Negotiating Power and Practice: Reimagining the Comprehensive Public High School for Diverse Learners

Negotiating Power and Practice: Reimagining the Comprehensive Public High School for Diverse Learners

Doctor of Education Leadership (Ed.L.D.)
Capstone

Submitted by

Alexis K. Morgan

To the Harvard Graduate School of Education
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education Leadership.

April 2018

Acknowledgements

It goes without saying that I am truly grateful for everyone who has helped me along this journey.

To Carolyn and David - I would like to thank you for being the greatest and most influential parents a young woman could have. You have spent endless days encouraging me to keep pursuing a better change for this world. From the two of you, I learned that anything worth doing is worth overdoing.

To my committee, Dr. Deborah Jewell-Sherman and Dr. Ebony Bridwell-Mitchell – thank you for your guidance through this process. I am eternally grateful for your feedback and ideas during this experience.

To my teaching fellow, Anne Lamb – you have made a profound impact on the development of this capstone. I was incredibly fortunate to have you on my committee.

To Liz City – I am humbled by your generosity to always extend yourself even when everyone (and everything) is making demands on your time. I don't think I would have made it through this year without your encouragement. Thank you for always pointing me back in the right direction.

I also would like to thank the incredible people at Vista Unified and Vista High School whose expertise and knowledge have been invaluable during this process. Dr. Matt Doyle, thank you for indispensable wisdom. Anthony Barela, Rebecca Nobriga, Linda Guerrero, Kimberly Collier, Katie Smith, Loretta Feltd, and Craig Gasteaur – thank you for the collaborative role you have played as I deepened my knowledge of high school, English language learners, and students with disabilities. You are all amazing champions for our students. I hope to model the same level of commitment and dedication as each of you as I continue to do this work. Kimberly Richards – your friendship this year has been invaluable. Thank you for the endless heart-to-hearts as we both tried to figure out how to be effective "tempered radicals."

To my peer coaches and my non-peer coach: Dr. Shadae Thomas Harris, Dr. Annie Knickman, and Dr. Aeran Baskin. I could not have done this without you. Your impromptu calls, emails, text messages, and gifts, brought immeasurable joy to my life. Thank you.

To my family: Grandma and Grandpa – you are the salt of the earth and I would not be here without you; Aunt Debbie and Kimberly Butler – thank you for always being in my corner; Aunt Roz "Rocky" – thank you for being both behind the scenes and on the stage in helping me to become the woman I am today; Marcelle Goode – you showed me what it means to be a follower of Christ even when life throws you curveballs. Thank you for opening up your home and your heart: Uncle Minasse and Aunt Iris Haille – thank you

for your generosity and endless meals as you taught me about politics, education, and history; and finally, to my godmothers: Charlotte, Barbara, and Emma – thank you for being remarkable women who always model excellence.

To my many mentors and supporters: David Hardy – your commitment to serving students continues to inspire me; Ethel Washington - you were one of the many people who helped me to be where I am today. But, you did more than give me a place to stay. You also gave me your friendship; Marilyn Mitchell and Dr. Lauren Katzman – Very few people have the privilege of knowing amazing women who work tirelessly on behalf of students with disabilities. Your friendship is one of my greatest gifts. Cathy Jenkins Saxon – thank you for modeling leadership. You fooled me by making it look so easy; to my P-Cell crew from The Perfecting Church; to Karen, whose correspondence and friendship have lifted my spirits when times got hard; and finally, to my lifelong friends – Thea, Flo, Tiffani, and Casey. Thank you for always being there for me.

Inclusion is not a strategy to help people fit into the systems and structures, which exist in our societies; it is about transforming those systems and structures to make it better for everyone. Inclusion is about creating a better world for everyone.

Diane Richler, Past President, Inclusion International

Table of Contents

Abstract

The national movement to redesign America's high schools has dominated public debate as other people wonder what actions to take to educate all students. For many school leaders, the vast number of students needing English language services or special education programming has increased, outpacing the amount of federal and state funding for the unique needs of these learners. The phenomenon of personalized learning has become an increasingly attractive approach to address the unique learning, language and behavioral needs of students while engaging them in rigorous, standards-based aligned content. This capstone explores one comprehensive high school's attempt to redesign the traditional high school experience into one that is student-centered and addresses the language and learning needs of students with disabilities (SwDs) and English language learners (ELLs). Throughout, I examine and reflect upon my role in leading a diverse team charged with addressing the structural and instructional barriers impeding students' progress. I also explore the role of personalized learning in a field where existing models of personalization have produced no significant success for learners. This capstone urges practitioners and policymakers to consider the diverse and complex needs of second language learners and students with exceptionalities before they restructure the high school model. Too often these students are overlooked or dismissed as new curricula or pedagogical practices are adopted. As many have found, these narrowly developed efforts often lead to further marginalization and exclusion of a population of America's most vulnerable students.

Introduction

Residency Site Overview: Vista High School

Of the three comprehensive high schools in California's Vista Unified School District, Vista High School is the largest, enrolling more than 2,500 students in the 2017-18 school years. Built in 1972, the 45-acre Vista High campus boasts a state-of-the-art culinary kitchen, auto shop, career center, art gallery, agriculture center, 126-seat theater, and a brand new football stadium for Vista High Panther fans (Vista Unified School District, 2017). Intended to house roughly a thousand students, Vista High's enrollment swelled to some three thousand students in the early part of the twenty-first century and dropped to 2,516 students by SY 2017-18. A disaggregation of student data shows that three-fourths of the student body identifies as Hispanic, one-fourth as white non-Hispanic, and less than 5% as Asian. Twelve percent (n=323) receive special education services, 12% (n=300) are English language learners (ELLs), and 6% (n=151) receive special education and English language services. These data shows a relatively high percentage of diverse learners (e.g., SwDs and ELLs) in comparison to the other schools in the school district. Vista High employs 155 teachers, 27 paraprofessionals, an internal director for the redesign project, four vice-principals, and a principal.

The mission at Vista High is to provide each student with a "challenging and personally relevant education" (Vista High, 2018, see Appendix A). The school embodies a personalized learning approach that includes honoring the unique strengths and passions of each student by creating positive relationships, empowering students to co-create their learning experiences, and building global literacy in all grade levels. To achieve this vision, Vista High embarked on a five-year strategic plan, starting in 2017, to

remove institutional barriers preventing all students from being prepared for college, career and civic life.

A-G Course Sequence: Early 2000s to the – Present

In the early 2000s, Vista High required all students except those with moderate to severe disabilities to complete a preparatory curriculum aligned to A-G subject requirements if they want to receive a standard high school diploma. A-G subjects are a sequence of fifteen high school courses and the number of years of each that students must complete with a minimum grade of C or better for admission to the University of California or California State University (UC/CSU) schools. The A-G subjects are two years of history (A), four years of English (B), three years of mathematics (C), two years of laboratory science (D), two years of language other than English (E), one year of visual and performing arts (F), and one year of college-preparatory electives (G) (University of California, 2018). Many California high schools don't require students to take and pass A-G courses in order to graduate with a standard high-school diploma. Of the six comprehensive and continuation high schools in the Vista Unified School District, only the comprehensive schools require students to meet these criteria.

Like other high schools in the state, Vista High struggled to help the vast number of students meet these standards. School and district leaders acknowledged that the rigorous course loads and minimum grade requirements did not prepare the majority of students for college. This was especially true for SwDs, who were previously in self-contained special day classes or resource classrooms where they received modified instruction. In the spring of 2013, the district dismantled all special day and resource

classes for students who were not intellectually impaired. These students were placed in general education classrooms that fall. Teachers were promised a summer institute aimed at improving their ability to provide effective instruction in inclusive classrooms, along with workshops on service delivery models, but the district never administered these trainings. The loss of training and support for education specialists and content area teachers hampered the integration of students into mainstream classes. These students were held to higher expectations than before without the benefit of a systemic approach to ensure equitable access and opportunity.

By the end of the 2016 school year, only one third of the graduating class had completed the A-G course sequence. The remaining students found the requirements too ambitious and either failed to complete the A-G sequence, did not earn a diploma in four years, or dropped out. In an effort to ease graduation requirements, Vista High allowed students to receive a D in a college-prep course even though they were no longer eligible for university admission without a C or higher, and it encouraged students to take credit recovery classes for subjects they failed while advancing to the next course in the sequence. For district officials, this solution increased graduation rates, but for students with a wider range of needs, the change in policy did not address academic weaknesses in their subject areas. Without a robust core instruction or resources to provide tiered intervention options, student learning gaps dramatically widened during their four years. At a loss as to how to help SwDs meet the stringent A-G requirements with few supports, when these students failed a course, the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team (comprising education specialists, general education teachers, special education department chairs, and a parent or guardian) decided to remove students from high school

diploma track to a Certificate of Completion. Other alternatives included transferring the student to a continuing or alternative education school, and in some cases, students opted to drop out of school altogether.

ELLs also were challenged, in different ways. According to the UC/SCU system, Sheltered and Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE) can be used to satisfy the A-G requirements. SDAIE uses an instructional methodology designed to meet the linguistic needs of students who struggle with the complexities of academic content in English. Additionally, English as a second language (ESL)/English language development (ELD)[1] classes are acceptable A-G courses if they meet the English/ELD B criteria (University of California, 2018). While there is no limit to the number of sheltered or SDAIE courses an English learner can take, students are permitted only one year of ELD courses to satisfy the A-G requirement for acceptance into the UC/CSU system.

An Education Opportunity Audit Report conducted by the XQ: Super School Project in 2016, found that while 71% of the VHS 2016 population took the required courses for eligibility to the UC/SCU system, "special needs students and English-language learners rarely took the A-G course, and ELs rarely completed it" (XQ, 2016). Resources matched to their language needs were notably unavailable. Vista High used the California English Language Development Test to determine when ELLs proficient in English, but the test does not reflect the rigors of the Common Core standards; thus, it is a poor measure of determining if a English learner will have an "equal chance at successfully performing academically" as fluent English speakers (Fensterwald, 2017).

[1] English language development is matched to student's language proficiency and provides targeted instruction in language acquisition until students are reclassified.

Student data also reveals that ELLs who tested proficient still needed help with academic language, reading and writing (Fensterwald, 2017). Laboratory science classes were not offered in students' primary languages. If ELLs wanted to enroll in a continuing or alternative program they had to be proficient in English because these sites did not offer ELD courses. Furthermore, students faced additional challenges if they failed a course or needed supplemental academic interventions in their native language.

Personalized Learning Academy at Vista High School from 2015 to 2018

Vista High responded to the problem of poor student achievement by adopting a personalized learning approach. The catalyst for this decision to embrace a personalized learning approach was a presentation of their strategic plan to two thousand middle and high school students. The many student responses to the school as "irrelevant" and "boring" challenged the district's vision to become a "model of educational excellence and innovation" (Vodicka, 2017). A majority of students desired a "more active role in their own learning" but were restricted to a traditional school model that consistently fell short of engaging them (Vodicka, 2017). These sentiments were validated by district data highlighting chronic absenteeism, poor academic performance, and the number of students dropping out of high school (Elsen-Rooney, 2017; Vodicka, 2017).

Personalized learning has long been viewed as an equalizer for students who enter school at varied levels of academic readiness. The fundamental goal of implementing a personalized learning approach at Vista High was to enable educators to fully understand an individual student's abilities, aspirations, and learning needs while making learning more relevant across the content areas (M. Doyle, personal communication, August 2018). In order to integrate personalized learning across the campus community, the

school focused on four primary areas: teaching and learning, use of time, use of space, and social-emotional learning (Vista High, 2017.

Prior to receiving the XQ grant, Vista High developed a prototype for a Personalized Learning Academy (PLA). The PLA was a school-within-a-school with 165 juniors enrolled. PLA demographics did not reflect that of the larger school with only neurotypical students and fluent ELLs making up the student population. PLA replaced traditional high school learning with individual coursework, an online curriculum, and project-based learning (Sullivan-Brennan, 2016a; 2016b). Teachers had more control of their curriculum and could choose and focus on project-based learning with an emphasis on skill building, rather than content or standards, in classes of 17 instead of 30 to 35 students. Additionally, teachers had two hours of collaborative planning time each day to design, revise, and reflect on their practice and student learning. The results after one year demonstrated that "students in the program had 50% fewer absences and 99% fewer disciplinary incidents than last year. [Furthermore], almost two-thirds boosted their grade-point averages by a full point" (Sullivan-Brennan, 2016a). However, after winning the XQ: Super School $10 million grant, Vista High decided to phase out PLA in the spring of 2018.

XQ's Super School Project: 2016 to the – Present

In 2016, Vista High expanded the promise of PLA to reach all students through XQ's Super School grant (see Appendix B). Funded by Laurene Powell Jobs, the XQ project helps traditional public and charter schools reimagine high schools through the development of innovative academic and social-emotional programs. The vision of XQ at

Vista High was to "ensure that all high school students have access to a free, high quality education that prepares them for college, career, and life" (XQ, 2018; see Appendix C). In 2016, VHS was one of ten recipients of a $10 million grant to cover five years. The designers whose job it was to reimagine the school included a small group of teachers from Vista High, the current internal director, school principal, and the assistant superintendent of innovation. After a year of planning the school redesign model, staff launched the implementation phase in the fall of 2017.

Three key elements of the redesign model include Vista High's four cornerstones, a house system, and extended teacher collaboration planning. These factors stemmed from VHS' theory of action: **"**by building an effective personalized learning environment which allows students to explore their passions, make ethical choices, and enact solutions to authentic problems that will benefit themselves as well as their community, then 100% of VHS students will transition into a college and/or career by 2021**"** (Vista High, 2017).

The four cornerstones were established as the building blocks of effective pedagogical practice: (1) personalized learning, (2) habits of mind, (3) contemporary curriculum, and (4) restorative practices. The first cornerstone, personalized learning, was intended to put "students at the center of the design of learning experiences" (Vista High, 2017). By leveraging students' strengths, aspirations, interests, and ideas, teachers would empower students to engage in authentic problems and challenges (see Appendix D). The habits of mind principle addressed the 16 non-cognitive skills students needed to confront adaptive challenges, or complex problems in which a solution is not readily apparent (to see a full list of the habits, refer to Appendix E). The third cornerstone, contemporary curriculum involved building classical literacies in reading, writing, and

mathematics. Contemporary curriculum was chosen as an instructional method to develop students' abilities to "analyze and evaluate [digital and media sources] as well as generate and communicate knowledge and ideas through these sources as an empathetic global citizen" (Vista High, 2017). The cornerstone of restorative practices entailed students learning how to build healthy and positive communities, repair harm, and restore broken relationships.

A second defining characteristic of the high school redesign was the creation of "houses". Incoming ninth graders were organized into a house system, or a community of learners, to share courses and teachers throughout the year. Each house had a set of classes "on-team," including English, math, science, and Challenge, a course built around examining and researching the U.N. Sustainable Development Goals. Additionally, they had one overlay course, Wellness, to address character development and social-emotional learning, and two elective courses "off-team." Similar to the PLA model, in addition to their daily preparation of designing units and analyzing student data, teachers had four prep hours weekly to collaborate as a team.

The school's desire to build collaboration into the fabric of its daily life was viewed as an essential element even though it produced operational challenges. The house system, often called the heart of secondary schools, classified students into separate pathways identified by environmental ecosystems: jungle, desert, mountain, forest, ocean, and river. School and district leaders focused on heterogeneous groupings of students during the planning phase of the model. By the start of school, however, a disaggregation of the houses indicated that ninth grade students were being tracked according to language, cognitive, and behavior abilities. For example, the Newcomers'

Academy was for students new to the United States and at beginning levels of English proficiency, the high needs house included students with disruptive behaviors, and the "honors house" included students in the advanced track. Notably, the honors house had no SwDs or long-term ELLs. Other houses counted a disproportionate number of SwDs or ELLs. Table 1 shows the distribution of ELLs and SwDs across houses:

Table 1: Organization of Ninth Grade Houses at Vista High as of October 2017

House	Number of ELLs	Number of SwDs
River	9 LTELs 19 RFEP	19
Desert	20 RFEPs	0
Mountain	18 LTELs 26 RFEPs	40
Forest	13 LTELs 29 RFEPs	16
Jungle	5 LTELs 11 RFEPs	17
Ocean	~103 (9th -12th grade newcomers)	0

Key: RFEP = reclassified fluent English proficient; LTELs = long-term English learner.

The third feature of the redesign was extended teacher collaboration planning time. It was essential that teachers' efficacy in implementing the new practices was fostered through frequent collaboration with other teachers in the same house. Each house had its own 4-hour weekly time to meet and included each house's English, math, science, special education, and challenge teachers. Teachers had the advantage of reaching out to the internal director for coaching, resources, lesson planning, and problem solving. One area of concern was the lack of structured or formal opportunities for teachers to meet with teachers in other houses to share practices or insights, particularly with colleagues teaching the same content.

Problem of Practice

My strategic project focused on identifying the barriers precluding SwDs and ELLs from accessing a personalized learning environment within a mainstream classroom. I was tasked with convening a cross-functional team of people from across the district and site to understand the barriers to change, identify causes, brainstorm ways to overcome barriers, and map out a plan to conduct "rapid tests of change" (Carnegie Foundation, 2015). To organize my work, I structured the project into phases. Phase 1 included a landscape analysis to identify and analyze existing policies and practices, and Phase 2 focused on deeper learning and implementation of new approaches for expanding the model of personalized learning to maximize the potential of all unique and diverse learners.

At the beginning of my residency, I believed that large-scale transformation at Vista High would require both deep pedagogical knowledge of personalized learning and specialized instructional supports for ELLs and SwDs, as well as conceptual understanding of effective organizational change management around teacher practice. My original theory shifted from an emphasis on human capital, or teacher knowledge and pedagogical skills, to social capital, the relationships and interactions among teachers that enable a collective commitment to school-wide change (Leana & Pil, 2014). Given the focus on relationships and pedagogical practice, this project ultimately focused on this question: What types of conditions must be in place for teachers and school leaders to redesign academic content and learning environments to better support a range of learners?

Preview of Capstone

The Review of Knowledge for Action is divided into three sections: the "what", "how", and "why". The first section surveys the literature on personalized learning at the secondary level ("what"), with a deeper examination of the implications for students with disabilities and ELls. Then I explore the role of social and human capital investments in the transformation of public schools. I draw on the scholarly research focused on relationships among teachers (that is social capital), to foster sustained changes in teaching and learning. Next, I look at the sequence of activities I undertook to lead multiple groups of district and school leaders in identifying the root causes of underachievement and potential strategies for improvement ("how"). I further investigate the successes and failures of my project using theories from *Leadership on the Line* by Heifetz and Linsky (2002) and adult development to undergird my interpretations (why). Finally, I propose a set of implications for the sector, the site, and my own leadership based upon my research and findings from the field.

Review of Knowledge for Action

Organization of Chapter

The Review of Knowledge for Action (RKA) is divided into four sections. First, I examine research about instructional redesign and teacher development trends within traditional public high schools. Second, I explore the underpinnings of personalized learning and how leaders can implement and scale a personalized learning model in schools having a high percentage of students with a broad range of language, cognitive and behavior differences. I seek to identify the challenges and opportunities teachers and school leaders face as they attempt to transform a system that has historically underserved students with challenging and complex needs. Third, I synthesize research about problem diagnosis to identify the root causes schools must identify before implementing disruptions to the system. Based on this research, I introduce two analytical frameworks used to diagnose gaps and opportunities in the system. Finally**,** I conclude with an explanation of my theory of action developed from a review of the literature. My initial theory of action provided insights into how I might execute the strategic project at Vista High School.

Instructional Redesign and Teacher Development within Traditional Public High Schools

For thirty years, public high schools have been besieged by reform efforts aimed at improving students' academic performance. This constant tinkering with educational practices to prepare youth for postsecondary college and careers has not meshed well with the evolving interplay of skills, abilities, languages, and knowledge students bring to the classroom setting (Tyack & Cuban, 1995). These reforms can be traced to the release

of *A Nation at Risk*, a 1983 report released by the National Commission on Excellence in Education. According to the report, curricula at the secondary level were considered "homogenized, diluted, and diffused to the point that [they] no longer had a central purpose" (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983, p. 17). In addition to the decline in standards and content, the commission found that few teachers were adequately qualified to teach courses in English, mathematics and science; teachers managed classroom time poorly; high school students entered and left school without acquiring systematic studying methods; and the overall average of student achievement deteriorated (National Commission on Excellence, 1983). The authors anticipated that the current U.S. education system's "factory model" approach to learning would "prepare [students] for a lifetime of compliance and subordination" for society and work (Shor, 2015; see Appendix F). In essence, the U.S. lost its position as the global forerunner in commerce, science, and technology, by refusing to grasp the purpose and power of schooling (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). Some thirty-five years later, U.S. high school students seem to be no better off. A recent report shows that 47% of American high school graduates complete neither a college nor career- ready course of study (Santelises, 2016).

Researchers and policymakers seeking to identify the elements that might have a large impact on student performance have pointed to several leading factors. Chubb and Moe (1990) determined that the organization of schools has influenced academic achievement. They argue that schools can be organized to promote factors that increase effectiveness, including, "clear school goals, rigorous academic requirements, an orderly climate, strong instructional leadership by the principal, teacher participation in decision-

making, cooperative principal-teacher relations, active parental involvement, and high expectations for student performance" (Chubb & Moe, 1990, p. 1066; Boyer, 1983; Brookover, Beady, Flood, Schweitzer, & Wisenbaker, 1979; Goodlad, 1984; Powell, Farrar, & Cohen, 1985; Rutter, Maughan, Mortimore, Ouston, & Smith, 1979; Sizer 1984). However, unlike private and public charter schools, public schools "do not have the luxury of being able to select the kind of students best suited to organizational goals and structure" (Chubb & Moe, 1990, p. 1079).

Other researchers have examined the importance of teacher quality on student performance. Findings suggest that among school-related factors, teachers are estimated to have triple the impact of any other school component, including facilities, school leadership, class size, service, and curricula (RAND Corporation, 2012; Stronge, 2003). A study of effective teaching determined that the following qualities in a teacher had a direct impact on increasing student achievement: teachers with high verbal ability (Coleman, Campbell, Hobson, McPartland, Mood, & Weinfeld, 1966; Strauss & Sawyer, 1986; Wenglinsky, 2000); teachers' pedagogical preparation, especially in the areas of mathematics, science, and reading (Monk, 1994); ability to apply and integrate knowledge or skills (Demmon-Berger, 1986; Mitchell, 1998; Porter & Brophy, 1988); teachers who use a hands-on learning approach emphasizing higher-order thinking skills and involve all students in the lesson (Wenglinksy, 2000); teachers trained to use a variety of materials to meet students' learning needs (Armor et al., 1976); and teachers who are informed about students' readiness level, learning styles, preferences, and interests (Borko & Livingston, 1989; Covino & Iwanicki, 1996; Jay & Johnson, 2002).

In response to these findings, multiple reform efforts have emerged to change the quality of teaching and learning in traditional public high schools. To address the organizational structure of schools, proponents initiated the small schools movement, claiming that many of the nation's high schools were too large and needed to be redesigned into smaller, more autonomous schools with fewer than 400 students. Several foundations, including the Bill & Melinda Gates, Annenberg, and Carnegie foundations, were contributors to the movement. With over $2 billion in grants, the foundations focused on the organizational elements of schools, including reduced class sizes and restructuring of how teachers worked (Gates, 2009). Positive outcomes from the Oakland small school movement and the Chicago High School Redesign Initiative demonstrated that these changes engendered safer and more welcoming institutions (Murphy, 2009) and closer relationships among students and between students and adults (Sporte & de la Torre, 2010). Additionally, teachers reported having more extensive knowledge of their students and a significant increase in positive working environments generated by collegiality, innovation, and trust (Sporte & de la Torre, 2010). School leaders reported feeling less like a "glorified cop" and more like an "instructional leader" (Murphy, 2009). However, despite the substantial investment, many of the school districts that made such changes continued to be plagued by the same challenges. Academic achievement remained consistently low and was found to be equivalent, on average with students at traditional large high schools with high teacher turnover, and, mixed graduation rates (Murphy, 2009). In his annual report, Gates (2009) conceded that many of the small schools did not significantly improve student achievement, but he argued that the cause was the lack of substantial changes to the culture. In these cases, policies preventing

principals from exercising authority over the selection of teachers, adoption of curricula, and setting high standards prevented sustained influence (Gates, 2009).

Big Picture Learning, High Tech High, and Summit schools are all high-performing charters that are part of the small schools movement. Build around a culture of personalized learning, these schools have incorporated similar values and structures promoted in the small schools initiative. Each school has a clearly defined mission and values that inform school leadership, professional development, and school organization. Moreover, there is a focus on personalizing learning for all students that is nested in data and relationships. At Summit Schools and Big Picture Learning, this focus manifests in a personalized learning plan to access all the learning tools and resources they need at any time, and the opportunity to explore individual passions throughout the school year based on their learner profile. At least one adult mentor and coach to supported them in achieving their goals and developing in their Habits of Success, and universally, students receive ongoing personalized feedback and support that was integrated into their school day (Summit Public Schools, 2018; Big Picture Learning, 2018). Big Picture Learning extended this model to include parents and families as equal drivers in developing the student's learning plan and essential to the growth and health of the school community. Student learning was anchored by internships in which students worked closely with mentors in real-world settings that integrated knowledge with skills. Analysis of these schools signifies the factors that produce success. Each small high school must operate as its own individual school with leadership and budget (Marshak, 2010). Many of the small schools struggled to make gains within a larger school with shared leadership and resources. Finally, each of these successful schools had the autonomy to hire teachers

who were committed to the ethos of a personalized learning education. At High Tech High, teachers were expected to design instructional activities that emphasize "hands-on, project-based learning with adult-world connections" (HTH, 2018). Candidates were selected for their willingness to embody a collaborative, teacher-driven, student-centered environment that is innovative and solution-oriented.

These examples are laudable, but public institutions have several constraints preventing the freedom and effectiveness public charter and private schools experience. In public schools, teachers have a smaller voice in school governance, and school leaders have struggled to achieve greater flexibility in budgeting, scheduling, and hiring (Kohli, 2017). Researchers claim that these organizational elements are the leading cause of effective teachers leaving the field (Davis, 2011). Recent data show that 13.2% of special education teachers leave the field annually double the rate of general education teachers (Vittek, 2015). As educators leave the organization, "they take with them the capacity to evolve an infrastructure of practice into one that supports continuous, organizational and individual learning and growth" (Fishman, 2015).

The "infrastructure of practice" includes the types of planning teachers are engaged in to (1) establish the general content and curriculum sequence for the course, (2) construct a timeline for content coverage, and (3) use methods for on-ramping students with diverse learning and language abilities (Borko & Livingston, 1989). Characteristics of on ramping are reported to be essential within the structural model of planning. For example, teachers need to know how to introduce a topic or explain a concept based on students' readiness skills and preference for learning; developing strategies for the best ways to communicate concepts to students and selecting materials to scaffold or supplement

instruction are also critical. Depending on the complexity of topics and level of students, teachers make judgments about the pacing and depth of content coverage. Teachers who are experts in their content were able to focus more on planning instruction that "explicitly anticipated contingencies dependent on student performance" (Borko & Livingston, 1989, p. 480).

A fundamental lesson emerges from these findings that is often absent from traditional public high schools. As demonstrated in Oakland and Chicago, the organization of schools has positive impacts on measures of peer and teacher relationships and student engagement but little to no impact on achievement (Hess & Cytrynbaum, 2002; Kahne, Sporte, & Easton, 2005; Wasley, Fine, Gladden, Holland, King, Mosak, & Powell, 2000). This runs counter to research and public belief that students learn more and teachers are more effective in classrooms with fewer students than the U.S. norm (Schanzenbach, 2014). Most education policy inflates the efficacy of class size policies, scant attention is given to building structures that will allow teachers to know their students deeply through an asset-based lens. When teachers consider the influence of each student's unique set of experiences, abilities, learning preferences, and passions, they will be able to design high-quality personalized instruction responsive to student performance.

Personalized Learning and the Intersection of Language Differences and Disability

The basic premise of personalized learning is universally thought of as instruction tailored to meet the unique needs of individual learners while incorporating their interests, preferences and aspirations (Cavanagh, 2014). As an instructional approach,

personalized learning is an appealing concept. Students are entering K-12 schools with a number of barriers preventing access to educational opportunities, including different ability levels; risks for social, emotional, and behavioral difficulties (NGAC, 2018;Weissberg, 2011); wide range of language needs that is intensified by gaps in their primary language; low rates of engagement and motivation (Wright, 2012); and the compounding effects of generational poverty (Beegle, 2003). A personalized learning approach seems like a panacea for the pressing problems of schools and students.

Personalized learning, however, is a slippery, amorphous concept with numerous definitions and theories about its implementation. Depending on the researcher, educator, or consultant, *personalized learning* may refer to a learning platform, technology devices, a strategy for school design, or sound instructional practice. The consistently used terms of *personal learning, personalized learning, and personalized learning environments* have become interchangeable with other familiar buzzwords such as *competency-based learning, project-based learning, mastery-based learning, personal learning plans,* and *deeper learning*. As one author writes, "the excitement shared by proponents of personalized learning eclipses any universal agreement about what it actually means" (Klau, 2017). To illustrate, the U.S. Department of Education's National Educational Technology Plan (2016) defined personalized learning as an instructional approach "in which the pace of learning [is] optimized for the needs of each learner. Learning objectives, instructional approaches, and instructional content (and its sequencing) may all vary based on learner needs. In addition, learning activities are made available that are meaningful and relevant to learners, driven by their interests and often self-initiated" (USDOE, 2016). The District Reform Support Network (District RSN), an organization

providing technical assistance to the grantees of Race to the Top, extends National Educational Technology Plan's definition by including the use of "technology to facilitate student ownership of learning" (District RSN, 2017). It also addresses the need for more "efficient assessments to inform and tailor instruction" (District RSN, 2017). The Bill & Melinda Gates foundation emphasized "accelerating" student learning by "tailoring the environment," while the Alliance for Excellent Education stressed the importance of educators developing "caring and trusting relationships" with students, who as a result of these interpersonal experiences will "put more effort into their school work and achieve at higher levels" (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2016; Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, 2014).

Intersection of Personalized Learning and Disability

A closer examination of personalized learning has goals similar to those of the special education and English as a second language movement. Since 1975, schools have been required to develop IEPs for students with disabilities, which in theory is personalizing learning from the perspective of special education teachers and families (Kelly, 2016). IEPs have used a battery of standardized and formative assessments to identify a child's strengths and weaknesses in cognitive ability, achievement, and oral development. Based on the assessment data, goals and objectives were developed to correspond to the students' needs, along with recommendations for educational setting and necessary accommodations and modifications to access and participate in the general education curriculum. Educators in general have also used data about students to identify

strengths and deficiencies and to make informed instructional decisions based on assessments (Mertler, 2014).

People with disabilities have long been perceived as "partial or limited people" who are different from "fully human people" (Block, 2017). For decades, society and schools adopted an *ableist* bias, or the pervasive devaluation of people with disabilities (Hehir, 2002). Ableism assumes a person is incompetent based on his or her disability. Parents of SwDs fear that labeling their children will result in their being ostracized from peers and segregated in self-contained classrooms (DeWitt, 2011). In other contexts, SwDs are placed in mainstream classrooms with their neurotypical peers, and general education teachers are unprepared to meet their educational challenges (Mader, 2017). A national movement connected to the least restrictive environment requirements of special education placed students with disabilities in fully inclusive environments and resulted in mixed outcomes. Mainstreamed SwDs receive more instructional time, have fewer reported absences, and have better post-secondary outcomes than SwDs in self-contained classrooms, but their proficiency rates continue to lag significantly behind their neurotypical peers on standardized achievement assessments (Kosiewicz, 2008). In SY 2012-13, 87% of California high school students scored at or above proficient in statewide math assessments, but only 17% of California's SwDs scored at or above proficient. Further analysis found that students with disabilities drop out at a higher rate, and are less likely to earn a standard diploma (CA DOE, 2012; Mader, 2017).

Positive changes for SwDs took root with multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) and Universal Design for Learning (UDL). Both MTSS and UDL are frameworks that address the behavioral, academic, and emotional development of each student from early

childhood to graduation (Hurst, 2014). MTSS provides a coherent continuum of system wide practices to include data-based monitoring, instructional approaches, and interventions to holistically meet the strengths and needs of each child to support them in meeting higher standards of learning. UDL is a framework primarily for the classroom that acknowledges learner variability and differences (UDL Center, 2014). Learning environments are often constructed for the "average" learner (Rose, 2016). The concept of "average" promotes the myth that all students will gather, organize, and express their ideas in the same way (National Center on Universal Design for Learning, 2015). It also assumes that learners engage with the material in the same manner, because of their shared motivations or interests (National Center on Universal Design for Learning, 2015). These beliefs, shaped in the industrial model of education, produced a "hidden curriculum" that teaches "certain students what they can and cannot do because of who they are" (Noguera, 2003).

Intersection of Personalized Learning and Second Language Acquisition

Across U.S. schools, immigrant youth from non-English speaking countries are often lumped together under the umbrella term of ELLs. Characterized by their lack of fluency in speaking, reading, or writing in English, the diversity of their cultures and languages is often overshadowed by the general pattern of schools viewing these youth as "knowing nothing," "ill-equipped for learning," and "unable to master difficult concepts" (Koran, 2016; Levine & Bleach, 1999). To address the diversity of ELLs, the U.S. Department of Education has identified four ELL typologies to target supports to match the characteristics and needs of each group: *newcomers* (highly educated or under-

schooled), or students who have been in U.S. schools for less than 36 months; *long-term ELLs (LTELs),* or those who remain ELs for five years or more; *reclassified fluent-English proficient (RFEP)*, or students who are considered proficient in reading, speaking, writing, and listening to English; and, *initial fluent English proficient (IFEP),* or students who meet the district's criteria for proficient in English; and *standard English learners (SELs)* (Soto-Hinman, & Hetzel, 2009). A final category of students, *ever English learners (Ever ELs)* embraces current ELLs and former ELLs who have attained English proficiency and "exited" ELL services (Institute of Education Sciences, 2017). Students in each category have different backgrounds and cultural experiences. Some may have little to no formal schooling while others may have extensive knowledge of reading and writing in their native language but have spent different lengths of time in U.S. schools and vary in their English proficiency levels . Others may identify deeply with their native culture, with multiple cultures, or only with U.S. culture (National Council of Teachers of English). The complexity of ELLs underscores the importance of creating opportunities for these students to develop their knowledge of English while enhancing their "existing knowledge base" and experiences as a foundation for new learning (Levine & Bleach, 1999; Valenzuela, 1999).

Despite civil rights legislation and court rulings mandating schools across the nation to address language barriers that prevent English learners from equal access to educational settings and opportunities, there is a general lack of understanding of how to design and implement effective systems to support the subgroup (Olsen, 2014). In the Supreme Court case *Lau v. Nichols* (1974), the court found that San Francisco Unified School District failed to provide English language instruction to students with minimal or

no English, depriving students an opportunity to participate in the education program (*Lau v. Nichols*, 1974). As a result of the court's decision, districts were obligated to develop programs for ELLs. However, even with programs based on linguistic theory in second language acquisition, the achievement gap between ELL and non-ELLs has remained unchanged since 2000. A majority of ELs remain in academically segregated programs, dropout risk is high, and large achievement disparities persist (Gallagher, Goodyear, Brewer, & Reuda, 2012; Murphy, 2014; Olsen, 2014). These outcomes stem from the challenges in secondary schools of learning a new language while trying to master multiple academic content areas at the same levels as their English-only or English-fluent peers. The majority of these students remain LTELs throughout their K-12 journey. They are either stuck at intermediate levels of English proficiency, or they reach higher levels of English proficiency but do not learn enough academic language to be reclassified (Olsen, 2014).

Although the field of research identifying and supporting students with learning disabilities or students with second-language acquisition needs is robust, there are minimal empirical findings about English learners with learning disabilities. Nonetheless, a disproportionate number of culturally and linguistically nonnative English speakers continue to be referred for a special education evaluation and, ultimately, diagnosed with a learning disability (Burr, Haas, & Ferriere, 2015; Shore & Sabatini, 2009). Prior to NCLB, Artiles and colleagues (2002) analyzed the 1998-99 special education placement data for ELLs in several southern California school districts and found that ELLs were overrepresented in programs for students with intellectual disabilities, learning disabilities, and language and speech impairments. Furthermore, ELLs receiving the least

English language development support were more likely to be placed in special education services (Artiles, Rueda, Salazar, & Higereda, 2002). Debate continues about the safeguards in place to accurately identify and place ELLs with disabilities (*Diana v. State Board of Education*, 1970). Artiles et al (2002) surveyed educators and found that many believed if ELLs were failing in their general education classrooms, it would help them to move to a special education program with a smaller class size where they can receive individualized support from teachers trained to help students acquire fluency in English and learn grade-level academic content. However, Wilkinson and Ortiz (1986) found that after three years of special education services, Spanish-speaking students regressed in their oral development, IQ scores, and academic achievement. Researchers concluded that neither placement in general education or special education programs "adequately served the needs of these students" (Artiles et al., 2002).

Scholars seeking to find elements of personalized learning for ELLs can explore frameworks, programs, and instructional strategies designed to help students learn and access rigorous content in both their native and target language. In terms of frameworks, two of the most commonly used tools are the California English Language Arts/English Language Development (ELA/ELD) framework and the specially designed academics in English (SDAIE) framework. ELD is a systematic instructional model designed to develop English language proficiency (Saunders, Goldenberg, & Marcelletti 2013). Instructional content focuses specifically on helping ELLs develop English language skills in reading, writing, speaking, and listening to advance their proficiency levels (Saunders, Goldenberg, & Marcelletti, 2013). This instruction is delivered during the school day outside of mainstream classrooms. SDAIE is a method of teaching designed to

support students develop knowledge in core academic subjects through extensive use of scaffolds and supports (Genzuk, 2011; Nickolaisen, n.d.). Similar to UDL, SDAIE removes barriers and gives ELLs equal access and participation to the grade level curriculum. These strategies are most appropriate for students who have reached an intermediate stage of English fluency (Genzuk, 2011; Nickolaisen, n.d.). Even when ELLs achieve proficiency in English and are considered reclassified fluent English proficient learners, they will always be considered "Ever ELs" and may still need supports to successfully comprehend content in their mainstream classes (de Oliveria & Schoffner, 2016).

If frameworks provide several ways to address students' linguistic and learning needs, then instructional programs for ELLs offers a second and more comprehensive benefit. In a study of immigrant and nonimmigrant youth attending a high school in inner city Houston, Texas, Angela Valenzuela found intense pressures for youth to assimilate into the nation's cultures and to adopt the language (1999). Instead of nurturing and promoting educational contexts that are bilingual, bicultural, and biliterate, schools in America have sought to forcibly "subtract [rather than] add to the competencies" of dual identity youth (Valenzuela, 1999). *Subtractive schooling* is the "process of divesting youth from minority and immigrant groups of their language and culture [their identity], leaving them vulnerable to academic failure and the disaffirmation of self" (Valenzuela, 1999).

Across the U.S., bilingual and dual-language immersion programs, schools for newcomer students, migrant education, and designated English language development programs demonstrate that students often catch up to and surpass their peers in English

immersion programs over time (Myers, 2014). Dual language immersion programs instruct students in both English and a "partner" language (Li, Steele, Slater, Bacon, & Miller, 2016). Some schools offer a two-way model immersion program for English-only speakers and a bilingual maintenance model for English learners (San Diego Unified School District, 2018); others offer a one-way model, in which students are native speakers of a single language (Li et al., 2016). Unlike traditional bilingual programs which expected English learners to abdicate their first language and in effect, their culture and identity, in favor of instruction in English, dual language programs provide enriched instruction in students' primary language while teaching a second language. Dual-language programs have been proved to lead to full English proficiency and curricular mastery while meeting students' cultural needs and giving them frequent opportunities to experience real-world learning with their peers (Thomas & Collier, 2003).

Schools across the nation have designed programs for newcomers who have little to no English proficiency and limited exposure to education in their native country (Maxwell, 2012). Flushing International High School is a New York City public school that serves recent immigrants new to the United States. The school uses hands-on, project based learning as the primary mode of instructional engagement. In the context of the a science class, the school personalizes learning through small groups in which students use English and their native language to develop bilingual and biliterate understanding of the content. Brooklyn International High School (BIHS) in Brooklyn, New York, also enrolls students who have recently emigrated to the U.S. and have limited English language and literacy skills. The school, similar to Boston Arts Academy, provides a student-centered experience through interdisciplinary projects and a strong arts

curriculum (Inside Schools, 2000-2018). Teachers at BIHS maintain high standards for all students but are cognizant of the struggles students face: many of them have journeyed to the U.S. alone, are living in low-income communities, and are facing some kind of trauma as they struggle to learn a new language and academic content (Hennessey-Fiske, 2015; Teaching Channel, 2018). Students are continuously engaged in inquiry-based collaborative work. All their projects contain deeply integrated learning of academic English language and content and students work together to challenge one another intellectually.

Problem Diagnosis

For more than a century, schools have implemented new teaching methodologies for the increasingly diverse student body enrolling in secondary schools with different levels of readiness. A review of the literature on systemic approaches to school redesign indicates that despite the millions of dollars invested and the emphasis on smaller, more personalized settings, schools are perplexed about why promising new initiatives fail to deliver.

In contrast to the High Tech High, Big Picture Learning, and Summit School models, which were built around a vision of personalized learning for a small group of students with a select teaching staff, most of the public schools of the small schools movement had little experience in school redesign, personalized learning, and structured levels of planning. These schools were expected to reinvent their model within a year with "little opportunity to start small, fail, learn, and iterate toward success" (Bryk et al., 2005, p. 3). In his book, *The Lean Startup*, Ries (2011) encourages organizations to engage in a "build-measure-learn feedback loop" methodology. The first step is figuring

out the problem to be solved and then building a product or prototype. Next, the designer measures the target user's response and experience with the prototype and learns from this input to make iterations or improvements (Anderson, 2016). Over time, the teachers and school leaders are able to identify the conditions under which new ideas will most likely produce success (Bryk, Gomez, Grunow, & LeMahieu, 2015). Without an improvement process, ideas fail and organizations move on to the next new reform without understanding why.

However, an improvement process must be anchored in a clear understanding of the specific problem the organization is trying to solve. Problems in an organization can be thought of as either adaptive or technical challenges (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002). *Technical problems* are everyday challenges that people within the organization have the skills or expertise to solve. They may include changes to the schedule, reduction in class sizes, grouping students in houses, or introducing a new curriculum. *Adaptive challenges* are not easily solved by existing systems, procedures or expertise. These challenges require "experiments, new discoveries, and adjustments from numerous places in the organization or community" (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002, p. 13).

In an improvement process, it is critical that school organizations bring in external perspectives to address adaptive challenges, develop solutions and make adjustments. Bryk et al. (2015) stress the concept of networked improvement communities to identify the root causes and to examine in detail how a set of solutions will improve learning outcomes (Bryk et al., 2015, p. 8). The objective, however, is to have a comprehensive understanding of the problems that need to be solved before a set of solutions can be proposed.

With an abundance of data from within and outside of the organization, school leaders are more confident in determining the specific problem to be solved. Administrators are privy to the patterns and trends in teaching and learning across the organization, have moderate to high levels of autonomy over teacher selection and evaluation, and are expected to possess instructional and change-management expertise. Despite a focus on improving student achievement, very few leaders or teachers have experienced the problem from the "point of view of the user", the users being SwDs and ELLs (Bryk et al., 2015, p. 13). In most large comprehensive high schools, the bureaucratic structures prevent a deep examination of the problem from the perspective of the users, both teachers and students. The data collected from these observations present a picture that becomes enhanced by a deeper focus on the impediments to student and teacher success.

In order to diagnose the specific problem, I used two analytical frameworks: Dr. Deborah Jewell-Sherman's Demography Is not Destiny (DID), and Heifetz and Linsky's adaptive leadership framework. Each analytical model provided a lens to analyze the evidence and extract relevant information to shape the project's success. Throughout my strategic project, I used the diagnostic tools to evaluate the successes and failures of my leadership and identify factors that impeded or facilitated the development of my project.

Frameworks Overview

Demography Is not Destiny. Dr. Deborah Jewell-Sherman (n.d.) developed the tool Demography Is not Destiny, to counter the narrative that geography, class, and race are immutable forces that shape a child's ultimate outcomes. This tool helps schools and

districts that are moving to a personalized learning environment by diagnosing gaps in several areas of the system that affect organizational learning and effectiveness. The framework also helps leaders identify the differences in outcomes between parts of an organization. The resulting gaps can be thought of as the space between where they are and where the organization wants to be (Reynolds & Lewis, 2017). According to the framework, gaps can be in Beliefs, Opportunity and Capacity, Instructional, Innovation and Support, and Outcome and Accountability (see Appendix G). The Belief Gap concerns hindering assumptions teachers and school or district administrators may have about students' and adults' abilities to learn and achieve at high levels. These beliefs often define the values and norms of the organization and influence how people operate in the organization. Change in an organization of any kind begins by challenging the beliefs that underlie educators' behaviors (Abdel-Ghany, 2014). One scholar defined the Belief Gap as "the persistent and deep divide between what parents believe their children are capable of and what teachers and school leaders, through word and deed, believe the very same kids can do" (Barbic, 2014). For organizations to effectively sustain change, they must first work with educators to question their previously held beliefs about students with learning disabilities, or attention-deficit disorders or those identified as long-term English learners.

The Opportunity and Capacity Gap relates to educational equities within an organization, such as how funding is allocated within districts and whether students are equally distributed among schools or concentrated in low-income schools. This component analyzes the structures that impede equal distribution of effective teachers, resources, and funding. The Instructional Gap includes the cultural, economic, and

political factors that expand the achievement gap between subgroups of students. The Instructional Gap also involves the structures and conditions that promotes or preclude teacher development. An Instructional Gap analysis can be used to determine the discrepancy of the number of students enrolled in a specific set of courses and the number that successfully complete the course sequence. This sort of analysis gives organizations a way to identify the key elements aligned to students' instructional needs (Childress, S., Elmore, F.R., Grossman, A., & King, C. 2011).

The Innovation and Support Gap covers the role of innovation in the design of solutions to address achievement gaps and the elements of organizational culture that are thought to stimulate innovative practices. Finally, the Outcome and Accountability Gap concerns the district or school leaders' ability to foster a learning environment of shared ownership and accountability from all stakeholders. I used the Demography Is not Destiny framework often throughout my residency. At times I used it in isolation to explore and understand the current state of the organization and the actions needed to transform it into its optimal state of performance. This framework aligns to four objectives of my theory of action: intentionally learn other perspectives on the problem, develop a multifaceted approach to analyzing data about how ELLs and SwDs are supported, form a task committee to observe the patterns of inputs and outcomes for SwDs and ELLs at Vista High, and identify methods and structures for stakeholders to observe and evaluate threats and opportunities to support ELLs and SwDs within a personalized learning framework.

Adaptive Leadership Framework. At its core, adaptive leadership is another analytical process that helps leaders tackle adaptive challenges in a changing

environment. According to Heifetz and Linsky (2002), one of the most common perils of leadership is the inability to distinguish technical problems from adaptive challenges. Technical challenges are problems that people within the organization know how to solve. Adaptive challenges require new learning and behaviors from the organization that are not easily discernable by those experiencing the problem. Adaptive changes, while potentially beneficial to the organization, can cause significant loss for those who have to change the "habits, attitudes, and values" that hold the organization back from thriving (Heiftz & Linsky, 2002, p. 26). When members of an organization experience loss, "they hold on to what they have and resist change" and the "common factor generating adaptive failure is resistance to loss" (Heifetz, Grashow, & Linsky, 2009, p. 10). In this sense, leadership is the act of mobilizing individuals to address adaptive challenges throughout periods of loss.

In *Leadership Can Be Taught*, Park and Bennis (2005) examines the differences between technical and adaptive challenges: "adaptive challenges often appear as swamp issues, tangled, complex problems composed of multiple systems that resist technical analysis and thus stand in contrast to the high, hard ground issues that are easier to address but where less is at stake for the organization or the society" (2005, p. 10). These "swamp issues" prove challenging for leaders and members of the organization because they require people to "redefine aspects of their identity" and they challenge people's feelings of competence" (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002, p. 30). Heifetz and Linsky have developed an adaptive leadership framework to help leaders address adaptive challenges and simultaneously move people through feelings of resistance, uncertainty, and loss (see Appendix H for the key elements of the framework).

For the purposes of my residency, I focused on the first four elements of the adaptive leadership framework: 1) get on the balcony, 2) think politically, 3) orchestrate the conflict, and 4) give the work back. The first key move for leaders is to "achieve a balcony perspective" by "taking [oneself] out of the dance" to get a "clear view of reality and some perspective on the bigger picture" (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002, p. 53). By doing this, leaders will have an opportunity to accurately observe the dynamics and understand the contextual factors shaping the outcomes for individuals (Bryk et al., 2015). Additionally, this step facilitates accurate diagnosis of technical vs adaptive challenges the organization is experiencing. As a result of observing and interpreting what is happening in the organization, leaders have the information to determine their next course of action. The next step, thinking politically, involves how leaders interact with those who ally themselves or oppose the adaptive challenge to be solved. For leaders, creating public value may not be enough to mobilize members forward (Moore & Khagram, 2004). The third step, orchestrating the conflict, requires the creation of a psychologically safe environment from which people can "tackle tough, sometimes divisive" issues" in a way that "diminishes their destructive potential and constructively harnesses" creative energy (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002, p. 102). It is a multistep process that includes, creating a holding environment, controlling the temperature, setting the pace, and demonstrating the future.

I engaged in the fourth step, giving back the work, during the last phase of my residency. In most organizations, members look to those in authority positions to manage the process and find the solutions. When leaders attempt to act on their own, "people become more passive" which leads to "complacency and habits of work avoidance that

shield people from responsibility, pain, and the need to change" (Heifetz & Linsky, 2009, p. 50). Many leaders are averse to giving the work back because it further stresses the system, causing disequilibrium for those seeking solutions, albeit temporary and most likely, in technical ways. Two key actions are entailed in this step: externalizing the issue for all individuals involved and ensuring that those who shoulder the work are the "relevant parties" (Heifetz & Linsky, 2009, p. 128). After these acts are achieved, the leaders establish four types of interventions (i.e. making observations, asking questions, offering interpretations, and taking actions) most likely to move the organization forward.

Theory of Action

My initial theory of action served as a hypothesis for how I might create the conditions for Vista High to improve instruction for diverse learners:

If I…

- Develop a multifaceted approach to analyze how ELLs and SwDs are served within a personalized learning environment with the participation of stakeholders from the school, district, and local community;
- Form and facilitate a task committee to observe patterns in the data that produces specific outcomes for SwDs and ELLs; and,
- Provide evidence-based strategies and high school models that demonstrate different organizational approaches to integrate and support SwDs and ELLs and put structures in place to help members create a prototype for SY 2018-19.

Then…

- Collectively, we will redefine success for ELLs and SwDs at Vista High,

- Orient the team around a coherent framework that integrates equity-based practices into personalized learning systems, and,
- Develop a strategic plan to build the capacity of educators.

Description of the Strategic Project

My strategic project focused on identifying structural and instructional barriers impeding the academic performance of SwDs and ELLs at the high school level. Additionally, I was tasked with developing a strategic plan for district and school leaders of effective strategies for ensuring equal access and opportunity for all diverse learners in A-G course sequence. The project had three main phases, aligned to my theory of action. The following chart summarizes each phase and describes key activities developed to drive the project forward.

		Key Activities		
Phases	**Theory of Action**	**July – September**	**October-December**	**January – March**
1	Develop a multifaceted approach to analyze how ELLs and SwDs are served within a personalized learning environment with stakeholders from the school, district, and local community;	Examine existing qualitative and quantitative data of SwDs and ELLs across the district and Vista High.	Observe classrooms. Shadow SwDs and ELLs. Identifying causal and maintaining factors. Conduct interviews and focus group meetings with teachers, teachers on special assignment, and directors.	Develop understanding of structural and instructional barriers.
2	Form and facilitate a task committee to observe patterns in the	None	Organize collective effort by recruiting	Design and implement feedback and

	data that produce specific outcomes for SwDs and ELLs.		teachers, directors, and school leaders to address systemic educational inequities for SwDs and ELLs. Codevelop our reasons for doing this work. Identify problems and root causes.	support processes. Develop a tool to help teams evaluate the effectiveness of instruction and interventions for SwDs and ELLs.
3	Provide evidence-based strategies and high school models that demonstrate different organizational approaches to integrate and support SwDs and ELLs and put structures in place to help members create a prototype for SY 2018-19.	Conduct and share research on schools creating learning environments for diverse learners based on personalized learning tenets.	Coach teams on understanding best practices. Have teams analyze the school to determine if best practices are in place. If not, identify reasons and/or barriers.	Develop a methodology for determining when students need "just-in-time" support. Implement a test for determining types of supports needed.

Section Overview

When I arrived at Vista High in Year 1 of the implementation of the XQ: Super School grant, I entered a site that was in the process of implementing a five-year plan to transform teaching and learning. Based on my landscape analysis of the context and the knowledge gained from a scan of the literature, I developed two goals to guide my strategic project: (1) identify the current patterns and interactions among staff at Vista High that focus on improving performance for SwDs and ELLs, and (2) collaborate with school and district leaders to develop a model of organizational learning rooted in the

relationships among teachers (social capital) and the pedagogical skills and content expertise (human capital). My initial charge at the beginning of my residency was to develop an onboarding process to help students from these subgroups adjust to the rigors of the A-G college course curriculum. This was an important goal, but my survey of the site and the literature indicated that my first step should be to understand how teachers at Vista High effectively learn to support students with diverse learning needs and what factors can facilitate or hinder their learning. Existing literature is rich with calls to dismantle silos that prevent teachers from adopting and implementing a collaborative problem-solving approach. However, the field has done little to operationalize this concept of building and sustaining relations between teachers. Instead we have reinforced the silo effect by emphasizing professional development and linking teacher performance to student achievement. Teachers at Vista High were being asked to make dramatic changes to their pedagogical practice under the national spotlight of the XQ: Super School Project. One study of professional development and school transformation supports the importance of relationships among teachers that are characterized by high levels of trust, frequent interactions, and ongoing opportunities to take risks without fear of retribution or exposure of ineffectiveness (Leana, 2011).

Phase 1 (July - November 2017): Identify the current patterns and interactions among staff at Vista High that focus on improving performance for SwDs and LTELs

Leading Phase 1 of the strategic project began by exploring the interactions of staff during the 2017 Summer Institute, weekly collaboration meetings, interviews, and monthly faculty meetings as they embarked on learning and implementing the four cornerstones of their redesign model: (1) personalized learning, (2) contemporary

literacies, (3), habits of mind, and (4) restorative practice. The most pressing obstacle Vista High faced, however, was ensuring that teachers were able to learn, adopt, and implement the new instructional approaches at scale to produce better academic outcomes for all students. Taking into consideration the conditions that would support changes to teachers' practice, I found that I would need to take a two-pronged approach at the start of my residency, which became the basis of my theory of action and strategic goals to guide my work.

Implementing Phase 1: Investigative Inquiries and Problem Diagnosis

Landscape Analysis

I began collecting information about the problem during a two-week summer institute for ninth-grade Vista High teachers. These sessions, held in August 2017, gave me an opportunity to participate in the personalized learning and habits of mind training, observe teacher interactions, and get feedback from teachers on the professional learning experience. Approximately thirty teachers from the ninth grade and wellness course enrolled and completed the institute. My observations covered the sessions directly or indirectly linked to SwDs and ELLs. I noted the different ideologies expressed by teachers, the number of interactions between ELD teachers and general education teachers, the number of interactions between education specialists (i.e., special education teachers) and general education teachers, the content of the sessions, and if and how the session addressed the unique needs of different learners. Additionally, I interviewed several education specialists and general education teachers to get their perspectives on the content and the process of interacting with one another. I also examined all the

artifacts from the two-week session to identify explicit strategies or techniques teachers were focusing on to make content accessible to ELLs and SwDs. This information gave me insight into the discrepancy between Vista High's espoused beliefs versus its enacted values. Most of the teachers in the ninth-grade teachers were either new to Vista High, new to teaching ninth grade, or new to teaching altogether. I hypothesized that the manner in which the school launched its two-week teacher development experience would imply what methods/strategies or which students mattered.

I expanded my data gathering to include classroom observations. From September through December, I visited approximately fifteen ninth English, math, challenge, and science classes. I also observed credit recovery, READ 180, and study skills for SwDs and an academic language and literacy course for ELLs. I was careful not to use a formal evaluation form to document teacher and student behaviors. Instead, I used an informal checklist to collect evidence of pedagogical practices that accommodate and include the diversity of students in order to capture a snapshot of student learning using UDL learning checklist (see Appendix I).

Teacher Interviews (October - November 2017)

From October through November, I interviewed general and special education teachers, teachers on special assignment (TOSAs), supervisors, directors, students, and families to understand their perceptions of a specific design challenge: developing a plan to narrow the opportunity and achievement gap between the lowest-performing and highest-performing students. I also gathered information on how teachers engaged with one another, district leaders, and parents to address the design challenge. My interview

list comprised all ninth-grade teachers, the wellness team, department chairs, school leaders, and district TOSAs who were selected because of their expertise in a particular area (e.g., ELD, behavior, and assessments). Based on the literature of social capital, best practices for supporting adolescent diverse learners, and aspects of the Public Education Leadership Project coherence framework, three questions guided each interview:

- Which elements have contributed to changes to your practice as they relate to SwDs and ELLs in the general education classroom and have improved student performance?
- What negative or positive influences in the environment have an impact on the collective performance of your teacher teams?
- In the redesign of the high school, how do you see your role and the role of other elements of the instructional core (e.g., co-teachers/education specialists, SwDs, ELLs, personalized learning, and A-G content)?
- To what extent are SwDs and ELLs included in the school?
- To what extent do teachers receive training or discuss how to integrate the personalized learning framework with integrated ELD and UDL?
- When SwDs or ELLs struggle, what do you do?
- What is needed to ensure SwDs and ELLs thrive during their four years at Vista High?

I asked these questions because I consider them the bedrock of school design for diverse learners. I wanted to fully understand the various elements that work in alignment or misalignment to strengthen the instructional core. Originally, I asked interviewees their "philosophy on inclusion" and "areas within the system that hinder or accelerate learning for diverse learners," but, ultimately I realized that the disappointing outcomes for these subgroups was directly linked to how agents in the organization interacted with

one another to bring about sustainable improvements in student performance. The primary goal of the interviews was to surface teachers' core beliefs about the centrality of relationships with members throughout the system and to identify elements of the traditional human capital model that have benefited pedagogical practice.

Analyze How ELLs and SwDs Are Supported (October - November 2017)

On several occasions in November and December, I shadowed English learners and students with IEPs in ninth-, tenth-, and eleventh-grade classrooms. I was introduced to this method during an ELD training based on the protocol developed by Ivannia Soto-Hinman, an associate professor of education at Whittier College. At every five-minute interval, the ELL shadowing protocol monitors and documents the primary speaker (i.e., the teacher or student), and the person the primary speaker is addressing. The protocol also captures whether the conversation is monologic (one-way) or dialogic (two-way). In that five-minute interval, the observer notes the events, dialogue, and interactions the student experiences (see Appendix J for the student shadowing observation form). The ELL protocol creates conditions schools can use to improve the educational experiences of ELLs. The technique examines the opportunities an ELL has to develop oral language and highlights patterns and trends underlying achievement gaps for ELLs. Soto-Hinman and other researchers found that ELLs "spend less than 2 percent of the day improving their academic oral language, even though it's a critical foundation for literacy" (Heitin, 2011).

Ten teachers attended the ELD training and shadowed students at the high school and a middle school. After inputting the observational data into a Google spreadsheet, we

determined what the research confirmed: students had access to the core curriculum, but teachers were not creating environments for students that fostered academic language development. A discussion ensued on the role of new instructional initiatives that competed with evidence-based practices for ELLs that are based on explicit skill instruction. This discussion was the impetus for bringing the shadow protocol to the Vista High ELL/Special Education Task Force to create awareness of systemic inefficiencies that prevent diverse learners from achieving at high levels.

The protocol for ELL did not lend itself to capturing the experience of SwDs. *Disability* can refer to one impairment of any type or a combination of impairments. Currently, I am in the process of developing my own protocol for this subgroup. At the time, however, I used the Shadow a Student Challenge protocol developed by School Retool, a professional development fellowship that equips school leaders to redesign their school culture. Similar to the ELL shadowing protocol, Shadow a Student increases empathy for students as educators gain insight into the unique experiences of individual students in their schools. The shadowing opportunities permitted valuable qualitative data about diverse learners' academic and social-emotional experiences.

Phase 2 (December - April 2018): Collaborate with school and district leaders to develop a model of organizational learning rooted in the relationships among teachers (social capital) and the pedagogical skills and content expertise (human capital).

Form and Facilitate a Task Committee: ELL/Special Education Task Force

Over the course of six months, I led a process for ensuring SwDs and ELLs were fully integrated into the redesign model of the comprehensive high school. I initiated a task force with the support of the superintendent. Since I was still new to the

organization, he identified several people to invite, but after two meetings, I realized that we needed to include the perspectives of teachers, students and parents. I structured the meetings around the improvement process. I employed the integrating and improving processes to build trusting relationships between the high school and the district office, which I hoped would cultivate organizational conditions that favor the work of instructional improvement (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). Another motive was to engage the team in a process that allowed them to innovate and learn together to solve a shared problem (Bryk, et al., 2015).

I met with several members of the team before our first meeting on September 13, 2017. At the time, very few people, including myself, knew what I would do over the next few months. By that time, I had met with everyone individually. As per my supervisor's suggestion, I conducted job shadows of the chief academic officer and the director of curriculum and instruction, analyzed data on special education across the district, reviewed the XQ application and educational audit conducted by XQ, and participated in the district's and the school's professional development series of personalized learning. Even though I had over ten years of experience working with SwDs, I had never worked directly with or for ELLs. Both the ELD and special education departments were in the midst of implementing their own strategic plan (ELD department) or beginning to revise one (special education department). In addition, XQ had a list of milestones required from each school in order to receive the multi-million-dollar grant. Because the purpose of my project seemed ill defined as to the *how*, I decided to use the first meeting to get clarity on the *what*.

Most district leaders attended the next task force meeting. Ten members attended the October 14th meeting, with only a department chairperson absent. I shared a Google presentation of the statements I had compiled from our last session using a prototype of a framework I was developing (see Appendix K). I organized the information into five priorities: Data Collection, Professional Development, Multiple Pathways, Rigorous Instruction, and ELD. Even though I had put five areas on the agenda, for the next forty minutes the group focused once again on Multiple Pathways. As the discussion progressed to the lack of supports for SwDs, the ELD teachers and leaders expressed surprise that students with federally mandated documents and legal rights did not have support classes to meet their needs while taking the A-G course sequence. Team members from the school explained that additional skill-building math courses had been offered for all students who lacked the foundational skills for Integrated Math 1, and that at one point, the school had tried unsuccessfully to "remediate" students using an online math program in tandem with the Integrated Math course. Other task force members then asked a series of questions: what data sources were used to determine if students lacked foundational skills for Integrated Math 1? What data are used to determine if students should transition from Quantitative Reasoning to Integrated Math? Does Quantitative Reasoning provide the skills students need to succeed in Integrated Math 1? Which additional supports are provided to students who struggle with Quantitative Reasoning? Finally, is the support math class more of a remedy for the absence of a multi-tiered system of supports and a strong teaching and learning plan with embedded instructional strategies for cognitively and linguistically diverse learners? This conversation helped us to narrow our priority areas from five to three: multiple pathways, teaching and learning,

and inclusive scheduling. In addition, we identified qualitative and quantitative data needed in order to improve outcomes for students.

In preparation for the third task force meeting on November 13, I conducted two SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analyses. The first was a general SWOT for SwDs and ELLs in A-G courses. The second was a broader analysis of four areas that surfaced as initial priorities for the school to address for all students: credit recovery, graduation requirements, response to intervention, and teacher development. The executive director of secondary curriculum, who had not attended previous meetings, attended the November meeting, as did Vista High's head counselor and an assistant principal. I structured the meeting to share an overview of ELLs' and SwDs' academic progress, the number of diverse learners enrolled in advanced placement and International Baccalaureate classes, and the composition of diverse learners across the six ninth-grade houses and their current grades in A-G courses. A rich discussion followed about the effectiveness of current school systems to help ELLs, SwDs, and students at-risk of being "off-track" on the A-G course sequence. At the end of the 90-minute meeting, we decided that our next step would involve shadowing ELLs and SwDs to gain more insight into their learning experiences in all classroom settings at Vista High. The group wanted to contextualize the data through classroom observations. A second development was acquiring additional data to redesign the professional learning experience for teachers based on the unique needs of their students.

On December 18, 2017, the task force reconvened for our fourth session. This time we included four teachers from Vista High (two from the ELD department and two education specialists). I focused on creating a shared moral sense of purpose with the

group (Fullan & Quinn, 2015). With the interim executive director of special education, we decided to create a shared purpose of what was best for all students, including those with disabilities and English learners. We made this decision after extensive analysis of student data showed that only 20% of all ninth graders were reading at grade level, a number of ninth-grade students were exhibiting inappropriate behaviors and were being excluded from classroom instruction, and there was evidence that students as a whole were ill prepared for the rigors of the A-G curriculum (see Appendix L). We focused on creating awareness in the group of the challenges students brought to school and the demands of the learning environment that often negated what was best for student learning. We launched the session by having each table list the elements students bring to school, including race, ethnicity, language, reading ability, family structure, culture, socioeconomic status, and level of motivation (for a more comprehensive list, see Appendix M). Once we had a consensus on the challenges affecting students at the secondary level, I introduced the team to the Demography is not Destiny framework and we identified the needs of ELLs, SwDs, and students who live in poverty. Several people stated that these needs often create belief gaps within the system. Teachers may develop implicit biases or attitudes and belief about students that affect their instructional decisions. We agreed that bias can result in students being shifted from a diploma track to a certificate of completion, few SwDs and ELLs enrolled in Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate courses, the tracking of students by houses, and the types of expectations held for these learners in general education classrooms. Next, I described several instructional tasks I had observed being given to students in grades 9 and 10, in which students were asked to complete tasks without any instructional guidance,

scaffolds, or clear rubrics for success all of which demonstrates an instructional gap. I documented these events in two English 9 courses, an Integrated Math 9 class, biology lab, and an ELD writing course (see Appendix N). The absence of these supports correlates with the subject grades and achievement results students received in prior and current years.

At our January 2018 meeting, I once again focused the group's attention on being specific about the problem from a user-centered perspective (Bryk et al., 2015; see Appendix O for full agenda). I opened up with a check-in from restorative practices, mentioning the technique and the rationale for using it with the group. Restorative practices is one of the four cornerstones currently being implemented at Vista High to foster a healthy, positive, and trusting community (Schott Foundation for Public Education, n.d.). I thought it was important for the task force to be in a safe learning environment that allowed them to talk freely and to address conflict using a restorative approach. Restorative practices were further integrated into our session as we surfaced issues of inequities for students with different learning needs. We then examined a redacted IEP of a twelfth grader at Vista High who was receiving dual services in English and special education (see Appendix P for the IEP). After four years, the student was 100 credits behind and receiving a majority of Ds and Fs in each content area. As a result of our discussion, the group decided they needed to delve deeper into other IEPs and samples of student work to engage in a new form of problem solving in order to bring about institutional change (Bryk et al., 2015, p. 3). The team admitted they had missed opportunities to accurately determine specific problem(s) in the system and had instead

engaged in promoting and adopting new solutions "before fully understanding the exact problem to be solved" (Bryk et al, 2015, p. 25).

Form and Facilitate a Task Committee: The XQ Leadership Team

In August 2017, Dr. Matt Doyle asked me to lead the XQ Leadership Team, which had begun meeting the year before to discuss the larger leadership goals and vision of the XQ project at Vista High. The team comprised of Dr. Matt Doyle, interim superintendent of Vista Unified; the principal; the internal director at Vista High, and the external director of communications. I was unsure of how to lead the team since I hadn't attended any of their previous meetings, but Dr. Doyle wanted me to understand the complexities of leading an executive team through a major change process tied to a multi-million dollar grant. At the onset, we used Franklin Covey's *The 4 Disciplines of Execution* to narrow our goals in alignment with the original strategic plan the team had set out to achieve (McChesney, Covey, & Huling, 2012). For three sessions, the team iterated their "wildly important goals," which were quantified, time-bound, and aligned to the district's blueprint as well as XQ goals. According to Covey's theory, wildly important goals create a sense of "empowerment and ownership" of a department's, or a school's goals that supports the overarching vision of the organization. By November, however, I realized we were engaged in the "wrong drivers for whole system reform" (Fullan & Quinn, 2015 p. 3). Each member of the team was focused on developing ad hoc strategies that were not influencing the instructional core: deepening learning for teachers or students. Fullan and Quinn (2015) define coherence as a "shared depth of understanding about the purpose and nature of the work in the minds and actions

individually and especially collectively" (p. 16). The critical challenge of the XQ Leadership Team was helping members to develop a deep, comprehensive sense of what must be done to improve student learning and the roles and responsibilities they have as agents in achieving that purpose (Fullan & Quinn, 2015). With only a few months remaining in my residency, I accelerated my plan to mobilize for change.

Teacher Work Group

On January 29, 2018, I began working with a group of Vista High teachers to understand the adaptive challenges at the school from their point of view. As Heifetz and Linsky state, the people closest to the problem are closest to the solution (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002). I knew from my interviews with ninth grade house teams and informal meetings with small groups of teachers and instructional assistants that many of the teachers felt disenfranchised by school and district leaders. Many teachers I spoke with felt disempowered by the number of changes instituted at Vista High. These feelings of frustration motivated me to meet with them without the school principal or internal director. The ELD school lead recommended additional general education teachers with success in supporting ELLs for the Teacher Work Group. It was important to bring teachers of SwDs, ELD teachers, and general educators to the group because as one ELD teacher said, "It feels like we live in separate worlds: the ELD world, the special education world, and the content area world. It doesn't make sense, because these are all our students" (ninth-grade ELD teacher, January 29, 2018). Originally, I invited the two education specialists and two ELD teachers from the December 2017 XQ ELL/Special Education Task Force meeting and the ninth-grade integrated math teacher who was also

the math department chair; one of the ELD teacher leads invited a social science teacher and another ELD teacher. Two driving questions guided our one-hour discussion: (1) how can we cocreate and support SwDs and LTELs in general education classrooms? (2) What infrastructure of practice can the school develop to better support teachers in meeting the diverse needs of learners in college preparatory classes (for the full agenda see Appendix Q)? Since some of these teachers had attended the December 2017 task force meeting, I summarized the discussions and the actions that had resulted from previous meetings. I presented a twelfth grader's redacted IEP and asked teachers to articulate their observations and wonderings as they viewed the IEP. Using a human-centered approach, I wanted the teachers to share their current dilemmas (e.g., how can I use an inquiry-based approach to allow student x to take ownership of their learning?) and to recall the students' past academic successes and challenges. I selected this tool so that teachers could isolate elements that advanced or hindered a student's progress.

The last task for the Teacher Work Group was drafting needs statements, or teachers to focus on opportunities for problem solving using a team-based approach. The focus of the needs activity directed teachers' attention to redesigning their classrooms, instructional approach, curriculum, or task to meet student needs or elevate student engagement (see Appendix R for protocol). Regrettably, there wasn't enough time to do more than introduce these tasks to the group. However, the meeting allowed teachers to "get on the balcony" and observe the roadblocks on the "dance floor" for teachers and students. The outcomes of this session shaped our February 2018 task force meeting with the larger group of school and district stakeholders.

Conclusion

The remaining work for March and April is to (1) create a personalized learning framework that integrates best practices for supporting diverse learners in a general education setting, thereby driving more equitable outcomes; (2) continue to build upon social capital structures within the school to develop an instructional vision and definition of success for diverse learners, and 3) develop a strategic plan to build capacity of educators within this new ecosystem.

Evidence

This section summarizes the outcomes of my theory of action. I used the following seven sources of data to collect information about the development of the project:

1. Hour-long semi structured interviews with each house's teacher team consisting of five to seven members.
2. Hour-long semi structured interviews with all math, ELD, and special education teachers on special assignments.
3. Mid-year survey (January – February) that asked teachers at Vista High what they want students to be able to know and do when they graduate from high school.
4. Presentation feedback (Ongoing). I gave a survey to the fifteen members of the ELL/Special Education Task Force.
5. ELL/special education shadowing data (November – December 2017). This data came from shadowing ELL and SwDs across the school.
6. Meeting notes and agendas from monthly ELL/Special Education Task Force meetings, weekly special education department meetings, and numerous one-on-one and small-group conversations.
7. Documentation of events and actions observed at the school between July 2017 and February 2018.

The following chart illustrates the progress I've made on my strategic goals and theory of action thus far:

Theory of Action	Success to Date	Results
If I…. Conduct a landscape analysis and semi-structured interviews to intentionally learn others' perspectives of the problem.	100%	Met with teachers, TOSAs, school and district administrators to collect information on how and why SwDs and ELLs were struggling in A-G courses Completed a landscape analysis using the Demography Is not Destiny framework
Develop a multifaceted approach to analyzing how ELLs and SwDs are served within a personalized learning environment with stakeholders from the school, district, and local community.	100%	Shadowed ELL and SwDs Used an improvement process to triangulate data points (SBAC, formative assessments, and grades) Conducted classroom observations Reviewed unit plans
Form and facilitate a task committee to observe the patterns in the data that produces specific outcomes for SwDs and ELLs.	100%	Brought together monthly district office staff, school administrators, teachers, parents, and students Used Demography Is not Destiny framework and SWOT framework to identify trends and generate potential root causes; identified the relationship between inputs and outcomes using different frameworks Used data to design tiered interventions for struggling students in ELA and math
Provide evidence-based strategies and high school		Identified existing policies allowing for multiple

models that demonstrate different organizational approaches to integrate and support SwDs and ELLs and put structures in place to help members create a prototype for SY 2018-19	75%	pathways (non-A-G courses) to lead to a high school diploma Identified the barriers for creating a non A-G pathway Developed a prototype of a pathway leading to a high school diploma
Then… Collectively, we will redefine success for ELLs and SwDs at VHS.	50%	Team developed a definition of success for ELLs and SwDs; Team iterated on the definition through April 2018
Orient team around a coherent framework that integrates equity based practices in personalized learning systems.	50%	Identified an equity based personalized learning framework from iNACOL Modified framework and developed a timeline for implementation
Develop a strategic plan to build capacity of educators.	100%	Partnered with ELD and special education department chairs and directors to co-create a plan for teacher and leadership development

Focus Area #1: Conduct a landscape analysis and semi-structured interviews to intentionally learn others' perspectives on the problem.

.

To orient me to the context, the task force and I conducted a SWOT analysis to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats for SwDs and ELLs in A-G courses. First, we examined how students were placed in A-G courses and, the types of supports provided based on their learning, language and social-emotional needs. Second, we examined how what just-in-time supports were given to students when they began to

demonstrate signs of struggle in their classes. Then we analyzed the progress of students after receiving these supports (Table ____).

Table ___: SWOT Analysis

Strengths	**Weaknesses**
Collective pride in Vista High Extensive CTE programs – in which students have opportunities to receive vocational training and explore new interests. Teacher collaboration meetings International Baccalaureate/AP/Avid Programs (many first-generation students attend college through these programs Staff dedication to students Migrant Education Program (supports students to achieve high academic standards and close the achievement gap) Monthly Family Engagement Nights	Anger, loss at the XQ changes Partnership with C&I (non-existent) Communication issues (from leadership, between houses) Inconsistent use and monitoring of modifications, supports, and accommodations for SwDs LTELs struggle academically because of very weak academic language – inconsistent use of attaining and practicing academic background knowledge Weak shared definition of personalized learning No tiered supports for struggling students (only options were READ 180, MATH 180, and tutoring, if provided by the teacher) No professional development integrating ELD and special education strategies for general education teachers until March 2018 No inclusion support plan during district transition 4 years ago
Opportunities	**Threats**
Full inclusion model for students with mild to moderate disabilities Newcomer Academy Program (provides	Large class sizes (35-38 students), which makes it difficult to personalize learning (total caseload for one teacher is 165 students/semester)

welcoming and safe environment that meets the unique linguistic, academic, and social/emotional needs of students) XQ grant (partnerships with MIT, Phil Darrow, Kallick, Zmuda, and Jacobs) Work-based partnerships Support from Department of Innovation, Special Education, and ELD Academic Language and Literacy (ALL) Study Skills Course for SwDs	Frequent turnover of administration School has its third special education administrator in two years XQ's goal is for every student to go to college, which may not match the reality or aspirations of student population

Focus Area #2: Development of a Cross-Functional Team Using Social Capital

I focused on two areas I spent September through November interviewing Vista High teachers, especially ninth-grade teachers, district leaders, TOSAs, and school leads. I asked each individual to respond to six open-ended questions:

1. Which elements have contributed to changes in your practice as they relate to SwDs and ELLs in the general education classroom and have improved student performance?

2. What negative or positive influences in the environment have an impact on the collective performance of your teacher teams?

3. In the redesign of the high school, how do you see your role and the role of other elements of the instructional core (e.g., co-teachers/education specialists, SwDs, ELLs, personalized learning, and A-G content)?

4. To what extent are SwDs and ELLs included in the school?

5. To what extent do teachers receive training/discuss how to integrate the personalized learning framework with integrated ELD and UDL?

6. When SwDs or ELLs struggle, what do you do?

After the interviews, I went through the transcript and coded the data to synthesize and organize it. In coding the data, I developed a storyline to address the disparities in access and quality for SwDs and ELLs to be successful. By having a story in mind, I could develop a coding scheme that highlighted patterns and trends. With several people, I conducted more than one interview in refine my preliminary categories to smaller areas of focus. I coded the interview responses into programmatic (instructional, curriculum), system (leadership, policies, values/beliefs, organizational structure), and external (district policies, district support, vision).

Focus Area #2: Develop a multifaceted approach to analyzing the existing data on how ELLs and SwDs are served within a personalized learning environment with stakeholders from the school, district, and local community.

I selected the following data points to analyze performance of ELLs and SwDs in a personalized learning environment: (1) types of academic tasks, (2) classroom observations, (3) students' first-semester grades.

Academic Tasks

Over the course of two weeks, I collected several types of academic tasks administered to all ninth-grade students. Each class had on average twelve students with disabilities and eight LTELs. The purpose of collecting and describing academic tasks is based on Doyle's (1983) central argument about the function of tasks:

- Students' academic work is defined by the academic tasks embedded in the content they encounter on a daily basis. Tasks regulate the selection of information and the choice of strategies for processing that information.

Thus, "changing a subject's task changes the kind of event the subject experiences" (Jenkins, 1977, p. 425).

- "Students will learn what a task leads them to do, that is they will acquire information and operations that are necessary to accomplish the tasks they encounter (see Frase, 1972, 1975). In other words, accomplishing a task has two consequences. First, a person will acquire information – facts, concepts, principles, solutions – involved in the particular task that is accomplished. Second, a person will practice operations – memorizing, classifying, inferring analyzing – used to obtain or produce the information demanded by the task" (Doyle, 1983, p. 162).

Table X lists the tasks. I've analyzed them by (1) the information and strategies students used to collect the information, and (2) the skills needed for students to complete the task.

Table 2: Analysis of Types of Tasks Given to Vista High Students during the "Re-imagination"

Types of Tasks	**Supports/Scaffolds Students Received to Complete the Task**	**Skills Needed to Complete the Task.**
Students are to think of 5 suggestions for making the story better (English 9).	Teacher provided exemplars of introduction, exposition, and rising action.	Organizing ideas effectively Gathering and using evidence Constructing a reasoned argument/response Noticing various text structures Comprehension

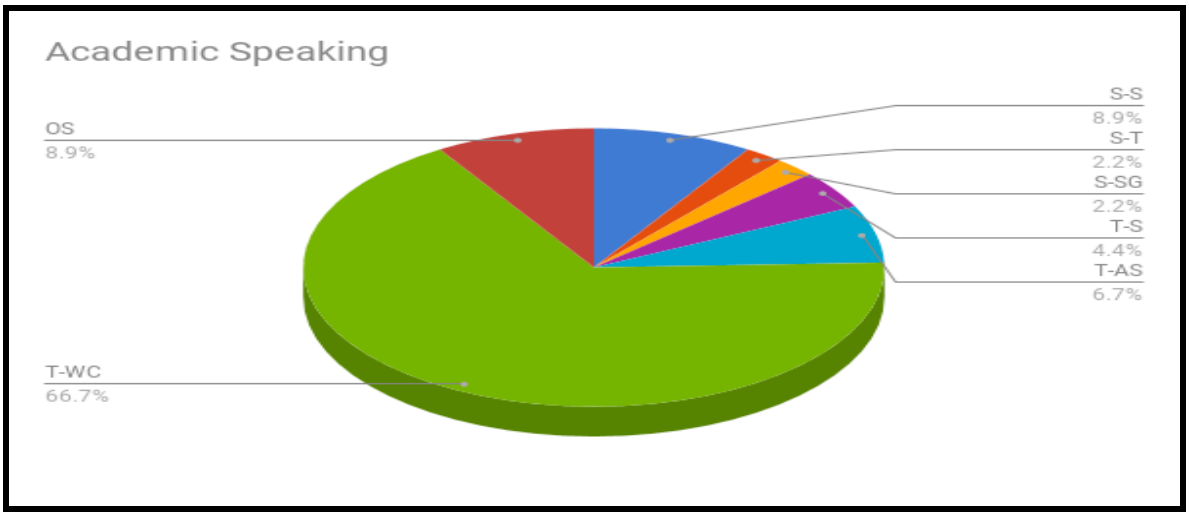
Write a rap song to compare and contrast plant and animal cells and identify structure of six membrane cells.	Students were allowed to refer to their notes/textbooks. Paraprofessional and teacher also provided support.	Understanding the basic structure of a rap song Vocabulary Rhyming Understanding the differences between and similarities of types of cells Knowledge about different types of cells
Design a juvenile detention center. Students have one week to design a model to present to the board of directors. Students must convince the board that their system is the best one to be funded by providing information about the programs available, how they will spend the yearly budget and evidence that this model will be a success. Students also must write a persuasive argument to the board.	Packet instructions	Architecture Purpose of juvenile detention centers Processing a variety of information Evaluating the costs and benefits Communication skills: presenting Word choice Development of logical argument Cohesive summary

Students were assigned a United Nations Sustainable Development Goal from the website http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/. **Students must read all the information about the goal, write a summary, identify five facts, three goal targets, and one or two challenges to reaching the goal.**	One-to-one laptops Partner	

Student Shadowing

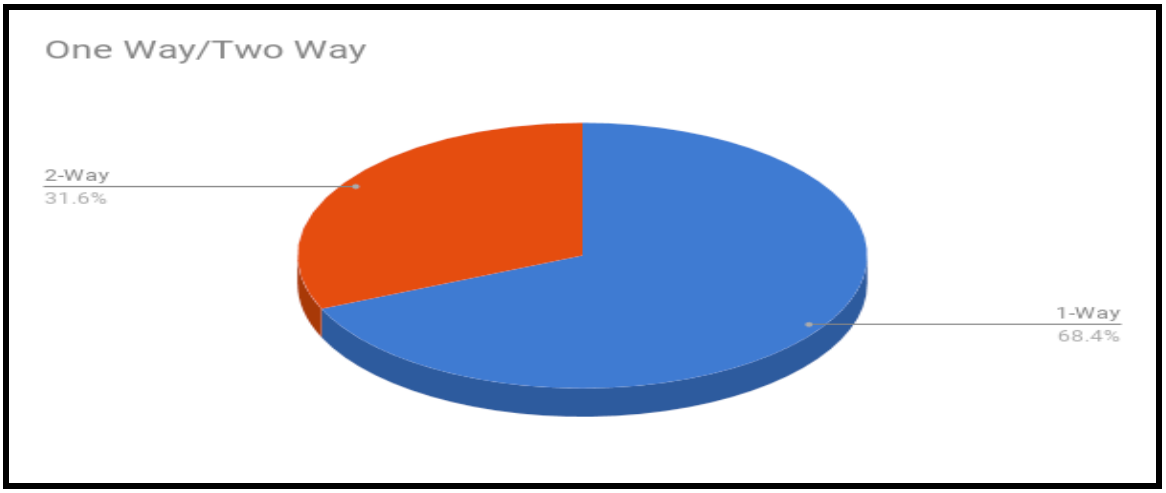
In November of 2017, I partnered with several ELD teachers, the director of ELD, and two ELL consultants from San Diego County Department of Education. We shadowed seven ELL students for several hours through all four grade levels in mainstream classrooms at Vista High. These students were either long-term ELLs or reclassified fluent. The data indicate that teachers were doing most of the academic speaking in all Vista High classrooms and LTELs spoke less than 2% of the day (Figure 1).

Figure 1: The Percentages of Academic Speaking Done by ELLs.



Legend for Figure __:
S-S = student shadowee speaking to another student;
S - T = student shadowee speaking to teacher;
S-SG = student shadowee speaking to small group;
S-WC =student shadowee speaking to whole class;
T-S = teacher speaking to student shadowee;
T-AS = teacher speaking to another student;
T-WC = teacher speaking to whole class; OS = other students speaking

Figure 2: The Percentages of Types of Dialogue Done by ELL Shadowee.



We also analyzed students' communication throughout the shadowing experience. Students spent almost 70% of their time engaged in one-way listening, in which students either passively listened or actively took in information from a teacher, student, or an audio/video. (Soto-Hinman & Hetzel, 2009). Throughout the day, participants observed ELL shadowees in two-way dialogue, such as asking clarifying or probing questions or responding to a question.

Redacted IEP.

This task surfaced many findings for the team: (1) the current supports (i.e., study skills for special education students, academic language and learning class for ELLs, tutoring) in place at Vista High are not helping this student; (2) students are not receiving their full set of accommodations and modifications in the general education classroom which presents an equity issue; (3) the absence of data on the IEP indicates that staff are unaware of the student's present levels; (4) the student's goals are not aligned to her perceived learning needs (i.e., reading below grade level; mastering academic English); (5) student fell "off-track" in ninth grade and did not receive an intentional IEP to help get her back on track; (6) the student is not prepared for a postsecondary career or college; and (7) the details in the IEP did not provide sufficient information for a general education teacher to design her curriculum without barriers. These insights were important because they helped the group to check their previous assumptions that students with diverse learning needs "just needed another study skills class" or a "non A-G course".

For many team members, the exercise of analyzing this IEP further challenged

their assumptions that the current professional development model was addressing the human capital gaps for teachers. For example, teachers were receiving professional development on the habits of mind and personalized learning, but how would those sessions address the deficiencies for this particular student? As a collective, the group generated a list of the dispositions, skills, and competencies teachers at Vista High needed to possess to meet the broad range of needs of diverse learners. Reflecting on the list once it was developed, the team recognized a "teacher profile" had yet to be developed for staff. The teachers on the team had beliefs about the teacher's role in creating classrooms to maximize the learning for all students, but at the time, teachers could not articulate what was expected of them. How did their role in a "reimagined high school" differ from that of a traditional teacher? Furthermore, what was the role of an education specialist or an instructional assistant?

Focus Area #3 Form and facilitate a task committee to observe the patterns in the data that produces specific outcomes for SwDs and ELLs.

Twenty-two district and school employees who received email invitations to participate in the monthly XQ ELL/Special Education Task Force over the course of ten months. Each month, the meetings had 95% attendance. Absences were due to either prior commitments or inability to find a substitute to supervise students. Those who were unable to attend were invited to optional debrief sessions held after school hours. Table 3 breaks down participants by numbers:

Table 3: XQ ELL/Special Education Task Force Participation

Month of Meeting	Invited	Attended
September	• Assistant superintendent • Principal • Internal director • Executive director of ELD • CAO VUSD • Executive director of special education • Two Vista High special education department chairs • ELD TOSA	• Interim superintendent • Principal • Two vice principals • Internal director • CAO VUSD • COO VUSD • Executive director of special education • Two Vista High special education department chairs • ELD TOSA
October	• Assistant superintendent • Principal • Internal director • Executive director of ELD • CAO VUSD • Executive director of special education • Two Vista High special education department chairs • ELD TOSA	• Assistant superintendent • Principal • One vice principal • Internal director • Executive director of ELD • CAO VUSD • Executive director of special education • Two Vista High special education department chairs • ELD TOSA
November	• Assistant superintendent • Principal • Internal director • Executive director of ELD • CAO VUSD • Executive director of special education • Two Vista High department chairs	• Assistant superintendent • Principal • One vice-principal • HS counselor • Internal director • Executive director of ELD • Executive director of secondary curriculum and instruction • CAO VUSD • Executive Director of Special Ed • Two Vista High special education department chairs

December	• Assistant superintendent • Principal • One vice principal • HS counselor • Internal director • Executive director of ELD • CAO VUSD • Executive director of special education • Two Vista High special education department chairs • ELD TOSA • VUSD behavioral specialist • Four Vista High teachers (teaching class at the time of the meeting and unable to attend)	• Assistant superintendent • Principal • Internal director • Executive director of ELD • Executive director of special education • Two Vista High special education department chair • ELD TOSA • VUSD Behavioral Specialist • Four Vista High teachers (teaching class at the time of the meeting and unable to attend)
January	• Assistant superintendent • Principal • One vice principal • HS counselor • Internal director • Executive director of ELD • CAO VUSD • Executive director of special education • Two Vista High department chairs • ELD TOSA • VUSD behavioral specialist • Four Vista High teachers (teaching class at the time of the meeting and unable to attend)	• Assistant superintendent • Principal • Internal director • Executive director of ELD • Executive director of special education • One Vista High department chair • ELD TOSA • VUSD behavioral specialist

Focus Area #7: Develop a strategic plan to build capacity of educators

Of all the strategies and milestones from the SY 2017 XQ Milestone Plan, only one goal explicitly addressed an action to be administered by the school to foster inclusion in the classroom for ELLs and SwDs. After six months of ELL/Special Ed Task Force meetings, biweekly XQ meetings, and classroom observations, several strategies and milestones were developed to build the capacity of educators in improving their support for learners with language and learning needs. This occurred in partnership with ELD and special education directors, department chairs, and the internal director of the XQ plan.

Table 4: 2018 XQ Milestone Plan Developed January 2018.

Category	Strategy	Milestone
1: School culture	N/A	N/A
2: Teaching and learning	Continue to examine and improve upon a master schedule to provide opportunities for students to engage in courses and any additional relevant learning opportunities on and off-site.	1. Develop a task forceorce to look into the complexities of opening up a more flexible master schedule to meet the needs of our unduplicated students. 2. Explore how to open up virtual and off-site learning opportunities for all students.
3: Networks and partnerships for learning	Expand opportunities for workability programs for all SwDs	1. Create a strategy where Vista High special education department partners with the Adult Transition Center to expand opportunities for workability programs for eleventh and twelfth grade students. 2. Continue to build

		elective classes in junior and senior year to prepare students for internships. 3. Partner with employers to procure internships for junior and senior students.
4. Stakeholder engagement	Engage the Community Action Council (CAC) and the District English Learners Advisory Committee (DELAC) on XQ learner outcomes.	1. Provide overview of the Vista High long-term learner outcomes and XQ learner outcomes at quarterly DELAC and CAC meetings. 2. Schedule school visitation for DELAC and CAC members to observe students in the learning environment.
5. Human capital	Partner with the district ELD and special education directors to design a professional development model for integrating ELD and SwDs services and supports seamlessly in content area classrooms.	1. Build shared understanding of the barriers for ELLs and SwDs in mainstream classrooms. 2. Provide coaching for teachers on explicit instructional strategies that include teaching academic English with content; tailoring lessons to the principles of UDL, differentiated learning, and academic language. 3. Expand opportunities for co-teaching to demonstrate best practices for supporting ELLs and special education teachers.
6. Technology	Provide training to teachers on using assisted technology (AT) for SwDs with documented accommodations on their IEPs.	1. Develop teacher knowledge on the purpose and use of AT to enhance learning. 2. Partner with the Office of Special Education and special education

		department chairs to train education specialists to apply AT in content-area classrooms to help compensate for disability 3. Monitor the effectiveness of teachers utilizing AT.
7. Student Support	Identify new approaches to support SwDs in mainstream classes	1. Analyze existing practices in mainstream classrooms to determine what supports are in place for students (e.g., co-teaching, accommodations). 2. Examine student performance for each category of support and determine its effectiveness. 3. Shadow students with unique learning and behavioral needs to develop a holistic view of the threats and opportunities in mainstream programs. 4. Working with education specialists and content-area teachers to research and develop new instructional strategies and supports for students in academic core content classes. 5. Hold teachers accountable through lesson plans, observations, and evaluations.

Analysis

In this section, I will explain key decisions I took during my residency. First, I will begin with a brief summary explaining why I believed I yielded the results from three components of my theory of action. Next, I will explain how new evidence influenced changes in my decision-making during my residency.

Section 1: Results from Theory of Action

Landscape Analysis

The first acts of my theory of action were to conduct a landscape analysis and semi-structured interviews to intentionally learn from the perspectives of staff and teachers. One of the reasons why I was able to move across different levels of the organization and engage members of the site in surfacing complex and challenging issues was through the building relationships based and using principles of humble inquiry which "facilitates better communication and ensures collaboration where it is needed to get the job done" (Schein, 2013, p. 8). One essential component of humble inquiry is the art of asking others what they believe the problem to be. Rather than coming in and telling them what I believed the issues to, I chose to empower each individual, which temporarily changed the power dynamics within our relationship. This change in our relationship was crucial, especially since I was entering their space as a doctoral candidate from Harvard Graduate School of Education. This helped to establish trust and build additional bridges with other individuals who were originally unwilling to meet with me.

Cross-Functional Teams

I was also successful in forming and managing a cross-functional team for several reasons. It was critical that I formed a team early on that encompassed staff from different departments. Historically, poor achievement outcomes for SwDs and ELLs fall under the purview of the Office of Special Education and the Office of English Language Department. Departments cannot work in isolation to tackle an array of adaptive challenges that affect diverse learners. The complexities I experienced in building a team that regularly met for an extended period of time proved to be one of the most elusive challenges of my residency. First, there was evidence of competing agendas between members of the group. One of the most influential factors that determine a team's success is whether a group can work together towards achieving adaptive solutions. There were several people who did not share the same goals that the majority of the group shared. By not addressing the lack of shared values, I observed divisions within the group that hindered their ability to effectively problem-solve around specific problems. In hindsight, I should have focused on creating public value with the team. According to Mark Moore (2004), to create public value, individuals need "clear objectives" and should be "involved in the process of deciding what [those] objectives should be" (p. 2). I needed the team to come to a consensus about what was most valuable in improving the outcomes of SwDs and ELLs. In the absence of this process, our team spent several months attempting to advance progress in several areas, which further divided our focus, resources, and performance.

Redefining Success for SwDs and ELLs

The task force struggled to redefine success for SwDs and ELLs because we failed to distinguish the nuances within each group. For example, SwDs does not address the different types of disabilities a student may have. According to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), there are 13 disabling conditions and within each condition students may vary across a continuum with how their disability impacts their educational performance. The task force's lack of attention to exploring the range of challenges a specific subgroup experienced caused the group to struggle with identifying and diagnosing with accuracy the problem. As the facilitator of the group, I did not create the conditions for teams to increase their understanding of each disabling condition or ELL typology. Members were able to redefine success, but only in abstract terms, without fully understanding the range of actions the site needed to take in order to achieve these outcomes.

Section 2: Pivotal Moves Based on New Learning

Prior to the frameworks introduced in my RKA to analyze the outcomes of my strategic project. Both Jewell-Sherman's Demography Is not Destiny framework and Heifetz and Linsky's adaptive leadership framework provided a useful and unique perspective for understanding the leadership and change management challenges at Vista High. Demography Is not Destiny is an invaluable tool for assessing the gaps in multiple areas of an organization and provides a useful frame for "comparing actual performance

with potential performance" (Mind Tools, 2018). It also allows the organization to gauge what different users in a system need and what the system currently provides (Squires, Roedler, Olwell, & Ekstrom, 2012). I used the adaptive leadership framework to help the organization create change based on information from the Demography Is not Destiny framework. My leadership task was to diagnose the context (Demography Is not Destiny), create an environment in which people generate new solutions to complex challenges (adaptive leadership), and help the XQ Task Force identify how to bring about a "gradual but meaningful process of change" and to "accept the responsibility for changing themselves (adaptive leadership; Watley, n.d.).

Successfully Achieving a Balcony Perspective

One of the toughest challenges for any leader is the ability to take a balcony perspective when "engaged on the dance floor, being pushed and pulled by the flow of events" (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002, p. 52). A balcony view lends itself to a more accurate diagnosis of the underlying causes of an organization's challenges. As an outsider, I was easily able to start on the balcony, observing the impact of policies and practices on SwDs and ELLs at the high school. As the leader of the ELL/Special Education Task Force, I succeeded in helping others shift from the dance floor to the balcony as they engaged in analyzing patterns to develop an understanding of what was happening and why. A result of their analysis showed the pervasive nature of belief gaps at Vista High:

- **High Rates of Failing**: Two-thirds of SwDs and ELLs don't enroll or complete A-G coursework to become eligible for admission to the UC/CSU system. Many teachers and administrators believe that students do not have a long-term vision and fail to see college as an option (a

number of students boast about working for their family's landscaping business). Furthermore, the high freshman failure rates results in students taking on even more demanding coursework to get back on track. Without support structures in place, students routinely find themselves not progressing toward college and career readiness.

- **Underrepresentation:** Low-income, SwDs, and ELLs are far less likely to enroll in AP or International Baccalaureate courses, even when they have the potential aptitude to succeed in these courses. A variety of factors may explain their underrepresentation. First, there is the impact of teacher bias on student participation (Buice, 2012). Teachers may fail to identify and recommend students for AP or International Baccalaureate classes, especially if they have a narrow view of the types of learners who are likely to succeed in these courses. Often teachers "focused on traditional characteristics of [aptitude] and did not tend to include characteristics associated with diverse students in their theories" (Miller, 2009, pp. 88-89).
- **Perceived Self-Efficac**y: The refusal to change emphasized the teacher's perception that the issues stemmed from the learner rather than from problems of practice. Upon seeing the number of years ELLs remained in the system with accumulated learning gaps, weak language acquisition skills, and years of struggling academically in general education classrooms, teachers felt limited in their own abilities to produce change. According to one Vista High teacher during an ELD training, "There isn't

much we can do to change things at this point" (Vista High teacher, November 2017).

- **Lack of Structures**: High turnover of administration coupled with new initiatives without an systematic implementation plan, key personnel to monitor and support, and tools to measure progress damaged the effectiveness of the organization. School leaders need to assess the barriers hindering teachers' growth and design or gather materials and resources intended to support practice. Organizations may abdicate this model for being "too prescriptive", but the transfer of new knowledge does not happen in a vacuum. Teachers need a roadmap to help them enter into new areas of learning depending on their level of experience teaching, but etting individuals to experience loss is a difficult and risky endeavor.

Mixed Results in Identifying the Type of Challenge

Distinguishing technical from adaptive challenges is a primary result of getting on the balcony. Leaders who have an accurate and complete picture of what is occurring on the dance floor can diagnose beliefs or practices that are causing the organization to operate dysfunctionally. Heifetz and Linsky (2002) call problems that cannot be solved by leadership adaptive challenges "because they require experiments, new discoveries, new adjustments from numerous places in the organization or community" (p. 13). To lead groups through adaptive challenges, I engaged with multiple people internal and external to Vista High on numerous occasions. I discovered early on that the technical and adaptive challenges were entwined. One example of the relationship between

technical and adaptive challenges occurred when the task force was exploring different data inquiry processes for the teams. Currently, teachers at Vista High have access to AERIES, which stores students' summative and formative assessments, grades for each year enrolled in a Vista Unified school, and their CELDT scores. One of our adaptive challenges was getting teachers to use data to make data-informed decisions, but AERIES did not store data teachers needed (e.g., reading levels, disciplinary data, learner profiles) and teachers were only able to access data for students on their roster, not for all of the students in their house. Furthermore, during one of our task force sessions it became apparent that teachers lacked access to the data and data literacy knowledge needed to inform their instruction.

Helping teachers to build their capacity in collecting and analyzing multiple sources of data is crucial if teachers are going to make changes to their practice. The first step for staff at Vista High requires data access for all teachers, especially those who teaching within the house system and need to examine data from a macro and micro lens. We piloted a new data platform that collected all the data for teachers and presented it in a visual form. Teachers were able to analyze students within their house and between houses, and were able to pinpoint specific subgroups that experienced academic difficulty in a specific domain. Teachers were able to create learner profiles capturing students' strengths, interests, and preferences. This is an important first step for the school, but without a robust collaborative inquiry process providing an infrastructure for decision-making, teachers struggle in addressing problems of instructional practice that result in poor student outcomes.

Heifetz and Linsky (2002) argue that "in mobilizing adaptive work, you have to engage people in adjusting their unrealistic expectations, rather than try to satisfy them as if the situation were amenable primarily to a technical remedy" (p. 15). For years, SwDs and ELLs have been failing to meet A-G college-prep curricula requirements at Vista High and in many other school districts in California (Leal, 2015). The task force assumed that more professional development on UDL and scaffolding instruction with a focus on academic English development would change the culture at Vista High and foster more inclusive environments for students. From previous experience, I knew that "no type, amount or combination of development activities appears to help teachers improve substantially" (TNTP, 2015, p.3). I wanted to avoid people pleasing by not falling for results that did not get to the root of what people believed about diverse learners. My goal was to target belief gaps as the first step towards developing an infrastructure of practice.

I struggled with negotiating the balance of changing culture. After four months, I noted that my original theory of action did not connect to the systemic beliefs observed at the school, and as a result, would not produce long-term changes to teachers' beliefs and practices. Teachers at Vista High have experienced a changing student population over the past four years, but this hasn't changed their practice, even with full-time coaches at the school, hiring of external consultants, and ongoing professional learning. For some teachers, there wasn't a need to adjust their instruction to attend to the needs of students, but the data proved otherwise. As several scholars have noted, "It may be that educators no longer have a legitimate choice about whether to response to the academically diverse populations in most classrooms; rather they can only decide how to respond" (Tomlinson,

Brighton, Hertberg, Callahan, Moon, Brimijoin, Conover, & Reyonolds, 2003, p. 119). But even when I was aiming to reshape their beliefs, I did not consistently anchor these shifts in new practices for the team members to adopt. Each month I felt like I was starting over as people naturally reverted to their prior knowledge and habits for educating SwDs and ELLs. I erred on the side of caution by trying to make significant change through dialogue, instead of developing my own infrastructure of change management to institutionalize new beliefs and procedures.

Mixed Results in Creating a Holding Environment

Psychoanalyst and pediatrician Donald Winnicott developed the concept of a holding environment in the mid-1900s. Winnicott used the term *holding* to refer to the supportive environment a therapist creates for a client (Winnicott, 1986). Others have expanded the concept to include "a psychologically [safe] space that is both safe and uncomfortable" (Cormode, 2015). A leader's role is to create a holding environment "to contain and adjust the heat" being stimulated from recognizing and addressing adaptive challenges (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002 p. 102). As the leader of this task force, I was charged with fostering a container for individuals across the organization. At the onset, I was faced with several challenges: identifying the characteristics of a holding environment, bringing together people who had a history of interpersonal conflict with one another, surfacing deeply divisive issues, and maintaining a balance between safety and discomfort to keep the attention and energy focused on the taxing issues at hand. I found success with establishing and maintaining a safe space for team members to engage in adaptive work without straining relationships, but I was less successful in

regulating “the heat” by keeping attention on the difficult issues and letting members “feel the weight of responsibility for tackling those issues” (Heifetz & Linksy, 2002, p. 109).

Williams (2005) asserts that “thoughtful consideration to the features of a holding environment [must be given] if a group is to undertake a successful developmental journey” (p. 97). The designer of a holding environment must provide boundaries for what people can and cannot do (Williams, 2005). These boundaries are often thought of as norms, or acceptable standards of social behaviors that govern how people operate in a group. This is especially important when brining up controversial issues that threaten an organization’s status quo. I aimed to create a climate in which everyone felt comfortable expressing their perspective on the problem, and later on, vulnerable in admitting how they contributed to the outcomes currently experienced by diverse learners at the school. However, I was not forthright in establishing a set of guiding principles for the task force early on in the process. These principles might have lessened the ambiguity about the task force’s purpose and individual roles in it, and they would have helped the group to gain clarity on the development and execution of key strategic decisions.

Leading a project of this magnitude requires engagement with adaptive challenges. I was tasked with entering a context that perceived outsiders, including those from the district as threats to the organization. In the past four years the school had a turnover of seven different school administrators. These individuals tried to generate change but were unable to engage members of the organization or develop transparent and efficient processes to advance a high performance culture.

While I managed to create a holding environment, I was slower to adjust the pressure for those within the organization. I knew that I could make people feel "psychologically safe" during our think tank sessions. Repeatedly, I was told that individuals felt positive about taking risks and felt a sense of trust at the meetings. However, several months after the launch of the think tanks, biweekly XQ meetings, and teacher groups, I continued to favor an environment where individuals felt "comfortable" and willing to talk about controversial concerns that should have provoked disequilibrium. I didn't talk about the elephant in the room: the role of race and the impact of implicit racial bias in student and teachers interactions. This occurred for two reasons: I didn't feel equipped to lead these conversations to ensure that our discussions were productive and not divisive; and, with the exception of my supervisor, I felt like I was the only one from the task force discussing these topics during our meetings.

By January, I was able redesign the holding environment to surface and address "the pinch of reality". We started to talk about race and the absence of equity within Vista High's personalized learning framework as we studied examples of IEPs, teacher developed lessons, and student assessment data. Members shared prior to these sessions they were inclined to solve students' poor performance with an additional study skills course or enrolling the student in a READ or MATH 180, and lowering classroom expectations. With the exception of Dr. Doyle, the task force never surfaced the impact of implicit bias on student outcomes. He often shared the comments expressed in Vista Unified schools when students of color were enrolled in their classrooms. Not wanting to "teach the little brown kids" has direct implications on students' learning. As one alumnus of Vista High pointed out, "I was the brown girl in class that no one saw going

to college. I wasn't proficient in English and I struggled academically in school. My parents did not know how to help me which left my future in the hands of people who focused on helping the white students. But one teacher, she saw value in me and invested her time in helping me get to college. My whole future is because of one teacher. I wonder if we were to ask students of color [at Vista High] who encourages and devotes time for bettering their future, if they can name one person" (Vista Unified district administrator, 2018).

Almost 79% of Vista High's student population is Hispanic, but only one-third of the graduating class is considered college and career ready (U.S. News & World Report, 2018). Compared to the adaptive challenge of getting teachers to consciously integrate scaffolds into their instruction, implicating teachers in the successes or failures of students based on their own implicit racial biases was an issue I felt underprepared to address. First, I am an outsider to Vista High. Second, as a black woman I may be perceived as being overly sensitive about race. Third, talking about race is even more controversial than talking about disability. One wrong misstep on my part could shut down any future dialogue about what is happening for students of color with disabilities and language acquisition needs.

But failure to acknowledge the role of race does little to achieve true equity goals for all students. Gaps in educational outcomes between brown and white students endured at every grade level of Vista Unified. However, instead of taking action toward racial equity, the district and I worked to advance opportunities for students through a personalized learning teaching approach. As our nation has seen, there is no other issue more divisive and difficult to discuss than the hard truths about the educational system in

America for students of color. By assuming that better results will occur by administering a professional development on personalized learning practices, we are encouraging teachers not to reflect on the impact of attitudes or stereotypes they hold for students of color. As one Vista Unified district administrator shared with me, "Even though we have invested a lot of time and money in personalized learning, I think we need to do more work in disrupting in how our teachers think about our students. I didn't see or understand what you were doing at first, but now I do. The way we talk to our students and their families…we just aren't seeing them as individuals who are in need. We only see and interact with them as though they are problems" (Vista Unified district administrator, March, 2018).

Placing the Work Where it Belongs

Task force members were often frustrated that school leaders weren't meeting their expectations by resolving the problems at Vista High with a set of solutions that included, creating a non A-G courses that would lead to a standard diploma, hiring more special education teachers, enforcing professional development around scaffolding instruction, increasing frequency of classroom visits to monitor implementation of professional development, and removing teachers who are resistant. Discussions related to the adaptive dimension, how will the school get teachers to take full ownership over all aspects of students' learning, was not owned by the task force team. As one member told me, "We can't make teachers do anything. We don't have the power or the position to do so. Teachers will only listen to the principal or the assistant principal" (Task Force Member, January 2018). When I suggested that school develop structures for their

colleagues and students, I felt immediate tension in the group. Later on, I realized that individuals did not want to lose their collegial friendships with other staff by disrupting their daily routines. As one member outside of the task force observed, “The minute they align themselves as ambassadors of the principal’s plan, they become outsiders” (Vista High staff member, personal communication, February 2018). People wanted change, but they found safety and security in someone else taking the hits and risk being ostracized. Furthermore, they were hesitant with being associated with a failed endeavor.

My attempts to share decision-making with staff created additional obstacles. Instead of establishing clear milestones for our team, I waited until I had the consensus of everyone before moving forward. My supervisor challenged my decision. He frequently said to me, “The people are never going to be ready to change. As the leader you need to mobilize them to action” (M. Doyle, personal communication 2018). My hesitancy resulted in the task force trapped in a cycle of identifying, diagnosing, and analyzing problems observed in the context.

As Goldsmith (2010) writes, “It is impossible for a leader to empower his or her employees: people must empower themselves.” As a leader, I had to create the conditions for individuals to assume authority over the adaptive challenges experienced at Vista High, but I needed my supervisor to help me lead the task force through this challenge. We enlisted the help of the measurement and monitoring specialist and the director of special education, we launched our March meeting with a discussion of why we needed to change. As my supervisor put it, “Enrollment across the district is going down. We are losing our students and we have to make changes. We know that the traditional methods

that may have worked fifteen years ago will not have the same effect on our students today." He also helped the task force to understand that this problem wasn't my problem to address. As he stated, "Alexis is leaving in less than six weeks. She was brought in to help gather the qualitative and quantitative data as it relates to SwDs and ELLs at Vista High. We are the ones who will bring about change, but we can't do that if we are not all working together to address the problem." It was evident by his statement that I had inadvertently made myself the owner of the problem. Instead of investing time with members of the special education and ELD departments to identify root causes and iterate on existing or new ideas, I set up structures that decreased their involvement. For example, I planned and facilitated most of the task force meetings with the exception of the December meeting. I did not devote as much time communicating with members to determine if we were meeting our overall goals and objectives, such as the special education department chairs' goals to develop multiple pathways for SwDs that would lead to a standard diploma. This was a primary concern shared with me in September, but instead of addressing their goal in an authentic and meaningful way at our meetings, I focused on other issues that I believed to be more relevant. By December, one of the special education department chairs stopped attending the meetings. She later rejoined in February, but I wonder if my decisions were a driving factor in her participation at meetings. As my supervisor said, "If you want people to own the work then you have to acknowledge their goals. Their concerns can never be dismissed" (M. Doyle, 2018).

Implement Interventions As a Lever To Change Beliefs

To mobilize people to address and take action on adaptive challenges, leaders must design interventions that will move the work forward. Winning the XQ grant gave

Vista High an opportunity to develop innovative systemic approaches for all students, including ELLs and SwDs. The school invested funds in professional development focused on personalized learning, the habits of mind, and restorative practices, but these sessions were administered without an explicit focus as to how it would accelerate learning for ELLs and SwDs. For ELLs to experience success, teachers would need to develop new practices to assist students with recognizing, understanding, and applying academic language. For SwDs, teachers would expand their knowledge and application of strategies to support students in inclusive classrooms (e.g., co-teaching, indirect consultation, peer-mediated instruction, tiered interventions, and differentiated instruction). Unlike the broader XQ challenge of transforming teaching and learning, however, fewer teachers had a stake in changing their practices for these two subgroups. For many, previous interventions meant to change instructional approaches for these groups resulted in resistance, criticizing the "system," or not seeing themselves as part of the problem.

Leaders can choose from four types of interventions: making observations, asking questions, offering interpretations, and taking actions (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002). One of my most successful tactics was using the observation intervention to shadow ninth-, tenth-, and eleventh-grade ELLs. When the task force analyzed the data, we confirmed Soto-Hinman and Hetzel's findings about ELLs in general education classrooms. Students did have access to the core curriculum, but teachers were not creating environments that fostered academic language development. Regardless of age or gender, ELLs students remained silent in class. Our team also witnessed the lack of standards-based scaffolds designed to support ELLs during the lesson. We noted the number of

ELLs who were able to hide out in class or were thought to be proficient in English based on their CELDT scores, and therefore did not need instructional scaffolding.

People from the ELD team suggested that I use one of our task force meetings to shadow ELL and SwDs. They insisted that by enlisting the principal and vice principals in the process, it will allow school leaders to "become sensitive to the academic oral language needs of ELLs and begin to change instructional practices" by requiring more academic talk is embedded in their instruction (Soto-Hinman, 2011, p. 16). However, one trusted confidante pushed back on this suggestion. "The principal knows that current practices are not working for these students. He doesn't need to collect more data on this issue; instead, he needs help in solving the problem" (Confidante, January 2018). One of the reasons the ELD team felt the system was continuing to perpetuate the same outcomes from students was lack of administrative support. As one member said, "Things rarely change because administration has [other] and higher priorities such as branding [our schools]" (Task Force Member, December 2017). Another member said, "There are no mandated [policies or practices]" (Task Force Member, January 2018). As a result, there is no oversight." These concerns reinforced the belief that the responsibility for change fell to the top administrator, instead of being owned and addressed by all stakeholders in the system.

By March, the task force had not developed and implemented any interventions in the school to address behaviors or beliefs. This was reflective of our task force meetings that were also absent of any new actions to task force members address adaptive challenges at Vista High. In hindsight, I wonder why I focused primarily on mining more data to tell us what we already knew, instead of actively engaged the task force in testing

new ideas, studying their effects on practice, and improving them over time? I have two ideas for why this occurred: I did not feel I was authorized to do so, and I assumed the school did not have the capacity to carry out any new strategies, regardless of scope or duration. In retrospect, I should have implemented my own personal change model timeline based on the plan-do-study-act (PDSA) cycle:

July – Early September	Late September - October	November	February - March
(Pre-Study)	**Plan**	**Do**	**Study**
Conduct a landscape analysis; identify the root causes; convene team to share findings	Team will write a statement of what the specific problem is for SwDs and ELLs Team will write a statement of what I plan to do (e.g., study the behaviors of LTELs in A-G; study the behaviors of SwDs across Integrated Math courses Team will craft a prototype to test in 1-2 classrooms	I will set execute the plan and collect multiple forms of data. This plan might include piloting a non A-G course for struggling learners, designing a professional learning institute for general education teachers, or developing a system of just-in-time supports. Data might include pre and post assessments, surveys, classroom observations, work assignments, lesson plans, etc.	Team will study findings. What significant insights did the test yield? What additional data supports our observations? Do we need to collect other information?

As I spent more time focusing on the data, several members became frustrated and questioned the purpose of the task force. There doubts cooled their efforts to own the change and as a result, lead the work.

Implications for the Sector

Personalized learning has emerged as an equalizer for students who have struggled to gain access under traditional one-size-fits-all educational models. The underlying premise of the personalized learning model is that the standard methods of instruction, content, assessments, and pace are not aligned to the strengths, interests, and values of individual students. Broadly speaking, traditional models of instruction have failed to optimize learning for students with diverse learning, language, and social-emotional needs. However, original policy measures driven by special education and bilingual education advocates have had minimal success influencing wide-scale changes in the sector's perception of or practices for these students in mainstream settings. I set out to explore the design and implementation efforts of a personalized learning approach in a comprehensive public high school that might serve as a model for other secondary schools in the nation. Vista High's experience in transforming the school into a personalized learning model to accelerate learning for SwDs and ELLs has important implications for practitioners and policymakers in the education sector.

Address Historical Challenges

When a teacher's identity is primarily that of a content expert, addressing academic differences or learner variability runs counter to their ideas about effective instruction. Coupled with the lack of structured supports to meet the challenging needs of learners in secondary general education classrooms, it is reasonable to hypothesize that if schools incorporated professional development and extra planning time for teachers then the issues would no longer affect schools. But even with additional training collaboration meetings, research finds that half of secondary teachers refuse to tailor their

instruction based on "readiness, interest, or learning profile because they saw no need to do so" (Moon, Tomlinson, & Callahan, 1995).

One root cause for the lack of integration of effective evidence-based practices for SwDs and ELLs, stems from general education teachers' beliefs about their role in supporting diverse learners. Vaughn and Schumm (1995) found that general education teachers reject modifying or adapting curriculum and instruction because they feel it "calls attention to student differences and it is not their job to do so" (Tomlinson, Brighton, Hertberg, Callahan, Moon, Brimijoin, Conover, & Reynolds, 2003, p. 122). Additionally, general educators are unaware of learner needs (Vaughn & Schumm, 1995); and they believe special treatment is poor preparation for a tough world that does not provide special treatment (Tomlinson et al., 2003, p. 122; Vaughn & Schumm, 1995). In research studies focused on teacher attitudes toward inclusion of ELLs, teachers were concerned about the influence of ELLs' learning and language needs on the classroom learning environment for English-only or English-fluent students (Reeves, 2006). For many, there was a high likelihood that ELLs would "slow the class progression through the curriculum" (Youngs, 1999), thereby creating educational inequities for other students. en ELLs (and/or SwDs) are enrolled in mainstream classes" (Reeves, 2006, p. 13).

If an aim of the sector is to systematically increase the capacity of general education teachers to meet the needs of all students, then the first stage of the process is to address the adaptive challenge that creates the systemic issues. A critical mass of general education teachers do not assume responsibility for the academic success of all learners when student variance is at play (Tomlinson et al., 2003). As studies have found,

when teachers see "difference as deficits" that are abnormal to the learning environment, students are unable to function successfully (Tomlinson et al., 2003, p. 124). Instead, teachers must adopt an approach that "predicts systematic learner variability . . . at every [grade] in every learning environment" (National Center on Universal Design for Learning, n.d.).

It is important not to simplify the implications of diversity for classroom practice. Students identified primarily by their disabilities or second language status are also affected by other factors that may result in "flawed assumptions of students' capabilities or assume a uniform standard of student performance" (Yale Center for Teaching and Learning, 2018). These factors include race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, and gender. Personalized learning aspires to customize learning for each student without acknowledging the history of mainstream marginalization of these groups. Tweaks to pedagogical practice or the emergence of new technological tools will not eliminate the pervasive beliefs many teachers hold about how students learn, teachers' role in facilitating learning, variance in student learning styles, and the optimum teaching methods based on learners' needs, interests, and preferences. The reimagination of a teacher's role cannot and should not be driven by the special education or the bilingual education departments. The offices directing curriculum and instruction, professional learning, and elementary and secondary education must play a pivotal role in reconstructing the learning context and teaching and learning culture in all schools (Tomlinson et al., 2003). Decoupling effective teaching from the ways in which diverse students learn reinforces the misconception that variability in learning is not the priority or responsibility of those teaching content-area subjects.

Instead of designing schools for the neurotypical English-speaking learner, schools need to be redesigned with the needs of the broadest range of learners at the forefront rather than retrofitted after the fact. This is the core principle of universal design, a concept developed by the architect Ron Mace, who stated that "the design of products and environments [should be] usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need of adaptation or specialized design" (Center for Universal Design, 1997). For teachers to become proficient in attending to learner variability and student readiness, change has to occur at all levels of teacher development. This includes undergraduate and graduate programs, internships, in-service and pre-service trainings, conferences, and district- and school-level professional development and coaching programs. However, as research and practice on changes to pedagogical practice indicate, "such a scope of change is profoundly difficult, calling for persistent, sustained leadership and support for the change" (Tomlinson et al., 2003, p. 135).

Build on the Lessons Learned from UDL Policy and Implementation

The national dialogue around personalized learning often omits previous policy initiatives to customize instruction for learners. State and federal law have incorporated both UDL and multitiered system of supports to enable students to access standards-aligned curricula and create equal educational opportunities for students with cognitive and language challenges. As early as 2006, the UDL language relating to "flexible materials" was introduced in the National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standard, version 1.0. In 2008, the Higher Education Opportunity Act emphasized the teaching of UDL principles in teacher education programs. Early versions of the Common Core Standards endorsed UDL, but it was removed after critics claimed the standards "should

not prescribe the means of instruction, only the goals of instruction" (National Center on Universal Design for Learning, 2013). In 2015, the Every Student Succeeds Act, a reauthorization of the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act, mandated that academic assessments in mathematics, reading or language arts, science, and comprehensive literacy instruction must incorporate principles of UDL as well as "programs that increase access to personalized, rigorous learning experiences supported by technology" (ESSA, 2015). Furthermore, the law explicitly endorsed UDL as a "scientifically based approach to personalized learning, [one that provides] flexibility and supports for all learners, including those with disabilities and English learners" (McClasky, 2017).

However, even with the adoption of UDL into federal law and state policy, studies have found several challenges with operationalized UDL in schools. One limitation is the divide on the definition of UDL. While the Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST) defines UDL as a "framework to improve and optimize teaching and learning for all people based on scientific insights into how humans learn" (2018), other definitions have penetrated the field. One misconception about UDL is that it is synonymous with differentiation. *Differentiated instruction* is an instructional strategy to address learner difference, including interest, readiness, culture, and learning style. UDL is an overarching approach to thinking about the design of the environment, curricular materials, and goals for the "broadest range of students from the beginning" (CAST, n.d.). Inconsistent use of terminology and meaning hinders practitioners' knowledge and application. As Edyburn (2010) writes, UDL is the "convergence of multiple disciplines," and teachers need clear training and support on the "functions of design, proactively

valuing diversity, and intentionality" (p. 38). Failure to train teachers and school and district leaders in UDL principles will negate meaningful access and engagement for diverse learners. Another core challenge of UDL lies in the fixed nature of textbooks. Many districts operate through a textbook-driven curriculum that is often criticized by curriculum designers for "lacking breadth and depth" and providing only "tidbits of information [that] lacks adequate integration of subject matter . . . [and] fails to capture the imagination and interest of students" (Ornstein, 1994, p. 71). Textbooks are developed for a national market and do not allow for learner variability. Unless districts and schools assume responsibility for curriculum development and address variability from the beginning, teachers and school leaders will struggle to embrace a genuine need to change their learning environment or instructional materials.

Unlike personalized learning, UDL is a clear framework organized by three main principles to address representation, engagement, and expression. Within each of these principles are specific checkpoints for strategies to address various areas, followed by examples. With this blueprint, educators can consciously design, implement, and collect evidence of UDL's impact on student learning. As noted in the RKA, personalized learning is still in the early stage of implementation in traditional public schools. If teachers are forced to work in isolation developing and operationalizing their understanding of what personalized learning is and what it should look like, then I worry that SwDs and ELLs will continue to fall even further behind.

Implications for the Site

Developing a strong infrastructure to meet the increasingly complex needs of diverse learners should be a key priority for Vista High. Two years after winning the XQ: Super School grant, Vista High continues to struggle with creating an academically responsive environment that promotes educational equity for all students regardless of ability or language proficiency. These realities are magnified by demands for successful entry into college and career that many students are unable to meet. My residency gave me significant insights into specific actions the organization could take to allow school leaders to develop, implement, and maintain a personalized learning approach that recognizes the diversity within and between student subgroups. In this section, I offer three recommendations for Vista High.

Foster Social Capital among Teachers to Enhance Pedagogical Practice

Research has shown that the universal belief of imposing professional learning activities is rarely effective at truly developing teachers. At most, these sessions are not part of a coherent arc for deep learning of curricula, standards, students, or pedagogy. Instead, teachers receive tidal waves of session dedicated to the latest education fads. As Ball and Cohen (1999) assert, "this kind of teaching and learning would require that teachers become serious learners in and around their practice, rather than amassing strategies and activities" (p. 4). One important investment is for the school to focus on social capital as the primary lever for change.

Economists define human capital as "factors such as teacher experience, subject knowledge and pedagogical skills" (Leana & Pil, 2014). Social capital however is sustained when meaningful learning is cultivated in the relationships among teachers and

between teachers and school leaders. Currently, ninth-grade teachers have fostered close collaborative relationships with the special education teacher on their team. If a relationship built on trust and shared experiences, then teachers are more likely to reach out to gain assistance on supporting students with differences. However, special education teachers need to build their knowledge and skill around disabilities, ELLs, differentiated instruction, Universal Design for Learning, and tiered interventions. It's important that everyone on the team has a specialized skill to enhance organizational learning and performance (Leana & Pil, 2014). In order to find success in this model, Vista High will need to strengthen the capabilities of special education teachers. Using their weekly 60 minute period set aside for collaboration and professional learning, VHS should partner with the Office of Special Education and English Language Development to put together a series of modules for teachers. For four to six weeks, teachers are immersed in an instructional area that has deep impact on the core. These topics could cover specially designed instruction in the co-teaching classroom, designing and implementing behavior intervention plans within a multi-tiered framework, adapting content area curriculum, and creating culturally responsive classrooms. Teachers at Vista High should also be considered as facilitators of these sessions, earning an additional stipend and professional learning credit. This learning will enable education specialists to help teachers in their house improve their pedagogical practice in a systemic and authentic way.

Another way to build social capital throughout the school is for leadership to intentionally create networked improvement communities designed to focus on a particular challenge in meeting the needs of unique learners. Leadership should

emphasize not the deliverable or solution communities develop, but the process they undertook to build their knowledge, acquire new knowledge, and assess and build onto existing knowledge (Leana & Pil, 2014). For example, school leadership could encourage teachers working in cross-functional groups to work together around a common purpose impacting the instructional core. Instead of having the leadership team ineffectively lead by assuming responsibility for the technical and adaptive challenges, teachers should be given the time and space to build their capacity in using an inquiry-based improvement process. Rather than passively listening to the school leader's next course of action, teachers with parents and students should become more actively involved in honing their problem-solving skills. Working collectively as a group, they might seek new educational opportunities for a broad range of learners (Tomlinson et al., 2003). During monthly faculty meetings, teams should have a platform to share the strategies they used with other staff. This will promote a culture of learning and decrease the "knowledge-doing gap" that has become endemic in many of our schools.

Exploit Existing Models of Innovation

O'Reilly and Tushman (2004) describe the core aspects of an ambidextrous organization as a balance of "constantly look[ing] backward, attending to the products and processes of the past, while also gazing forward, preparing for the innovations that will define the future" (O'Reilly & Tushman, 2004). Although the private sector has numerous examples of organizations that were successful in negotiating the complex interplay of exploration and exploitation, school systems falter with creating an

organization that is flexible and nimble enough to pursue new endeavors while simultaneously iterating on existing services and programs.

Vista High is in a cycle where systems and programs that demonstrate promising results are often dismantled, leaving teachers, parents, and students feeling disempowered and further marginalized. As I conducted my landscape analysis, I was surprised to learn about the number of programs that had proved to be effective for SwDs and ELLs but were eliminated after the arrival of new leadership or new initiatives from the district. For example, Vista High piloted a Personalized Learning Academy (PLA) one year prior to winning the XQ: Super School grant. Evidence from the pilot showed significant improvement for general education students but not for diverse or disengaged learners. When I met with several of the academy teacher leads and designers, I found that none of these teachers had been asked to share their insights about the academy model. Several patterns that emerged with a small group of 165 juniors could have been analyzed to determine what practices worked, why these practices worked (or not), and how they might be improved before scaling to an entire grade of 660+ students (Bryk, Gomez, Grunow, & LeMahieu, 2015). After analyzing these results, Visa High should have enrolled a small group of LTELs and SwDs to study the impact on their achievement.

Making the decision to acquire superficial knowledge to understand the relationships between inputs, outputs, and outcomes created a "knowing-doing gap" for the organization (Pfeffer & Sutton, 1999). Instead of building the organization's capacity to collect, retain, and turn knowledge into action, the organization developed a set of new strategies. This damaged the site in multiple ways. First, many of the same threats that hindered the progress of the PLA greatly impaired its efficacy. For example, the PLA did

not enroll any ELLs or SwDs. Students thrived in learning environments that were student driven and framed by interdisciplinary projects and personalized learning strategies, but these students were not representative of the larger student body at Vista High. Teachers had little knowledge about designing similar experiences for students on a third-grade reading level, those with minimal understanding of English, or those unmotivated to engage in independent study.

Second, the knowledge gap influenced the organizational culture. Vista High's espoused values are "trust, respect, and collaboration," but to many, the refusal to seek input from key leaders of the PLA and others created "knowledge silos" that left the organization in a precarious position (Tannenbaum, 2014). Teachers were not enthusiastic about the adoption of XQ or the influx of consultants imposing their definitions of good teaching and learning on the organization. Many educators at Vista High had mixed opinions about the PLA's successes, and only a few people on campus had a concrete understanding of how to define personalized learning. The school focused most of its energy on training teachers about the skills and dispositions students needed to have, but it stumbled in framing the school redesign model around these three critical questions: (1) Based on what we learned from previous experience, what does good learning look like for all students? (2) How do we change or align our practices to achieve that type of learning? (3) What were some of our strengths and weaknesses in aligning our practices during the PLA implementation?

To develop an ambidextrous organization, the organization needs to involve teachers, parents, and students in attending to programs, services, and supports that improve the instructional core while seeking innovative approaches that will create better

learning conditions for all students. This will help to reshape the current culture, in which many employees feel excluded or undervalued. First, the school administration should meet with multiple groups and stakeholders over the course of one to two months to determine which past or current offerings to use and then refine those before launching any changes. The primary focus of the discussions, however, should be to shed light on the effect of these educational programs to address the academic needs of SwDs and ELLs. It is equally critical for the school to corroborate anecdotal or qualitative data with student achievement data, attendance rates, and disciplinary data.

Moving forward, Vista High might also restructure the multiple teams it has on campus. Currently the cabinet comprises the principal, the vice principals, the internal and external XQ director, and the lead counselor. The school also has a decision-making committee of elected teachers who make recommendations to the principal about programming, funding, and staff concerns. The leadership team is composed of department chairs. All three groups have serve as informal advisors to the principal, giving input on the direction of the school. The ambiguity of the responsibilities or roles within each team and the fragile links between the teams hinders the organization's capacity to become ambidextrous. Furthermore, the organization is not adept at strengthening what works or making incremental changes to improve.

The school might consider collapsing the committees into two groups with two distinct functions: exploitation and exploration. The exploitation group, made up of teachers, school leaders, students, and parents, would focus on expanding the merits of processes, programs, and supports for diverse learners. The exploration group would have a similar makeup of stakeholders with the aim of pursuing "new knowledge" (March,

1991, p. 105) through "risk-taking, experimentation, play, . . . discovery, and innovation" (March, 1991, p. 75). However, it is important that the two groups do not become isolated from one another. If actions are uncoordinated and not able to meet the needs of all of the school's users, then the school will risk creating two separate schools. The school leader will have established tight structures for the two units to share and capitalize on the system's resources and expertise (O'Reilly, & Tushman, 2004). This would require the development of a "network [or organization] strategy" to enable teams to accelerate learning for SwDs and ELLs in multiple contexts: general education classrooms, self-contained classrooms, migrant education, primary language courses, newcomer academies, and credit recovery (O'Reilly, & Tushman, 2004).

Engage in an Improvement Process

Before further exploring new opportunities, Vista High should engage in a couple of key steps to improve on existing ideas using the first three steps of the core principles of improvement before scaling their model to the tenth grade (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning, 2018). First, the school needs to be clear about what problems the PLA and the first year of XQ were trying to solve. Vista High will never be able to determine if its interventions were successful if it is unable to be problem-specific. By fully understanding the key problem(s) the school wants to address, leadership and staff will be less likely to implement solutions that do not align to the problem and will be more sensitive to identifying and implementing productive solutions (Bryk et al., 2015).

Second, in order to pursue innovative solutions that will benefit SwDs and ELLs, Vista High must conduct a careful analysis of "what works, for whom, and under what

set of conditions" (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning, 2018). This group should include teachers from the PLA and those from the ninth-grade houses. The conditions to study could include but are not limited to the house model, 60-minute class periods, coteaching model across subject areas, students receiving an intervention reading or math course in addition to their required class, a paraprofessional across subject areas, implementation of restorative practices, community circles, mindfulness, and laptops for every student. The school must consider SwDs and ELLs but create and configure new or cross-subgroups that speak to the differences within each group, such as ELLs with disabilities who have been in the system since elementary school, ELLs who are at a level 3 or 4 English proficiency, students with a specific learning disability, twice-exceptional learners, LTELs, and ELLs with limited or interrupted formal schooling. Devoting time, a process, and guidance will engage multiple stakeholders from across the system who may not understand (or notice) why some practices and supports have little effect on improving student achievement for a specific user or group of users.

Another essential step for district, school, and teacher leaders is recognizing how the current K-12 system at Vista Unified produces the current outcomes. One outcome from my monthly XQ meetings suggests a lack of understanding about how the system hinders or accelerates student learning. Although the focus is to provide supports for students once they enroll at Vista High, district leaders need to recognize that teachers in grades K-8 across Vista Unified do not have an instructional vision, curriculum scope and sequence, or mandated standards-aligned curriculum. Without these resources, teachers struggle to identify what to teach, what students should know and be able to do, and a

systematic way of assessing students' growth in reaching these targets. Furthermore, without an instructional vision, district and school leaders cannot create a strong professional development model. As a result, the current system continues to produce dismal outcomes for all of its students.

Implications for Self

Throughout my ten months at Vista High School, I realized that leading a large-scale change project required me to enhance and develop leadership skills to tackle the complex equity issues. My leadership goals were to (1) effectively facilitate a process to challenge the mindsets and practices stakeholders had about SwDs and ELLs, and (2) to lead a process by which stakeholders are equipped with the knowledge and strategies to target educational inequities in the system. Leading a project while in a position of informal authority required me to adopt an approach to leadership that often felt foreign, risky, and unproductive. In the following pages, I provide my key learnings from the ten-month experience.

Leadership Goal 1: Effectively facilitate a process to challenge the mindsets and practices stakeholders had about SwDs and ELLs.

My first goal was to lead task force members in a process to accurately diagnose the problem for the users, SwDs and ELLs at Vista High. I developed this goal because if the school was going to change outcomes for students, then stakeholders had to clear about the adaptive challenge they were trying to solve. Leading this process required me to understand what were the beliefs held by members of the task force and to guide them in shifting their thinking about students with diverse needs from a fixed mindset to a growth mindset.

I knew that leading the task force in identifying the root causes of a problem that felt too complex and massive would first require me to alter my own mindset, especially since I was in a position of informal authority. Similar to the improvement process, I had

to adopt a position that the missteps are just as important as the wins. If I didn't want the stakeholders to get bogged down by the complexity of the issue or gaps in their own expertise, then we had to learn how to engage in a process where we learned from our errors. But this was something I had to learn throughout my residency. In the beginning, I put a tremendous amount of effort in avoiding failure. The pressure of being from Harvard with years of experience in special education and administration caused feelings of insecurity to rise up when I felt like someone was challenging my methods or outcomes. My doubts carried weight into decisions I made when leading the task force. At Vista High, there were so many new areas that I had to learn quickly and expertly: high school, personalized learning, English language learners, English language development, California education standards, and restorative practices. I did not want to be exposed as a fraud or have my leadership questioned.

My interactions with stakeholders from the task force showed me that I wasn't alone. As I built trust with different members, they felt at ease with sharing with me the inner discourse that prevented them in taking action in their own areas of expertise. One member shared she never felt smart sitting in meetings with other stakeholders, while another member revealed the animosity she felt from school leaders and teachers when she dropped by to monitor teaching and learning for students. More than once, a majority of stakeholders expressed if they didn't have the title of *Dr*. prefixing their name or a published book, then there was little chance that their recommendations would be heard or implemented. I wanted change the belief that people had to be experts in order to be effective at driving high-impact change.

Looking back, I wished that I spent more time on cultivating the habits and mindset of an improver rather than focusing on the improvement process. These habits require differences in actions and beliefs from the simple day-to-day routine of addressing technical challenges. By definition, adaptive challenges are challenges that require new learning, are difficult to identify and to solve. If I wanted to guide stakeholders in dealing with adaptive challenges then I would have to lead them, and myself, in developing the habits of an improver.

Facilitators of any change effort in a school should employ these habits regularly. They are not knowledge or skills that can be taught, but they are habits that will enable the capability to understand and implement the improvement process (Lucas & Nacer, 2015). Although I recognize the value that habits of learning, influencing, resilience, creativity, and systems thinking have for any group, I wonder how will I design learning environments and create the conditions for others to practice learning and deploying these habits regularly to solve complex challenges. It would have strengthened the process and my leadership if I had intentionally designed opportunities for individuals to select one to two habits they wanted to develop or enhance, and to reflect on their growth as they go through the task force experience. Adopting these habits and practicing them in a safe, holding environment could have accelerated their behavior changes, and helped members stay on track during future moments of disequilibrium

Leadership Goal 2: Lead a process by which stakeholders are equipped with the knowledge and strategies to target educational inequities in the system.

Throughout my residency I tried to remain respectful of both historical context and current load on teachers while figuring out ways to move forward on the most

essential things. To minimize my discomfort in tackling biases that further perpetuated educational and socioeconomic gaps for students at Vista High, I tended to engage in theory about teacher improvement, even in light of the evidence revealing teachers' treatment of students based on their race, disability, and language proficiency. With ten years experience in education, I have had little experience with addressing issues of race and equity in the classroom. I felt like I lacked the tools using adult development techniques to lead racial equity training. First, I believe this work must first be done with the members of the task force. How often do they self-reflect on their own biases and how it may inform their practices and policies? As a woman of color who is in a leadership role, it would have a profound affect for me to model how my own unconscious biases show up in my work.

One particular meeting in which we started to address the issue of assumptions teachers may hold about students was the opportune time to pivot the direction of the task force to areas that were deeply rooted in the culture of the school. For example, our analysis of the instructional tasks given to students led us to consider the beliefs white, middle-class teachers had about students at Vista High, a majority of whom were Hispanic: they liked rap music, lacked intellectual ability to be held to high expectations, and needed to know how to design a juvenile detention center instead of an innovative school or place of employment.

Instead of further surfacing these adaptive challenges, I focused on easier technical solutions: professional development, book studies, a data platform, and an improvement process. It's important to note that my supervisor raised the issue of race with administrators, task force members, and the school board. As a white male in power,

his comments were the open door I needed to engage the group in creating more equitable environments for students. Even though I stumbled during the January 2018 meeting in sharing an equity framework with the team, I should have persisted. Showing a framework will not change beliefs or practices unless people can use the tool to identify and dismantle inequities in the system. The next step, which may require an outside expert, involves operationalizing racial equity strategies in the school. As transition out of my residency, I recognize that I've learned has positioned me to better understand the complexities in leading an adaptive change process.

Conclusion

This capstone has raised concerns about the best instructional approaches for our most underserved groups. Who gets to make these decisions, and what is their definition of good instructional? For the past fifty years, the public has debated what types of schools and instructional approaches best serve disadvantaged youth of color. These students are primarily enrolled in underfunded schools with large class sizes, few qualified teachers, low expectations, and less access to challenging and engaging curriculum (Darling-Hammond, 2004, 2008; Oakes, 2005). Even with the an ongoing wave of educational initiatives to reform these schools and increase the academic performance of African-American and Latino students, these students continue to lag behind national averages and "fall farther behind the longer they remain in school" (Hill, Campbell, & Harvey, 2000, p. 10). The realities of a public high school education are extremely challenging for teachers and school leaders. It is no longer satisfactory that they are highly credentialed teachers with expertise in a specialized area. Teachers must also understand factors, internal and external to the classroom experience that can negatively impact student achievement.

Although it is tempting to try and fix these challenges through instructional design anchored on personalized learning approaches, schools and districts need to acknowledge and operate in the current reality in which their students live. In *Other People's Children*, Delpit (2006) compares the cognitive dissonance teachers of color experienced when implementing progressive approaches to children of color. Delpit was educated in a "segregated" and "skills-based" "poor community," but after attending a prestigious school that favored more progressive models of education as the "most humanizing of learning environments, where children [were] in control of their own learning" and

"would read when they were ready," Delpit eschewed the traditional explicit and direct instruction model that teachers of color utilized (2006, p. 12), . After several weeks, Delpit noticed that while her white students thrived under the model that was unstructured and "allowed the children's intellect to flourish," her black students moved farther away from meeting the grade-level standards. When she implemented more traditional approaches, black students made gains in reading and writing.

The question of which pedagogical principles should frame teaching and learning for children from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds has influenced many of the reforms of the past forty years. Middle-class and affluent families have embraced Montessori, Waldorf, and Reggio Emilia-based schools and abandoned traditional public schools. Characterized by an educational philosophy focused on a student-centered or play-based approach that values students steering individual and classroom learning, this style of learning diverges from the early childhood and K-12 education that students of color, SwDs, and ELLs typically experience. Even though Maria Montessori, founder of the Montessori method, developed her model based on her work with mentally disabled children and students housed in the "worst slum district of Rome," many argue that these pedagogical approaches would be a disservice to students who have limited opportunities outside of school to build and develop their skills in reading, writing, and math. As one teacher of color asserted, students "need skills, not fluency" (Delpit, 2006, p. 16).

Schools such as Achievement First, Uncommon Schools, Mastery, Edward Brooke, and Harlem Children's Zone Promise Academies have demonstrated success in increasing academic achievement of low-income youth, and in many cases, erasing the achievement gap in math (Angrist, Pathak, & Walters, 2011; Fryer & Dobbie, 2011),

many critics have questioned whether these schools provide students with the noncognitive skills to be successful. Students perform well on summative assessments, which measure students' achievement in relation to grade-level standards, but achievement tests have several limitations for schools, students, and families. First, they are not predictors of life outcomes or later-life success (Kautz, Heckman, Diris, Ter Weel, & Borghans, 2014). Second, schools lack information about students' noncognitive skills and abilities that cannot be measured by standardized tests, such as creativity, perseverance, motivation, conscientiousness, critical thinking, self-control, work ethic, trust, attentiveness, self-esteem and self-efficacy, resilience to adversity, openness to experience, empathy, humility, coping, flexibility, and open-mindedness (Kautz, terWeel, Heckman, Borghans, & Diris, 2014).

In closing, even if our schools address the multifaceted skills students will need to be successful, will that eliminate the extensive reach of racism, discrimination, and ableism? Delpit (2006) asserts that minority youth "need technical skills to open doors, but they need to be able to think critically and creatively to participate in meaningful and potentially liberating work" to function in the dominant society (p. 19). While it is a laudable goal to reimagine our schools that balance both pedagogical approaches, it is incumbent that school and district leaders hold themselves equally accountable in addressing equity and inclusion.

Bibliography

Introduction

Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. (2015). Our ideas: Using improvement science to accelerate learning and address problems of practice. Retrieved from www.carnegiefoundation.org/our-ideas/.

Doyle, M. (2018). Personalized learning. Retrieved from www.vistausd.org/PersonalizedLearning.

Elsen-Rooney, M. (2017, July 10). One school's quest for personalized public education. *The Atlantic*. Retrieved from https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2017/07/one-schools-quest-for-personalized-public-education/533004/.

Fensterwald, J. (2017, May 17). *Researchers, advocates divided over reclassifying English learners.* Retrieved from https://edsource.org/2017/researchers-advocates-divided-over-reclassifying-english-learners/582175.

Heifetz, R. A., & Linsky, M. (2002). *Leadership on the line: Staying alive through the dangers of leading*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.

Leana, C., & Pil, F. (2014, October 14). *A New focus on social capital in school reform efforts.* Albert Shanker Institute [Web blog post]. Retrieved from www.shankerinstitute.org/blog/new-focus-social-capital-school-reform-efforts.

Sullivan-Brennan, D. (2016, September 14). "Vista high lands $10 million innovation grant." *San Diego Union-Tribune*. Retrieved from http://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/news/education/sd-no-vista-superschool-20160914-story.html.

Sullivan-Brennan, D. (2016, May 9). "Education in the digital age." *San Diego Union-Tribune*. Retrieved from http://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/news/education/sdut-education-in-the-digital-age-2016may09-story.html.

University of California. (2018). "A-G subject requirements." Retrieved from https://www.ucop.edu/agguide/a-g-requirements/.

Vista High School. (2017). "Vista High School learning philosophy: High school reimagined." Vista, CA. [internal school document]

Vista Unified School District (2018). "Vista High School." Retrieved from http://vhs.vistausd.org/about/our-story/.

Vodicka, D. (2017). Innovative practices in action. In Sheninger, E.C. & Murray, T. (Ed.), *Learning transformed: 8 Keys to designing tomorrow's schools, today.* Retrieved from https://books.google.com/books?id=NcsmDwAAQBAJ&pg=PT170&dq=devin+vodicka&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjRga3RlufZAhUGr1QKHR83BpcQ6AEIRjAF#v=onepage&q=devin%20vodicka&f=false.

XQ. (2016). "Vista High School pilot education opportunity audit report" [PDF].

XQ. (2018). About: Why XQ? Retrieved from https://xqsuperschool.org/about

Review of Knowledge for Action (RKA)

Abdel-Ghany, M.M.M. (2014) Readiness for change, change beliefs and resistance to change of extension personnel in the New Valley governorate about mobile extension, *Annals of Agricultural Sciences*, 59 (2): 297-303.

Anderson, B. (2016). The learning loop: An Iterative dialogue between faculty and design partners [Web blog post]. The Teaching and Learning Lab. Retrieved from https://tll.gse.harvard.edu/blog/learning-loop.

Armor, D., Conroy-Oseguera, P., Cox, M., King, N., McDonnell, L., Pascal, A., Pauly, E., & Zellman, G. (1976). Analysis of the school preferred reading programs in select Los Angeles minority schools. (REPORT NO. R-2007-LAUSD). Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. 130 243).

Artiles, A. J., Rueda, R., Salazar, J., & Higareda, I. (2002). English-language learner representation in special education in California urban school districts. In D. Losen & G. Orfield (Eds.), *Racial inequity in special education* (pp. 117-136). Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.

Barbic, C. (2014, December 29). Charter school critics blinded by 'belief gap'. Tennessean. Retrieved by https://www.tennessean.com/story/opinion/contributors/2014/12/29/belief-gap-blinds-charter-critics-reality/20875559/.

Beegle, D. (2003). Overcoming the silence of generational poverty. *Talking Points*, 15(1), pp. 1-15.

Big Picture Learning. (2018). How it works. Retrieved from https://www.bigpicture.org/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC_ID=389353&type=d&pREC_ID=882356.

Block, L. (n.d.). Stereotypes about people with disabilities. Disability History Museum. Retrieved from http://www.disabilitymuseum.org/dhm/edu/essay.html?id=24.

Borko, H., & Livingston, C. (1989). Cognition improvisation differences in mathematics instruction by expert and novice teachers. *American Education Research Journal*, 26, pp. 473-498.

Boyer, E. (1983). *High school: A Report on American secondary education*. New York: Harper & Row.

Brookover, W., Beady, C., Flood, P., Schweitzer, J., & Wisenbaker, J. (1979*). School social systems and student achievement.* New York: Praeger.

Bryk, A. S., Gomez, L. M., Grunow, A., LeMahieu, P. G. (2015*). Learning to improve: How America's schools can get better at getting better*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.

Burr, E., Haas, E., & Ferriere, K. (2015). Identifying and supporting English learner students with learning disabilities: Key issues in the literature and state practice (REL 2015–086). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of. Education Sciences, Regional Educational Laboratory West.

CAST (2018). The UDL guidelines. Retrieved from http://udlguidelines.cast.org.

Cavanagh, S. (2014, October 20). What is 'personalized learning'? Educators seek clarity. *Education Week*. Retrieved from https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2014/10/22/09pl-overview.h34.html.

Childress, S., Elmore, F.R., and Grossman, A., King, C. (2011). "Note on the PELP coherence framework." Boston: MA, Harvard Business School Publishing.

Chubb, J.E., & Moe, T.M. (1990). *Politics, markets, and America's schools*. Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution.

Coleman, J.S., Campbell, E.Q., Hobson, C.J., McPartland, J., Mood, A.M., Weinfeld, F.D., & York. R.L. (1966). *Equality of educational opportunity*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Covino, E.A., & Iwanicki, E. (1996). Experienced teachers: Their constructs on effective teaching. *Journal of Personal Evaluation in Education*, 11, pp. 325-363.

de Oliveira, L. C., & Shoffner, M (2016). Addressing the needs of English language learners in n English education methods course. In L.C. de Oliveira & M. Shoffner (Eds.). *Teaching English language arts to English language learners: Preparing pre-service and in-service teachers* (pp. 9-33). UK: Palgrave Macmillan

DeWitt, P. (2011, August 11). The stigma of special education [Web blog post]. *Education Week*. Retrieved from http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/finding_common_ground/2011/08/the_stigma_of_special_education.html.

Demmon-Berger, D. (1986). *Effective teaching. Observations from research*. Arlington, VA: American Association of School Administrators. (ERIC Eric Document Reproduction Service No. 274 087).

Fishman, P. (2015). *Learning for adaption: Building teacher career pathways at DSST public schools* (Doctoral Capstone). Retrieved from Digital Access to Scholarship at Harvard.

Gallagher, K. S., Goodyear, R. K., Brewer, D. J., & Rueda, R. (2012). *Urban education: A model for leadership and policy*. NY: Routledge.

Gates, B. (2009). 2009 annual letter. Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Retrieved from https://www.gatesfoundation.org/Who-We-Are/Resources-and-Media/Annual-Letters-List/Annual-Letter-2009.

Genzuk, M. (2011). Specially designed academic instruction in English (SDAIE) for language minority students. Center for Multilingual, Multicultural Research Occasional Paper Series. Retrieved from http://www2.csudh.edu/tsr/assets/genzuk-sdaie-2011.pdf.

Goodlad, J. (1984). *A Place called school*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company.

Hehir, T. (2002). Eliminating ableism in education. *Harvard Educational Review*, 72(1), pp. 1-33.

Heifetz, R.A. & Linsky, M. (2002). *Leadership on the line: Staying alive through the dangers of leading.* Boston, Mass.: Harvard Business Press.

Heifetz, R. A. Grashow, A., & Linsky, M. (2009). *The practice of adaptive leadership: Tools and tactics for changing your organization and the world*. Boston, Mass.: Harvard Business Press.

Hennessy-Fiske, M. (2015, March 29). "Challenges at school for migrants: Overcoming trauma, learning English*." Los Angeles Times*. Retrieved from http://www.latimes.com/nation/immigration/la-na-immigration-houston-school-20150327-story.html.

Hess, G. A., Jr., & Cytrynbaum, S. (2002). The effort to redesign Chicago high schools: Effects on schools and achievement. In V. E. Lee (Ed.), *Reforming Chicago's high schools: Research perspectives on school and system level change* (pp. 19–49). Chicago, IL: Consortium on Chicago School Research.

High Tech High (2018). Employment at High Tech High. Retrieved from https://www.hightechhigh.org/about-us/join-our-team/

Inside Schools (2000-2018). Brooklyn international high school: Grades 9-12. Retrieved from https://insideschools.org/school/13K439.

Institute of Education Sciences (2017, June 16). Understanding outcomes for English learners: The Importance of the 'ever EL' category. Retrieved from https://ies.ed.gov/blogs/research/post/understanding-outcomes-for-english-learners-the-importance-of-the-ever-learner-category.

Jay, J. K., & Johnson, K. L. (2002). Capturing complexity: a typology of reflective practice for teacher education. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 18, pp. 73-85.

Jewell-Sherman, D. (n.d.). Demography is Not Destiny Framework [PowerPoint slides]

Kahne, J. E., Sporte, S. E., & Easton, J. Q. (2005). Creating small schools in Chicago: An early look at implementation and impact. *Improving Schools*, 8, pp.7–22.

Kelly, C. (2016, March 9). Personalizing from the perspective of special ed [Web blog post]. Retrieved from https://www.edelements.com/blog/personalizing-from-the-perspective-of-special-ed

Klau, K. (2017, August 26). Personalized learning is the answer. (I forgot the question.). *EdSurge*. Retrieved from https://www.edsurge.com/news/2017-08-26-personalized-learning-is-the-answer-i-forgot-the-question.

Kohli, S. (2017, December 5). California isn't doing enough to teach kids how to read, lawsuit says. *Los Angeles Times*. Retrieved from http://www.latimes.com/local/education/la-me-edu-california-literacy-lawsuit-20171129-story.html.

Koran, M. (2016, March 16). “New graduation requirements are leaving behind students they were supposed to help.” Voice of San Diego. Retrieved from https://www.voiceofsandiego.org/topics/education/new-graduation-requirements-are-leaving-behind-students-they-were-supposed-to-help/. Kosiewicz, H. (2008). Achievement gap between disabled and nondisabled students. *Education Week*. Retrieved from https://www.edweek.org/rc/articles/2008/12/24/sow1224.h27.html.

Lau v. Nichols , 414 U.S. 563 (1974).

Li, J., Steele, J., Slater, R., Bacon, M., Miller, T. (2016). Implementing two-way dual-language immersion programs: Classroom insights from an urban district. Research Brief. RB-9921. RAND Corporation.

Mader, J. (2017, March 1). How teacher training hinders special-needs students. The Atlantic. Retrieved from https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2017/03/how-teacher-training-hinders-special-needs-students/518286/.

Marshak, D. (2010, February 19). Why did the Gates small-high-schools program fail? Well, actually it didn’t. *Education Week*. Retrieved from zzshttps://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2010/02/17/22marshak.h29.html.

Maxwell, L. (2012). Study shares newcomer schools’ best practices. *Education Week*. Retrieved from https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2012/01/18/17newcomer.h31.html.

Mertler, C. (2014). Data-driven classroom. ASCD. Retrieved from http://www.ascd.org/publications/books/sf114082.aspx.

Mitchell, A. (1998). African-American teachers: Unique roles and universal lessons. *Education and Urban Society*, 3(1), 104-122.

Monk, D. H. (1994). Subject area preparation of secondary mathematics and science teachers and student achievement. *Economics of Education Review,* 13(2), pp.125-145.

Moore, M., & Khagram, S. (2004). "On Creating public value: What business might learn from government about strategic management." Corporate Social Responsibility Initiative Working Paper No. 3. Cambridge, MA: John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University.

Murphy, D. (2014). The Academic achievement of English language learners: Data for the U.S. and each o f the states. Child Trends. Research Brief. Retrieved from https://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/2014-62AcademicAchievementEnglish.pdf

Murphy, K. (2009, May 6). Oakland's small schools movement, 10 years later. *Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education*. Retrieved from https://edpolicy.stanford.edu/news/articles/899.

Myers, A. (2014, March 25). Students learning English benefit more in two-language instructional programs than English immersion, Stanford research finds. Stanford Report. Retrieved from https://news.stanford.edu/news/2014/march/teaching-english-language-032514.html.

National Commission on Excellence in Education. Department of Education. (1983). *A Nation at risk: the imperative for educational reform: a report to the Nation and*

the Secretary of Education, United States Department of Education. Washington, D.C.: The Commission: [Supt. of Docs., U.S. G.P.O. distributor].

Nickolaisen, D.(n.d.) Specially designed academic instruction in English. http://people.ucsc.edu/~ktellez/sdaie-easy.pdf.

Noguera, P. (2003). The trouble with black boys: The role and influence of environmental and cultural factors on the academic performance of African American males. *Urban Education*, 38, 341-459.

Office of Educational Technology (2017). Personalizing the learning experience: Insights from future ready schools. Retrieved from https://medium.com/personalizing-the-learning-experience-insights/what-is-personalized-learning-bc874799b6f

Olsen, L. (2014). *Meeting the unique needs of long-term English language learners: A guide for educators.* Washington, D.C.: National Education Association.

Parks, S. D., & Bennis, W. G. (2005). *Leadership can be taught: A bold approach for a complex world*. Boston: MA: Harvard Business School Press.

Porter, A., & Brophy, J. (1988). Synthesis of research on good teaching: Insights from the work of the Institute for Research on Teaching. *Educational Leadership*, 45(8), pp. 74-85.

Powell, A.G., Farrar, E., & Cohen, D.K. (1985). *The Shopping mall high school: Winners and losers in the educational marketplace.* New York: Houghton Mifflin.

RAND Corporation (2012). Teachers matter: Understanding teachers' impact on student achievement. Santa Monica, CA. Retrieved from

https://www.rand.org/education/projects/measuring-teacher-effectiveness/teachers-matter.html.

Reynolds, A., & Lewis, D. (2017, October 30). Closing the strategy-execution gap means focusing on what employees think, not what they do. *Harvard Business Review*. Retrieved from https://hbr.org/2017/10/closing-the-strategy-execution-gap-means-focusing-on-what-employees-think-not-what-they-do.

Ries, E. (2011). *The lean startup: How today's entrepreneurs use continuous innovation to create radically successful businesses*. New York: Crown Business.

Rose, T. (2016). *The End of average: How we succeed in a world that values sameness*. San Francisco, CA: HarperOne.

Rutter, M., Maughan, B., Mortimore, P., Ouston, J., & Smith, A. (1979). *Fifteen thousand hours: Secondary schools and their effects on children*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

San Diego Unified School District (2018). Dual language programs. Retrieved from https://www.sandiegounified.org/dual-language-programs.

Santelises, S. B. (2016, April 6). Are high schools preparing students to be college- and career-Ready [Web blog post]. Retrieved from http://hechingerreport.org/are-high-schools-preparing-students-to-be-college-and-career-ready/.

Saunders, W., Goldenberg, C., & Marcelletti, D. (2013). English language development: Guidelines for instruction. *American Educator*, 37(2), pp. 13-25.

Schanzenbach, D.W. (2014). Does class size matter? In D. Weitzman (ed.), Policy Briefs, National Education Policy Center, School of Education, University of Colorado, Boulder.

Sizer, T. (1984). *Horace's compromise: The Dilemma of the American high school*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Shor, I. (2015, October 3). Opting out of factory model schooling [Web blog post]. Retrieved from https://creativesystemsthinking.wordpress.com/2015/10/03/opting-out-of-factory-model-schooling-by-ira-shor/.

Shore, J. R., & Sabatini, J. (2009). English language learners with reading disabilities: A reviewof the literature and the foundation for a research agenda (Research Report ETS RR-09–

20). Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service. http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED507842.

Soto-Hinman, I., & Hetzel, J. (2009). *The literacy gaps: Building bridges for English Language learners and Standard English learn*ers. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Sporte, S., & de la Torre, M. (2010). *Chicago high school redesign initiative: Schools, students, and, outcomes*. Consortium on Chicago School Research. Retrieved from https://consortium.uchicago.edu/sites/default/files/publications/CCSR_CHSRI_Report-Final%5B1%5D.pdf.

Stronge, J. H. (2002). Qualities of effective teachers. Alexandria, VA: Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Strauss, R.P., & Sawyer, E.A. (1986). Some new evidence on student and teacher competencies. *Economics of Education Review*, 5(1), 41-48.

Summit Public Schools. (n.d.). Our approach. Retrieved from www.summitps.org/approach/our-curriculum.

Thomas, W.P., & Collier, V.P. (2003). The multiple benefits of dual language. *Educational Leadership*, 61(2), 61-64.

Thomas, W.P., & Collier, V.P. (2003). Reforming education policies for English learners: Research evidence from U.S. schools. *The Multilingual Educator*, 4(1), 16-19. Covina, CA: California Association for Bilingual Education.

Tyack, D. B., & Cuban, L. (1995). *Tinkering toward utopia: A Century of public school reform.* Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.

United States Department of Education. "National Education Technology Plan 2016." Retrieved from https://tech.ed.gov/files/2015/12/NETP16.pdf.

Valenzuela, A. (1999). Subtractive schooling: U.S-Mexican youth and the politics of caring. New York: SUNY.

Vittek, J. E. (2015). Promoting special educator teacher retention: A Critical review of the literature. SAGE Open, 5(2). doi: 10.1177/2158244015589994.

Wasley, P. A., Fine, M., Gladden, M., Holland, N. E., King, S. P., Mosak, E., & Powell, L. (2000). *Small schools: Great strides*. New York, NY: Bank Street College of Education.

Wenglinksy, H.H. (2000). *How teaching matters: Bringing the classroom back into discussions of teacher quality.* Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service.

Wilkinson, C., & Ortiz, A. (1986). Characteristics of limited English proficient and English proficient learning disabled Hispanic students at initial assessment and at reevaluation. Austin: University of Texas, Department of Special Education, Handicapped Minority Research Institute. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. 283 314).

Wright, J. (2012). *Six reasons why students are unmotivated (and what teachers can do).* Paper presented at the meeting of the Technical Assistance Meeting for CSE Chairpersons, Lake Placid, NY. Retrieved from http://www.jimwrightonline.com/mixed_files/NASP_Indy/wright_NASP_IN_motivation_supplemental_handout.pdf.

Description of Strategic Project

Bryk, A. S., Gomez, L. M., Grunow, A., LeMahieu, P. G. (2015*). Learning to improve: How America's schools can get better at getting better*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.

Bryk, A..S. & Schneider, B (2002). *Trust in schools: A Core resource for improvement*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Fullan, M. & Quinn, J. (2015). *Coherence: The Right drivers in action for schools, districts, and systems.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Heifetz, R.A. & Linsky, M. (2002). *Leadership on the line: Staying alive through the dangers of leading.* Boston, Mass.: Harvard Business Press.

Heitin, L. (2011, October 12). ELL 'shadowing' shows promise. Education Week Teacher Professional Development. Retrieved http://schd.ws/hosted_files/cabe2016/4f/Ivannia%20Soto%20CABE%202016.pdf .

Leana, C. R. (2011). The Missing link in school reform. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*. Retrieved from https://www2.ed.gov/programs/slcp/2011progdirmtg/mislinkinrfm.pdf.

McChesney, C., Covey, S., & Huling, J. (2012). The 4 disciplines of execution. New York: Free Press.

Soto, I. (2012). *ELL shadowing as a catalyst for change*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Evidence

Doyle, W. (1983). Academic work. *Review of Educational Research*, 53(2), pp. 159-199.

Jenkins, J.J. (1977). Remember that old theory of memory? Well, forget it! In R. Shaw & J. Bransford (Eds.), *Perceiving, acting, and knowing: Toward an ecological psychology* (pp. 429-446). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Frase, L.T. (1972). Maintenance and control in the acquisition of knowledge from written materials. In J. B. Carroll and R. O. Freedle (eds) Language Comprehension and the Acquisition of Knowledge. Washington, D.C.: Winston.

Frase, L.T. (1975). Prose processing. In G. H. Bower (ed). *The Psychology of Learning and Motivation*, 9. New York: Academic Press.

Soto-Hinman, I., & Hetzel, J. (2009). *The literacy gaps: Building bridges for English Language learners and Standard English learn*ers. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Sturgis, C. (2017). In Pursuit of equality: A Framework for equity strategies in competency-based education. *Competency Works*. Retrieved from https://www.inacol.org/resource/in-pursuit-of-equality-guiding-principles-for-equity-strategies-in-personalized-competency-based-education/.

Zmuda, A., Curtis, G., & Ullman, D. (2015). *Learning personalized: The Evolution of the Contemporary Classroom*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Analysis

Cormode, S. (2015). "Constructing a holding environment." The Next Faithful Step, 18 http://leadership.fuller.edu/Leadership/Resources/Part_4Leading_for_Transformative_Ch ange/III__Constructing_a_Holding_Environment.aspx.

Goldsmith, M. (2010, April 23). Empowering your employees to empower themselves. Harvard Business Review. Retrieved from https://hbr.org/2010/04/empowering-your-employees-to-e.

Heifetz, R.A. & Linsky, M. (2002). *Leadership on the line: Staying alive through the dangers of leading.* Boston, Mass.: Harvard Business Press.

Leal, F. (2015, August 23). Raising graduation bar poses challenges for school districts. *EdSource.* Retrieved from https://edsource.org/2015/raising-graduation-bar-poses-challenges-for-school-districts/85149.

Miller, E.M. (2009). The Effect of training in gifted education on elementary classroom teachers' theory-based reasoning about the concept of giftedness. *Journal for the Education of the Gifted*, 33(1), pp. 65-105.

U.S. News & World Report. (2018). Vista high. Retrieved from https://www.usnews.com/education/best-high-schools/california/districts/vista-unified/vista-high-3625.

Schleppegrell, M. (2004). *The language of schooling: A functional linguistics-perspective*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Soto-Hinman (2011). Increasing academic oral language development: Using English language learner shadowing in classrooms. *Multicultural Education*, 18(2): pp: 21-23.

Squires, A., Roedler, G., Olwell, D., & Ekstrom, J. (2012). Gaps in the body of knowledge of systems engineering. Paper Presented at the INCOSE International Symposium Volume 22 2012, pp.1967-1976.

TNTP (2015). The Mirage: Confronting the hard truth about our quest for teacher development. Washington, D.C.: Authors. Retrieved https://tntp.org/assets/documents/TNTP-Mirage_2015.pdf.

Williams, D. (2005). Real leadership: helping people and organizations face their toughest challenges, ReadHowYouWant edition. Sydney, Australia: Accessible Publishing Systems.

Winnicott, D. (1986). *Holding and interpretation: Fragment of an analysis*. New York: Grove Press.

Implications for Sector

Anand, N., & Barsoux, J. L. (2017). What everyone gets wrong about change management. Harvard Business Review. Retrieved from https://hbr.org/2017/11/what-everyone-gets-wrong-about-change-management.

Blase, J., & Blase, J. (2000). Effective instructional leadership: Teachers' perspectives on how principals promote teaching and learning in schools. *Journal of Educational Administration, 38*(2), 130–141.

CAST. (n.d.). UDL intersections: Universal Design for Learning and Universal Design [Brief]. Retrieved from http://www.udlcenter.org/sites/udlcenter.org/files/UDL-DI%20BRIEFfinal.pdf

CAST. (2018). UDL in the ESSA. Retrieved from http://www.cast.org/whats-new/news/2016/udl-in-the-essa.html#.WrcOOpPwYWo.

Center for Universal Design (1997). The Principles of universal design. Retrieved from https://projects.ncsu.edu/design/cud/about_ud/udprinciplestext.htm.

Edyburn, D. (2010). Would you recognize Universal Design for Learning if you saw it? Ten propositions for new directions for the second decade of UDL. *Learning Disability Quarterly, 33*(1), 33–41.

Flath, B. (1989). The principal as instructional leader. *ATA Magazines, 69*(3), 19–22, 47–49.

Jenkins, B. (2009). What it takes to be an instructional leader. *Principal*, *88*(3), 34–37. Retrieved from https://www.naesp.org/sites/default/files/J-F_p34.pdfOrnstein, A. (1994). The textbook-driven curriculum. *Peabody Journal of Education, 69*(3), 70–85.National Association of Elementary School Principals. (2001). *Leading learning communities: Standards for what principals should know and be able to do*. Alexandria, VA: Author.

McClaskey, K. (2017). Personalization and UDL: A Perfect match. Educational Leadership, 74(6). Retrieved from http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/mar17/vol74/num06/Personalization-and-UDL@-A-Perfect-Match.aspx.

Moon, T., Tomlinson, C., & Callahan, C. (1995). Academic diversity in the middle school:

Results of a national survey of middle school administrators and teachers (Research

Monograph 95124). Charlottesville: National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented, University of Virginia.

National Center on Universal Design for Learning. (2013). References to UDL in public policy. Retrieved from http://www.udlcenter.org/advocacy/referencestoUDL.

National Center on Universal Design for Learning. (n.d.). Learner variability and UDL [Presentation]. Universal Design for Learning Series.

Ornstein, A. (1994). The textbook-driven curriculum. *Peabody Journal of Education, 69*(3), 70–85.

Osborne, M. (2014). Inviting innovation: Leading meaningful change in schools. *SET Research Information for Teachers*, *2,* 3–8.

Reeves, J. (2006). Secondary teacher attitudes toward including English-language learners in mainstream classrooms. *The Journal of Education Research*, 99(3): 131-143.

S. 114-95, 114 Cong. (2015). Every student succeeds act (enacted). Retrieved from https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/senate-bill/1177/text.

Todnem, R. (2007). Organisational change management: A critical review. *Journal of Change Management, 5*(4), 369–380.

Tomlinson, C., Brighton, C., Hertberg, H., Callahan, C., Moon, T., Brimijoin, K., Conover, L., & Reynolds, T. (2003). Differentiating instruction in response to student readiness, interest, and learning profile in academically diverse classroom settings: A review of literature. *Journal for the Education of the Gifted*, *27*(2/3), 119–145

Vaughn, S., & Schumm, J. (1995). Responsible inclusion for students with learning disabilities. *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 28*(5), 264–270.

Yale Center for Teaching and Learning (2018). Diversity in the classroom. Retrieved from https://ctl.yale.edu/teaching/ideas-teaching/diversity-classroom.

Youngs, C.S. (1999). Mainstreaming the marginalized: Secondary mainstream teachers' perceptions of ESL students. (Doctoral dissertation, University of North Dakota, Grand Forks 1999). Dissertation Abstracts International 60: 6

Implications for Site

Bryk, A. S., Gomez, L. M., Grunow, A., & LeMahieu, P. G. (2015). *Learning to improve: How America's schools can get better at getting better*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.

Boston Arts Academy (2018).

Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning. (2018). The six core principles of improvement. Retrieved from https://www.carnegiefoundation.org/our-ideas/six-core-principles-improvement/

Clark, A. (2005, June 9). Inclusion research at work at Boston Arts Academy. *Horace, 21*(2), 7–17.

Leana, C., & Pil, F. (2014, October 14). A new focus on social capital in school reform efforts [Web blog]. Albert Shanker Institute. Retrieved from http://www.shankerinstitute.org/blog/new-focus-social-capital-school-reform-efforts

March, J. G. (1991). Exploration and exploitation in organizational learning. *Organization Science*, *2*(1), 71–87.

O'Reilly, C., & Tushman, M. (2004). The ambidextrous organization. *Harvard Business Review*. Retrieved from https://hbr.org/2004/04/the-ambidextrous-organization

Pfeffer, J., & Sutton, R. (1999). The Knowing-doing gap: How smart companies turn knowledge into action. Boston, MA: Harvard Business Review Press.

Reeves, D. (2006). Leading to change: How do you change school culture? *Science in the Spotlight*, *64*(4), 92–94.

Tannenbaum, N. (2014, September 18). Leadership challenge: Creating a collaborative Organizational Culture [Web blog post]. Retrieved from http://execdev.kenan-flagler.unc.edu/blog/leadership-challenge-creating-a-collaborative-organizational-culture-0.

Implications for Self

Bryk, A. S., Gomez, L. M., Grunow, A., & LeMahieu, P. G. (2015). *Learning to improve: How America's schools can get better at getting better*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press

Lucas, B. & Nacer, H. (2015). *The habits of an improver: thinking about learning for improvement in healthcare*. Retreived from http://www.health.org.uk/sites/default/files/TheHabitsOfAnImprover.pdf

.

Conclusion

Angrist, J., Pathak, P., & Walters, C. (2011). Explaining charter school effectiveness." NBER Working Paper 17332.

Atchison, B., Diffey, L., Rafa, A., & Sarubbi, M. (2017). Equity in education: Key questions to consider. Retrieved from http://www.ecs.org/wp-content/uploads/Equity_in_Education_Key_questions_to_consider.pdf

Badger, E., Miller, C.M., Pearce, A., & Quealy, K. (2018, March 19). Extensive data shows punishing reach of racism for black boys. *New York Times*. Retrieved from https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/03/19/upshot/race-class-white-and-black-men.html

Darling-Hammond, L. (2004). Inequality and the right to learn: Access to qualified teachers in California's public schools. *Teachers College Record, 106*(10), 1936–1966.

Darling-Hammond, L. (2008). Teacher learning that supports student learning. *Teaching for Intelligence, 2*(1), 91–100.

Delpit, L. D. (2006). *Other people's children: Cultural conflict in the classroom*. New York: New Press.

Fryer, R., & Dobbie, W. (2011). Are high-quality schools enough to increase achievement among the poor? Evidence from Harlem Children's Zone. *American Economic Journal, 3*(3), 158–187.

Hill, P., Harvey, J., Campbell, C., & Reed, C. (2000). *It takes a city: Getting serious about urban school reform*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press

Kautz, T., Heckman, J. J., Diris, R., Ter Weel, B., & Borghans, L. (2014). *Fostering and measuring skills: Improving cognitive and noncognitive skills to promote lifetime success*. Paris: The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

Oakes, J. (2005). *Keeping track: How schools structure inequality*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Appendices

Appendix A: Vista High's Mission and Philosophy of Education

At Vista High School (VHS) we believe that all students deserve a challenging and personally relevant education. We are passionate about learning, and over the decades have cultivated a range of courses to suit any student interest. With support from an XQ Super School award, and together with our community, we are creating a school wide personalized learning environment where we honor the unique strengths, interests and passions of each student.

VHS Learning Philosophy: A place to inspire and be inspired, to dive deeper into academics and the arts, to develop perspective and compassion for society's problems, to graduate prepared for the future and empowered to make the world a better place.

The purpose of the VHS learning philosophy is to define the parameters of change that will shape our first steps in the evolution to an XQ Super School. Our first iteration emphasizes Four Cornerstones:

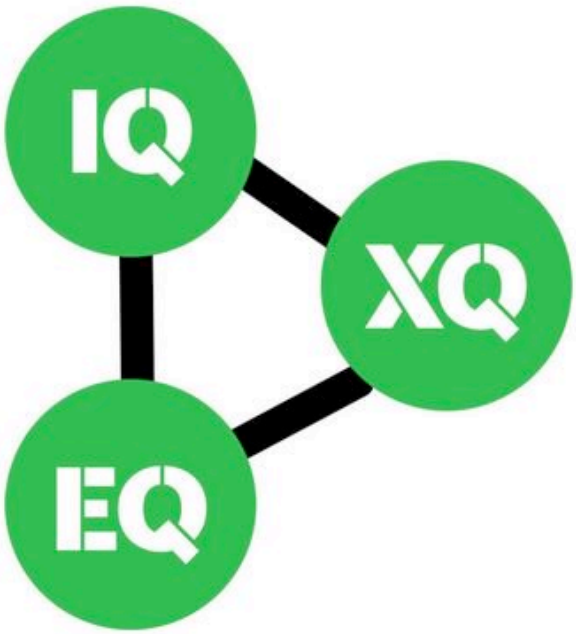
- **Personalized Learning** at the core of instructional practice in which students will become increasingly engaged in the design of their learning process.
- Development of the **Habits of Mind** to help students build the mental dispositions necessary to engage in complex, messy problems which have no clear solution.
- Demonstration of learning through authentic application of knowledge and skill in a fresh **contemporary curriculum**.
- Development of the social-emotional well-being of our students (**Restorative Practices**).

VHS' Theory of Action: By building an effective personalized learning environment which allows students to explore their passions, make ethical choices, and enact solutions to authentic problems that will benefit themselves as well as their community, then 100% of VHS students will transition into a college and/or career by 2021.

Appendix B: What Is XQ?

What is XQ: The Super School Project?

XQ: The Super School Project is an open-call to America's students, teachers, administrators, civic leaders, businesses, entrepreneurs, artists and designers to meet the challenge of preparing our students for the future by dreaming, designing and creating the new American high school. The American high school model has remained unchanged for more than 100 years. Designed for a world and an economy that look nothing like today, high school is failing to prepare our students for the jobs of the future. There is a crucial link between socio-economic mobility and education, and the extent to which we as a country are failing to prepare our students for the future limits our ability to grow as a country and as a society. Our kids need us. We must harness the ingenuity and creativity in communities and towns across America to rethink and create a new approach to high school that gives every student the tools and opportunity to succeed. XQ will show what is possible and will help spark a movement for individuals across the country to get behind.



WHAT IS XQ?

IQ: How We Think

It measures your cognitive capabilities.

EQ: How We Learn In The World

It measures the ability to connect, collaborate, and learn from others.

IQ + EQ + That Certain Something

XQ is the agile and flexible intelligence that prepares students for a more connected world, a rapidly changing future, and a lifetime of learning.

Appendix C: Vista High's Rationale for Change

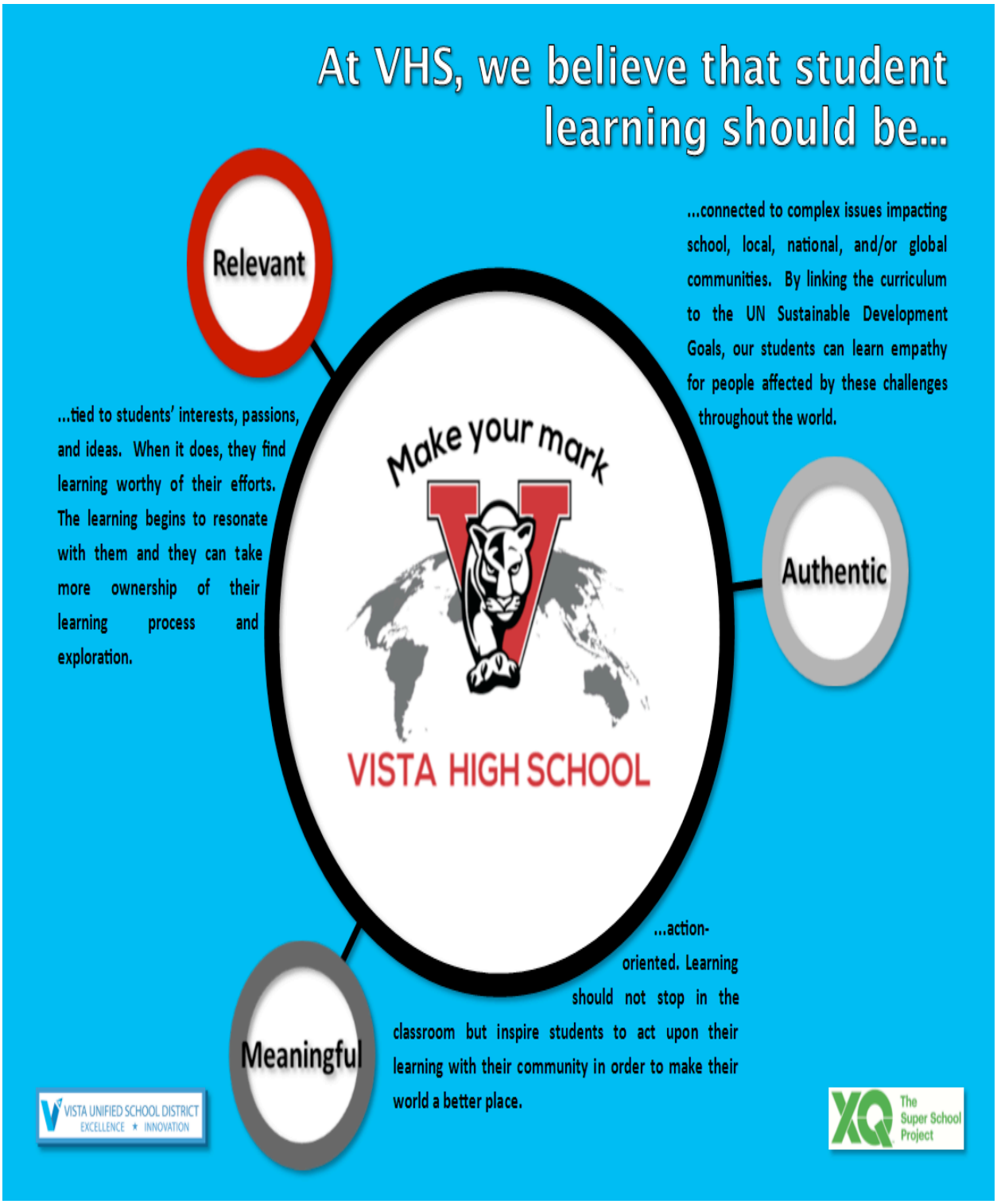
Current educational structure is based on the 1892 "Committee of Ten" recommendations focused on providing every student the same educational experience. It was from this work that schools developed the segregation of disciplines primarily focused around English, math, history, chemistry, and physics. Additionally, this Committee saw that high school was a separating ground for the few elite ready for college and the masses who would work as an industrialized labor force. We believe that we must stop the perpetuation of this antiquated structure.

Recent standards movements furthered conformity by encouraging teachers to look at every student in the same way. Examination of many standards documents provide little evidence of developing critical and creative thinking, problem solving, metacognition, or the ability to use knowledge and skill in a flexible manner. This is especially important as the types of jobs that will be available in the future are drastically changing due to a variety of factors. According to the 2016 White House Economic Report to the President (see Figure 1 below), of the currently existing jobs earn less than $20 per hour, 83% will be lost in the near future due to automation. Additionally, today's high school teachers and university professors lament that students do not have desired skills (see Figure 2 below) to succeed in the types of jobs that will be available. Business owners now need their employees to generate new ideas, analyze and evaluate information to help the business 'stay ahead of the curve,' and collaborate with people on a global scale rather than follow rote instructions. Research from the OECD predicts that 65% of today's elementary age students will be employed in careers that do not yet exist based on current trends in the workforce.

Based on this information, we can no longer prepare students for a specified future job. Instead, we must prepare our students to learn essential skills that will help them navigate an ever evolving future. Therefore, intentional decisions must be made to ensure our students learn how to drive their learning, engage in critical and creative thinking, and solve relevant, authentic, and meaningful problems within an interconnected and interdependent global society.

- What are we doing to intentionally model and teach students how to learn these desired skills as they explore their passions and interests?
- How do we assess students in their ability to use these skills?
- How do we provide concise and actionable feedback to help them develop these skills from their efforts?
- How do we help students apply their learning to relevant, authentic, and relevant problems?
- How do we help students reflect upon and refine their abilities from their efforts?
- How do we help students become self-directed learners?

Appendix D: View of Student Learning at Vista High



Appendix E: Habits of Mind

(After Arthur L. Costa and Bena Kallick, Habits of Mind: A Developmental Series, Copyright © 2000)

The 16 Habits of Mind identified by Costa and Kallick include:

1. **Persisting:** Efficacious people stick to a task until it is completed. They don't give up easily. They are able to analyze a problem, and they develop a system, structure, or strategy to attack it. They have a repertoire of alternative strategies for problem solving, and they employ a whole range of these strategies.

2. **Thinking and communicating with clarity and precision**: People with this Habit of Mind strive to communicate accurately in both written and oral form, taking care to use precise language; defining terms; and using correct names, labels, and analogies. They strive to avoid overgeneralizations, deletions, and distortions. Instead, they support their statements with explanations, comparisons, quantification, and evidence.

3. **Managing impulsivity**: Effective problem solvers are deliberate: they think before they act. They intentionally establish a vision of a product, an action plan, a goal, or a destination before they begin. They strive to clarify and understand directions, they develop a strategy for approaching a problem, and they withhold immediate value judgments about an idea before they fully understand it.

4. **Gathering data through all senses**: The more regions of the brain that store data about a subject, the more interconnection there is. This redundancy means students will have more opportunities to pull up all those related bits of data from their multiple storage areas in response to a single cue. This cross-referencing of data strengthens the data into something that's learned rather than just memorized (Willis, 2007).

5. **Listening with understanding and empathy**: People who demonstrate this Habit of Mind are able to see through the diverse perspectives of others. They gently attend to another person, demonstrating their understanding of and empathy for an idea or a feeling by paraphrasing it accurately, building upon it, clarifying it, or giving an example of it.

6. **Creating, imagining, innovating**: Creative human beings try to conceive solutions to problems differently, examining alternative possibilities from many angles. They tend to project themselves into different roles using analogies, starting with a vision and working backward, and imagining they are the object being considered. Creative people take risks and frequently push the boundaries of their perceived limits (Perkins, 1991). They are intrinsically rather than extrinsically motivated, working on the task because of the aesthetic challenge rather than the material rewards.

7. **Thinking flexibly**: People who demonstrate this Habit of Mind have the capacity to change their minds as they receive additional data. They engage in multiple and simultaneous outcomes and activities, and they draw upon a repertoire of problem-solving strategies. They also practice style flexibility, knowing when thinking broadly and globally is appropriate and when a situation requires detailed precision. They create and seek novel approaches, and they have a well-developed sense of humor. They envision a range of consequences.

8. **Responding with wonderment and awe:** We want students to be curious, to commune with the world around them, to reflect on the changing formations of a cloud, to feel charmed by the opening of a bud, to sense the logical simplicity of mathematical order. We want students to feel compelled, enthusiastic, and passionate about learning, inquiring, and mastering (Costa, 2007).

9. **Thinking about thinking (metacognition):** The major components of metacognition are, when confronted with a problem to solve, developing a plan of action, maintaining that plan in mind over a period of time, and then reflecting on and evaluating the plan upon its completion.

10. **Taking responsible risks**: Students with this Habit of Mind will learn how to take intellectual as well as physical risks. Students who are capable of being different, going against the grain of common thinking, and thinking of new ideas (testing them with peers and teachers) are more likely to be successful in an age of innovation and uncertainty.

11. **Striving for accuracy**: These people take pride in their work, and they desire accuracy as they take time to check over their work.

12. **Finding humor**: We want students to acquire the habit of finding humor in a positive sense so they can distinguish between those situations of human frailty and fallibility that require compassion and those that truly are funny (Dyer, 1997).

13. **Questioning and posing problems**: Effective problem solvers know how to ask questions to fill in the gaps between what they know and what they don't know. Effective questioners are inclined to ask a range of questions.

14. **Thinking interdependently**: Collaborative humans realize that all of us together are more powerful, intellectually or physically, than any one individual. Problem solving has become so complex that no one person can go it alone. No one has access to all the data needed to make critical decisions; no one person can consider as many alternatives as several people.

15. **Applying past knowledge to new situations**: People with this Habit of Mind call upon their store of knowledge and experience as sources of data to support, theories to explain, or processes to solve each new challenge. They are able to abstract meaning from one experience, carry it forth, and apply it in a novel situation.

16. **Remaining open to continuous learning**: Our wish is for creative students and people who are eager to learn. This Habit of Mind includes the humility of knowing that we don't know. This is the highest form of thinking we will ever learn.

Habits of Mind Attend To:

- Value: Choosing to employ a pattern of intellectual behaviors rather than other, less productive patterns.
- Inclination: Feeling the tendency toward employing a pattern of intellectual behaviors.
- Sensitivity: Perceiving opportunities for, and appropriateness of employing the pattern of behavior.
- Capability: Possessing the basic skills and capacities to carry through with the behaviors.
- Commitment: Constantly striving to reflect on and improve performance of the pattern of intellectual behavior.

Appendix F: Skills Desired by Employers

Figure 1

Predicted Job Loss Due to Automation

Figure 2

Top 10 skills desired by employers, teachers, and professors:

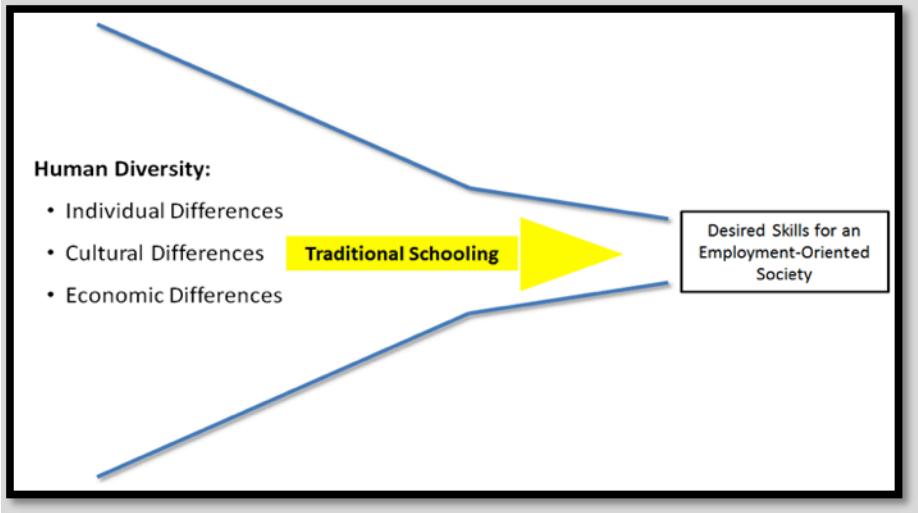
in 2020

1. Complex Problem Solving
2. Critical Thinking
3. Creativity
4. People Management
5. Coordinating with Others
6. Emotional Intelligence
7. Judgment and Decision Making
8. Service Orientation
9. Negotiation
10. Cognitive Flexibility

From: https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/blog/2016/02/22/2016-economic-report-president
From https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2016/01/the-10-skills-you-need-to-thrive-in-the-fourth-industrial-revolution/
Retrieved 3/11/18

The Traditional Model of Schooling

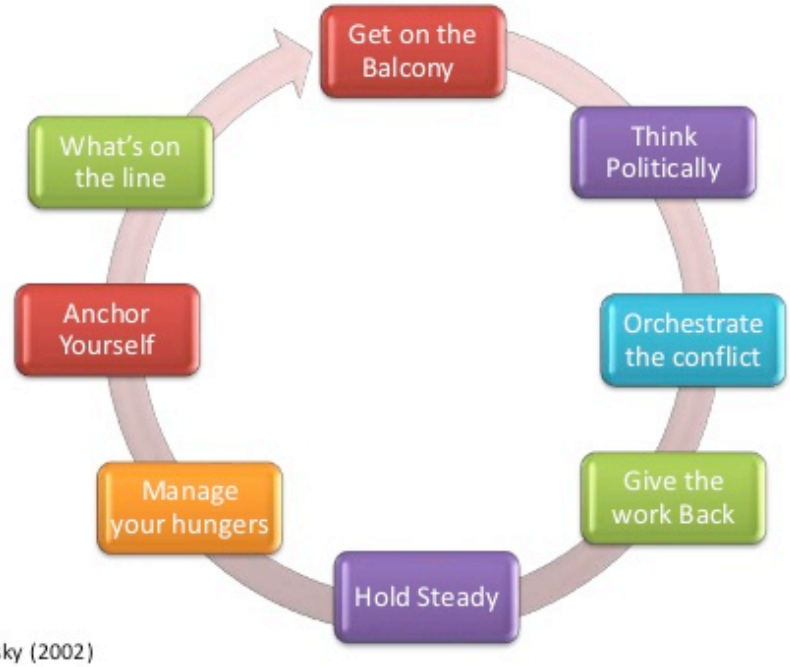
In a traditional model of school, students have always been told what knowledge and skills they must learn, how to demonstrate they have learned the knowledge and skills, and when this learning must be accomplished. Students' strengths are not considered and struggling students continue to struggle throughout their educational experience. Everyone is treated the same. Everyone is expected to conform and be obedient.


Human Diversity:
• Individual Differences
• Cultural Differences
• Economic Differences
Traditional Schooling
Desired Skills for an Employment-Oriented Society

Appendix G: *Demography Is not Destiny* Framework

Framework Components	**Essential Questions**
Belief Gap	What hindering assumptions do we hold about students' and adults' abilities to learn, improve, and achieve?
Instructional Gap	To what degree is teaching and learning the organizational focus and what competes with it?
Opportunity and Capacity Gap	What are the areas of (mis) alignment between espoused and enacted policies and strategies?
Innovation and Support Gap	What are the levers of reform and what is the current level of performance capacity to address the problem of practice?
Outcome and Accountability Gap	To what degree is there an organizational culture of shared ownership for the problem of practice?

Appendix H: ***Adaptive Leadership Framework***



Source: Heifetz & Linsky (2002)

Appendix I: Pedagogical Practices Using the Universal Design for Learning Checklist

Do you create a learning environment in which …

Ideas and information are represented in multiple ways?

You clearly describe the content of your lessons and your expectations of students.
You present information in multiple formats (e.g., lecture, text, graphics, audio, video, hands-on exercises).
You begin each lesson with an outline or overview of what will be covered.
You summarize key points throughout the lesson and tie these points to background knowledge and larger concepts.
You post electronic equivalents of paper handouts and reading assignments in alternative formats, such as audio and video.
You employ technologies that enhance learning.

Students can express their comprehension in multiple ways?

You encourage students to demonstrate knowledge and skills in ways other than traditional tests and examinations (e.g., written essays, projects, portfolios, journals).
Your assessments measure students' achievement of the learning objectives.
You incorporate technologies that facilitate class communication and participation.
You allow assignments to be submitted electronically.

Students have multiple opportunities for engagement?

You express enthusiasm for each topic you teach, and you explain its real-world significance.
You challenge students with meaningful assignments.
You create a class climate in which student diversity is respected.
You give prompt and instructive feedback on assignments.
You supplement lecture and reading assignments with visual aids (e.g., photographs, videos, diagrams, interactive simulations).

From University of Vermont (n.d.)

Appendix J: Student Shadowing Form

Student Group_____ Grade Level _____ Date _____

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">[Step 1] Collaboration</th><th>[Step 2] Descriptive Evidence</th></tr>
<tr><td>Time</td><td>Student Activity:</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Academic Speaking

Student shadowee speaking to….

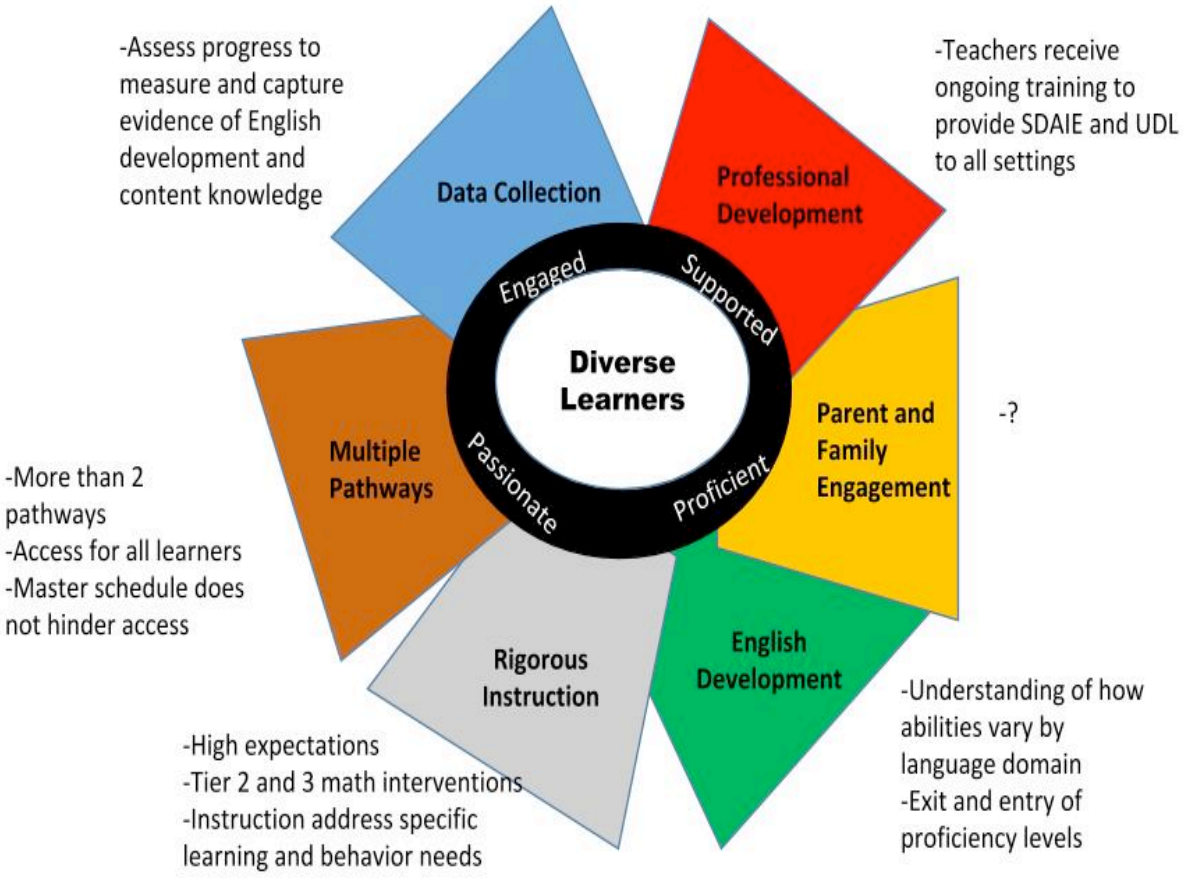
• Another student
• Teacher
• Small group
• Whole class</td><td>Academic Listening

Student shadowee listening mostly to…
• Another student
• Teacher
• Small group
• Whole class
• Audio/video</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Teacher speaking to…

• Student shadowee
• Another student
• A small group
• Whole class</td><td>• 1 way (i.e. lecture)
• 2 way (i.e. conversation)</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Other speaking
• Another student
• Audio/video</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Independent Work (No Speaking/Listening)

• Engaged in other academic task:
• Engaged in non-academic task (per teacher directions)
• Off task</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">[Step 3] Questions/Wondering/Comments:</td></tr>
</table>

Appendix K: Version 1.0 of Framework for VHS



Appendix L Students' "Backpack": Factors That Have Influence Over Students' Academic Achievement

- Socioeconomic status
- Limited English proficiency
- Disability
- Trauma
- Chronic Stress
- Student Competence
- Student Confidence
- Student Comprehension
- Reading Fluency
- Previous Student Attainment
- Interrupted or Uninterrupted Schooling
- Health
- Physical Development
- Nutrition Motivation
- Support from Home

Appendix M: Learning Tasks Administered to 9th and 10th Grade Students at Vista High

Types of Tasks	Supports/Scaffolds Students Received to Complete the Task	Skills Needed to Complete the Task.
Students are to think of 5 suggestions for making the story better (English 9).	Teacher provided exemplars of introduction, exposition, and rising action.	Organizing ideas effectively Gathering and using evidence Constructing a reasoned argument/response Noticing various text structures Comprehension
Write a rap song to compare and contrast plant and animal cells and identify structure of six membrane cells.	Students were allowed to refer to their notes/textbooks. Paraprofessional and teacher also provided support.	Understanding the basic structure of a rap song Vocabulary Rhyming Understanding the differences between and similarities of types of cells Knowledge about different types of cells

Design a juvenile detention center. Students have one week to design a model to present to the board of directors. Students must convince the board that their system is the best one to be funded by providing information about the programs available, how they will spend the yearly budget and evidence that this model will be a success. Students also must write a persuasive argument to the board.	Packet instructions	Architecture Purpose of juvenile detention centers Processing a variety of information Evaluating the costs and benefits Communication skills: presenting Word choice Development of logical argument Cohesive summary
Students were assigned a United Nations Sustainable Development Goal from the website http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/. **Students must read all the information about the goal, write a summary, identify five facts, three goal targets, and one or two challenges to reaching the goal.**	One-to-one laptops Partner	

Appendix N: XQ ELL/Special Ed Task Force Agenda

Vista High School
XQ ELL/Special Ed Task Force
Friday, December 19, 2017

Time	Min.	Activity	Materials
12:30	10	**Team Check-In** • Name • Title • On a scale of 1-10, how are you feeling today?	None
12:40	5	**Key Tasks for Today's Meeting** • Identify supports diverse learners (SwDs/ELLs) will need to meet the expectations of a VUSD graduate • Develop ed specialist and general educator profile ○ Generate list of professional experiences/supports needed	Agenda

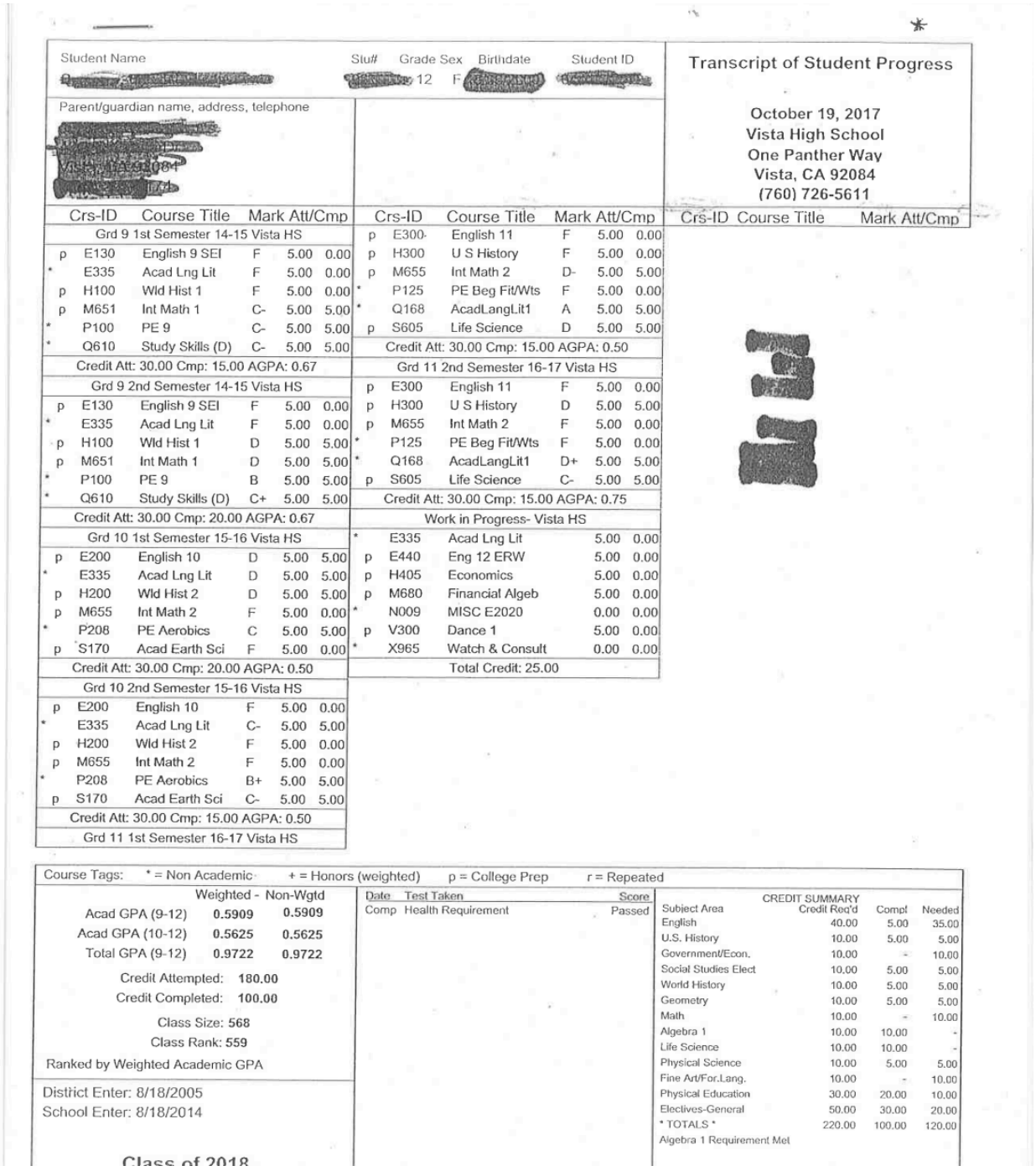
12:45	15	**Connecting Our Learning**
		• Overview of Meeting #4
		• Our Stakes in the Ground
		  ○ Aspirations - - Demography Isn't Destiny (DID) Framework
		  ○ Instructional Core
		• Equity Framework for Personalized Learning
			Demography Isn't Destiny
			
			Aspirations
			
			Instructional Core
			
			Equity in PL

1:00	40	**Supporting Diverse Learners**
		• Community Agreements
		• Examining IEP
		  ○ Is he/she on path of meeting expectations of graduate profile?
		  ○ What supports are needed in general ed for students to continue to access content area standards?
		  ▪ What is in place at VHS? The district?
			VUSD Graduate Profile
			
			VHS IEP
			
			Chart Paper/Dots

1:35	35	**Teacher Profile** • What are the high leverage practices teachers need to support diverse learners? • What is the role of the ed specialist/general education teachers/paraeducators? ○ Mindsets? Knowledge	CEC High Leverage Practices (link only)

		○ Pedagogical practices? Skills? ○ What types of strategies should they have in their toolbox to reinforce a focus on learning and growth?	
2:10	10	**Next Steps**	None
2:20	10	**Feedback Survey**	Google Survey (link only)

Appendix O: Redacted IEP of 12th Grade Vista High Student



Student Name [redacted] Stu# [redacted] Grade 12 Sex F Birthdate [redacted] Student ID [redacted]

Parent/guardian name, address, telephone [redacted]

Transcript of Student Progress

October 19, 2017
Vista High School
One Panther Way
Vista, CA 92084
(760) 726-5611

	Crs-ID	Course Title	Mark	Att	Cmp
Grd 9 1st Semester 14-15 Vista HS					
p	E130	English 9 SEI	F	5.00	0.00
*	E335	Acad Lng Lit	F	5.00	0.00
p	H100	Wld Hist 1	F	5.00	0.00
p	M651	Int Math 1	C-	5.00	5.00
*	P100	PE 9	C-	5.00	5.00
*	Q610	Study Skills (D)	C-	5.00	5.00
Credit Att: 30.00 Cmp: 15.00 AGPA: 0.67					
Grd 9 2nd Semester 14-15 Vista HS					
p	E130	English 9 SEI	F	5.00	0.00
*	E335	Acad Lng Lit	F	5.00	0.00
p	H100	Wld Hist 1	D	5.00	5.00
p	M651	Int Math 1	D	5.00	5.00
*	P100	PE 9	B	5.00	5.00
*	Q610	Study Skills (D)	C+	5.00	5.00
Credit Att: 30.00 Cmp: 20.00 AGPA: 0.67					
Grd 10 1st Semester 15-16 Vista HS					
p	E200	English 10	D	5.00	5.00
*	E335	Acad Lng Lit	D	5.00	5.00
p	H200	Wld Hist 2	D	5.00	5.00
p	M655	Int Math 2	F	5.00	0.00
*	P208	PE Aerobics	C	5.00	5.00
p	S170	Acad Earth Sci	F	5.00	0.00
Credit Att: 30.00 Cmp: 20.00 AGPA: 0.50					
Grd 10 2nd Semester 15-16 Vista HS					
p	E200	English 10	F	5.00	0.00
*	E335	Acad Lng Lit	C-	5.00	5.00
p	H200	Wld Hist 2	F	5.00	0.00
p	M655	Int Math 2	F	5.00	0.00
*	P208	PE Aerobics	B+	5.00	5.00
p	S170	Acad Earth Sci	C-	5.00	5.00
Credit Att: 30.00 Cmp: 15.00 AGPA: 0.50					
Grd 11 1st Semester 16-17 Vista HS					
p	E300	English 11	F	5.00	0.00
p	H300	U S History	F	5.00	0.00
p	M655	Int Math 2	D-	5.00	5.00
*	P125	PE Beg Fit/Wts	F	5.00	0.00
*	Q168	AcadLangLit1	A	5.00	5.00
p	S605	Life Science	D	5.00	5.00
Credit Att: 30.00 Cmp: 15.00 AGPA: 0.50					
Grd 11 2nd Semester 16-17 Vista HS					
p	E300	English 11	F	5.00	0.00
p	H300	U S History	D	5.00	5.00
p	M655	Int Math 2	F	5.00	0.00
*	P125	PE Beg Fit/Wts	F	5.00	0.00
*	Q168	AcadLangLit1	D+	5.00	5.00
p	S605	Life Science	C-	5.00	5.00
Credit Att: 30.00 Cmp: 15.00 AGPA: 0.75					
Work in Progress- Vista HS					
*	E335	Acad Lng Lit		5.00	0.00
p	E440	Eng 12 ERW		5.00	0.00
p	H405	Economics		5.00	0.00
p	M680	Financial Algeb		5.00	0.00
*	N009	MISC E2020		0.00	0.00
p	V300	Dance 1		5.00	0.00
*	X965	Watch & Consult		0.00	0.00
Total Credit: 25.00					

Crs-ID	Course Title	Mark	Att/Cmp
[redacted]			

Course Tags: * = Non Academic + = Honors (weighted) p = College Prep r = Repeated

	Weighted	Non-Wgtd
Acad GPA (9-12)	0.5909	0.5909
Acad GPA (10-12)	0.5625	0.5625
Total GPA (9-12)	0.9722	0.9722

Credit Attempted: 180.00
Credit Completed: 100.00

Class Size: 568
Class Rank: 559

Ranked by Weighted Academic GPA

District Enter: 8/18/2005
School Enter: 8/18/2014

Class of 2018

Date	Test Taken	Score
Comp	Health Requirement	Passed

CREDIT SUMMARY

Subject Area	Credit Req'd	Compl	Needed
English	40.00	5.00	35.00
U.S. History	10.00	5.00	5.00
Government/Econ.	10.00	-	10.00
Social Studies Elect	10.00	5.00	5.00
World History	10.00	5.00	5.00
Geometry	10.00	5.00	5.00
Math	10.00	-	10.00
Algebra 1	10.00	10.00	-
Life Science	10.00	10.00	-
Physical Science	10.00	5.00	5.00
Fine Art/For.Lang.	10.00	-	10.00
Physical Education	30.00	20.00	10.00
Electives-General	50.00	30.00	20.00
* TOTALS *	220.00	100.00	120.00

Algebra 1 Requirement Met

Appendix P: XQ Agenda

Vista High School

XQ ELL/Special Ed Task Force

Wednesday, March 21, 2018

1 0:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Agenda Items	Presenter	Essential Questions	Action Steps
Welcome	Dr. Matt Doyle	• What are we trying to accomplish? What is our "why"? • What is the central purpose of Year 1 around transformation?	
Power BI	Steve Davies	• Q & A about the pilot	
"Leveling Up"	Rebecca Nobriga and Alexis Morgan	• Key findings/insights from previous sessions ○ Improvement Science • Where are we now? • Where do we need to go? Looking ahead	
Impact of learning disabilities at the secondary level	Rebecca Nobriga and Alexis Morgan	• What are our current general education classrooms like? How do they impede or facilitate the learning for students with learning and attention issues?	
Developing a classroom ecology that supports learning disabilities	Alexis Morgan	• What do students with learning and attention issues need to be successful? • How do we initiate a process of change across classrooms?	
Next Steps	Rebecca Nobriga		
Plus/Delta	Alexis Morgan	Discuss what worked well about this meeting and what we would like to change next time. Plus: Delta:	

Appendix Q: Teacher Work Group Protocol
***From the d.School, 2009**

POINT OF VIEW

This activity is designed to teach the students the concept of a user need statement. In design thinking, user need statements are generated from interviews.

1. Introduce the concept of Point of View with your students. Tell the students here are the activities to create a point of view statement:

Look at specific needs of a user

Think about what might meet the users' need.

And fill in the following statement: user + need + insight

For example, the User Need statement is , "I am seven-years-old and I hate doing homework because it takes me forever to finish."

2. Now that you've identified a user need, create a Point-of-View question to answer that need.

For example, for "I am seven-years-old and I hate doing homework because it takes me forever to finish,"the Point of View Question might be, "How might we create a way for this student to do his or her homework more efficiently?

One way to know if you have created an effective Point of View Question is to see if it can be answered in a multitude of ways.

In design projects, this can be done through the next step ideation

My "How Might We…." Statements

How might we…

How might we…

How might we…