resources. In addition, professional guidance and development opportunities could be provided to promote adequacy. The accountability for curriculum development and assessment ensures standards of education, with robust critical thinking development among students. Given a non-threatening supportive and

collaborative school culture, the instructional leaders develop skills within teachers to rise to excellence and create continuous improvement in student outcomes. Effective communication along with mentorship and dedication for professional growth forms the core foundations required for instructional leadership to maintain a thriving educational community in academic excellence.

The principal of Lincoln High School, Dr. Martinez, recognized that students were not meeting the state achievement test expectations, particularly in mathematics. In addressing this issue, Dr. Martinez began the process of optimizing instructional leadership by implementing a Collaborative PLC within the school structure based on the work of [7, 12].

Step 1

Establish the PLC Dr. Martinez began the PLC by gathering math teachers and instructional coaches. This would help the teachers meet with one another, discuss best practices, review student data, and determine a course of action in case there were areas of deficiency reflected in that data.

Step 2

Professional Development Support for the PLC Next, Dr. Martinez used resources to fund ongoing professional development to support the PLC: workshops on using data-driven instruction, differentiated teaching strategies, and new educational technologies. Time was also provided within the school day to attend PLC meetings and collaborate around lesson planning.

Step 3

Refining Instructional Strategies Through regular PLC meetings, teachers examined student performance data to determine specific areas in which students struggled. They worked together to design targeted interventions and make adjustments to their instructional methods in order to better meet students' needs. For instance, they added small-group instruction for students needing extra help, along with more hands-on activities to increase engagement.

Step 4

Monitoring and Supporting Dr. Martinez listened actively to monitor how the PLC was going through regular check-ins and offered support when needed. Such support may be given through feedback on lesson plans, classroom observations, and facilitation of strategy discussions.

Step 5

Foster a collaborative atmosphere. "With Dr. Martinez encouraging open communication and collaboration, the teachers in the school knew they were valued and supported. This positive school culture encouraged teachers to try new things and share what was working well and what wasn't within their own classrooms". Due to all these efforts put in, there was tremendous improvement in the mathematics achievement of the students in Lincoln High School. In one year, the test scores of math went up 15%. Teachers found themselves confident and full of more support that resulted in greater effectiveness in delivering lessons among students.

Strategic Execution of Educational Strategies through Organizational Leadership

Once the educational perspectives, needs, and the quality level of the educational materials are judged, there is an urgent need for the formulation and implementation of educational strategy. Organizational leadership for educational leaders could be utilized in the form of strategic planning, decision-making, communication, and team management as methods of leading the organization toward the realization of its objectives. The core of such an approach would be to delineate a clear and inspiring vision compatible with the values and objectives of the organization that inspires joint action. Successful leaders navigate the process of decision-making effectively; thus, they can adapt to the dynamics around them and shape the course of the organization. Effective communication allows leaders to express the vision of the organization, the expectations, and objectives that will develop a positive culture and create trust within the members of the team. Through successfully balancing these dimensions, educational leaders are able to set detailed plans and focus on long-term goals by applying organizational leadership in Canada's diverse and multifaceted culture.

In 2017, the York Region District School Board was faced with various issues which involved the students' mental health and well-being. A large proportion of the students were stressed and anxious, hence affecting their academic performance and all-round well-being. YRDSB did thorough assessments through the survey of the students, teachers, and parents. They reviewed the then-existing services aimed at mental health support and identified the resources gaps in availability and accessibility.

Informed by the results of this analysis, YRDSB developed the "Mental Health and Well-Being Strategy". The strategy aimed to bring more mental health resources into schools and make schools places where healthy well-being practices were modeled. Training programs were rolled out for teachers and staff aimed at recognizing the signs that indicate a young person is

experiencing mental health issues and giving them the necessary support. They also created workshops on mental health for students and parents.

The YRDSB integrated mental health education into the curriculum. It involved the teaching of students about mental health, coping strategies, and how to seek help when needed. The Board increased access to mental health professionals within schools. They expanded their partnerships with community organizations to provide additional support services.

YRDSB had specific goals, within the Mental Health and Well-being Strategy, including increasing the cadre of school mental health professionals, improving student access to counseling. They have developed a timeline and budgeted resources to implement those goals. Decisions on resource allocation and program selection were done based on the evidence of effectiveness and direct linkage with the objectives of the strategy. The board also addressed schools with the highest needs.

The YRDSB has shared goals and progress over the strategy through newsletters, school meetings, and the board website. They also provided ample opportunity for students, parents, and staff to share feedback about the initiative and build support. In turn, a dedicated team was to be set up made up of mental health coordinators, school counselors, and community partners who would lead in the implementation of the strategy. It includes updating on the status, problem-solving, and supporting the embedding of the strategy into schools. YRDSB argued for the perspective of creating an ongoing supportive and inclusive school environment in which mental health and wellness form part of every student's school experience. They aimed to inspire openness and a culture of support which would make students and staff discuss and share issues on their mental health openly.

For instance, in 2019, YRDSB reported improvements in the mental health and well-being of students, awareness of, and usage of resources regarding mental health. This is an example of how effective organizational leadership makes a difference in addressing key concerns, ultimately creating a better overall educational environment for the students [22].

Embracing Collaborative Leadership for Transformative Change

In the approach to collaborative leadership, there is more of a transformational kind of leadership which emphasizes shared decision-making and collective problem-solving by drawing on diverse expertise within a team or organization. The style would nurture inclusivity to allow for active participation of membership in setting directions and determining outcomes, recognizing multiple perspectives hold values in generating effective and creative solutions. Instead, at the core of collaborative leadership lie open

communication and teamwork, whereby individual ideas and opinions are shared, which, accordingly, gives a sense of belonging and commitment among its members. Leaders who adopt the collaborative approach tear down the hierarchical barriers to trust and cooperation—essential ingredients in addressing many of today's complex challenges amid dynamic work environments.

Furthermore, they expand the concept of collaboration beyond internal dynamics to involve the active construction of partnerships with external stakeholders for the achievement of collective impact and increased effectiveness in trying to meet societal challenges. Mindful of the greater value derived from the pooling of diverse viewpoints and resources, collaborative leaders work both internally and externally to harness expertise toward thorough and impactful endeavors. In particular, one of the strong examples of collaborative leadership in Ontario schools is the approach practiced by YRDSB.

The YRDSB is practicing a model of collaboration to achieve continuous improvements in student achievements across all of its schools and also to tackle the diversifying needs of the students.

In the model, school leaders, educators, students, and members of the community enter into a shared decision-making process. For instance, the board regularly creates task forces or advisory committees that consist of teachers, parents, students, and community representatives to address issues like curriculum development or school improvement plans. Subsequently, these teams collaborate and make recommendations via brainstorming and analysis of data that incorporate various perspectives in formulating education strategies.

The process empowers the many skills and resources of a wide range of stakeholders, like individuals with diverse life experiences and professions, and builds ownership and commitment from all participants. By bringing different voices into one room, YRDSB leaders inspire active participation and collaborative problem-solving that have resulted in creative solutions to challenges, such as improving student engagement and academic achievement.

The board also expands its collaboration effort from the internal school environment by engaging itself with other organizations and groups within the community. For example, YRDSB has ever collaborated with local businesses and nonprofits in developing mentorship and experiential learning programs for students. This move would expand educational experience and effectively build stronger links with the community.

Fundamentally, the shared leadership in YRDSB through this case stands a chance to demonstrate that shared decision-making and collective problem-solving probably yield more inclusive and effective educational

practices which better serve the students and wider community as a whole [23].

Transitioning from Reactive to Enactive Leadership

It is necessary to change from a reactive to proactive and, finally, to enactive approach in strategies against negative phenomena, such as symbolic or cultural violence. While reactive strategies focus on either temporary solutions or imitation of existing mechanisms, proactive ones try to elaborate strategies of resilience. However, enactive approaches proceed beyond this stage since they address the very root of the problem in order to achieve permanent solutions [5]. Educational leadership will therefore require an enactive approach along with transformational leadership style to bring long-lasting impacts in eradicating these issues. Because of the elimination of root causes and creation of an empathetic and well-understanding culture, educational leaders can play a major role in developing a more just and fair society [20]. Also, YRDSB in Ontario has used an enactive leadership approach in order to eliminate issues of symbolic and cultural violence in schools.

The shift away from the merely reactive strategies, such as temporary disciplinary measures, into proactive and enactive approaches attempts to deal with the very causes of these issues. Development of an inclusive culture and empathetic environment has seen YRDSB leaders introduce comprehensive programs engaging students, staff, and members of the community in building a more equitable world. This proactive shift in focus toward the solution of root systemic issues and building long-term resilience is also in tune with enactive leadership principles that seek systemic change rather than temporary fixes [24].

11. Conclusion

In Canada, critical race theory and social justice leadership have become integral to societal discourse in tune with the nation's commitment to multiculturalism and progress. But this veneer of progress conceals a painful historical legacy, wherein the truth becomes more akin to violence from a wound that refuses to heal. Consider the 19th-century, church-run institutions that forcibly whisked children away from their Indigenous families, leaving in their wake scarring harm. Despite such a dark history, the educational policy elite in Canada have taken proactive steps to atone for past injustices and to further an inclusive model of educational leadership that can advance diversity, equity, and social justice.

Of course, some reconciliatory work has taken place, which has been significant in addressing past evils; in that light, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples

and the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement represented key milestones. Despite such initiatives, however, serious ongoing gaps exist in the addressing of persistent challenges by Indigenous communities and imperatives for further structural reforms and sincere societal commitment toward reconciliation.

For inclusivity and equity in the educational environment, educational organizations need to institutionalize leadership for social justice and struggle against racism. Transformational leadership, instructional leadership, organizational leadership, and collaborative leadership will eventually represent important means for framing clear visions that enhance instructional processes and implement strategic educational strategies. It requires transitioning from reactive to enactive leadership to unlock systemic foundational causes and support long-term solutions in creating a just and equitable society. Only with continued resolve and sustained activity will Canada continue to move toward reconciliation and social justice for all citizens.

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