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Using Cultural Framing Exemplars from the Social Sciences to Inform Teaching about Change Agent Leadership in University-Based School Administrator Preparation Programs

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ABSTRACT

Education professors tasked with preparing aspiring K-12 administrative and instructional leaders enrolled in university-based graduate education programs to be able to effectively navigate the myriad difficulties associated with leading successful turnaround school improvement in K-12 school districts is a daunting pedagogical design challenge. Professors and instructors working in these kinds of university-based educational leadership programs can significantly expand and enhance their instructional toolkits by tapping into the power of employing *cultural framing exemplars* as a means to help teach aspiring administrative leaders about processes and practices of effective change agent leadership in K-12 schools and school district organizations. This article first describes the use of cultural framing exemplars as a creative instructional tool in graduate teaching. The article then profiles three Cultural Framing Exemplars selected from the social sciences and discusses key cultural attributes of these cultures that can be gleaned from an examination of each culture's community-based organizational practices and cultural traditions. Finally, the article includes a detailed discussion highlighting the practical applicability of key change agent leadership insights and strategies derived from the three Social Science Cultural Framing Exemplars for informing the teaching and practice of *change agent leadership in K-12 school organizations* within the areas of: 1) distributive leadership capacity–building; 2) utilizing multileveled analyses of students' learning performance data to inform instructional improvement; 3) involving teaching personnel directly in day-to-day school leadership decision making and in creatively designing their own professional/staff development; and 4) revitalizing and expanding instructional program offerings to enhance student learning success.

Keywords: cultural framing exemplars, change agent leader preparation, instructional improvement and collaborative decision making in K-12 school districts.

INTRODUCTION

Acquiring practical, real-world implementable insights and understandings regarding the processes and practices of conducting effective *change agent leadership* in K-12 school

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organizations is one of the difficult learning challenges faced by neophyte school leaders. This article presents and discusses the pedagogic concept of *framing exemplars* that professors working in university-based school administrator preparation programs can use as an instructional tool to help teach graduate students about processes and practices of change agent leadership in K-12 schools and school districts. Teaching about the difficulties associated with striving to engage in effective change agent leadership in school organizations is a topic that can seem very abstract and unapproachable to both instructors and graduate students. As such, this topic is one that can be made more accessible through: 1) being appropriately grounded in an intensive examination of the multifaceted challenges associated with enacting positive change agent leadership in human-interactive teaching and learning organizations; and 2) identifying practical, real-world implementation strategies that instructional leaders working in a variety of elementary and secondary campus settings in K-12 school districts can utilize to motivate and empower their teachers and related instructional staff to work collaboratively to create meaningful teaching and learning improvement opportunities for their students.

During a career of over thirty five years as a university-based professor of educational leadership in the southwestern United States, I have designed and taught dozens of master's and doctoral graduate courses in educational leadership graduate programs aimed at properly preparing educators interested in pursuing a variety of administrative and instructional leadership roles (such as: campus-level principal, assistant principal, instructional coach, and grade-level team leader; and district-level superintendent, associate superintendent, program director, and the like) in K-12 schools and school districts. Through a long process of trial and error and testing what kinds of teaching strategies "actually work" for students in graduate classroom environments, I developed and refined over the years the pedagogic concept of *framing exemplars* (Claudet, 2015) and how framing exemplars can be used as an instructional tool to assist graduate students in understanding and gaining real-world insights on the challenges and opportunities associated with enacting effective change agent leadership in K-12 schools and school districts. In this article, I expand on this pedagogic approach to teaching about change agent leadership through introducing the concept and applied use of *cultural framing exemplars* as a focused "interactive communal culture–building" instructional tool that university-based instructors and professors can incorporate into their graduate teaching toolkits. Most importantly, I have found that the intentional applied use of *cultural framing exemplars* as a pedagogic way of thinking in university-based school administrator preparation programs can be a very useful instructional approach for helping graduate students in educational leadership programs—i.e., career educators who are interested in learning about the realities associated with enacting impactful change agent leadership in diverse, multistakeholder school organization settings—gain important insights and practical strategies to directly inform how these aspiring instructional leaders can: 1) energize teachers' collaborative teaching and learning improvement efforts in dealing with challenging student-learning problems; and 2) nurture positive collaborative teaming cultures within their elementary and secondary schools and K-12 school district communities.

CULTURAL FRAMING EXEMPLARS

This section presents three selected *cultural framing exemplars* grounded in the broad social sciences (i.e., cultural anthropology, cultural studies, ethnography, etc.) that I have used successfully over the years in my own graduate teaching in educational leadership to teach

about the processes and practice of effective "change agent leadership" in school organizations. For each of the three cultural framing exemplars presented, I provide a succinct overview of the history and distinctive interactive dynamics of the generations of people living and working within the highlighted societal culture followed by a presentation and discussion of "key attributes" of each societal culture that offer insights for informing the practice of effective change agent leadership in community-based school organizations.

Social Sciences Cultural Framing Exemplar No 1: *Japanese Rice Farming Culture*

The practice of rice farming in small villages has been a bedrock of the cultural way of life in Japan for millennia. As rice is a staple of the Japanese diet, the group life of Japanese villagers traditionally centers around the goals and challenges associated with managing their village's rice fields. Indeed, the grinding hard work of growing rice as the bedrock of the Japanese diet has served over countless generations to shape the Japanese national character. In Japanese village life, collaboration among community members and subservience to the needs of the village as a whole is of utmost importance. To the Japanese, *relationship to the group* is of overwhelming importance in everything they do. There is a famous Japanese saying: "If a nail sticks out, you hammer it down." This saying reflects the importance the Japanese place on achieving *collective unanimity and consensus*. In Japanese society, willful individualism is not valued. *Discussion—followed by group action*—is how all major jobs get done. Thus, all members of traditional Japanese rice farming villages (men and women working equally side by side as well as young children helping in small ways guided by their parents) work together as a collaborative group in multiple "village meetings" to discuss and plan each year's rice planting and cultivation tasks and to take group action in the fields to ensure that all the necessary steps associated with successful rice cultivation proceeds in the most efficient and effective manner through each rice planting and harvesting season. For the Japanese, who value group collaboration and group endeavor above any form of individual activity, the overarching fundamental principle defining Japanese cultural life could be summarized as: *Greater productivity through group endeavor*.

These distinctive foci existing for generations in Japanese cultural life stressing the importance of "relationship to the group" and an emphasis on "group productivity" have carried over readily into modern life as many Japanese pivoted in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries to transitioning to becoming workers in Japanese manufacturing industries. One noteworthy example of this is how many traditional Japanese farm workers seeking new forms of employment offering higher wages have actively sought and obtained jobs in the Japanese auto industry, an industry which has become a model for the world of industrial efficiency and production quality. Indeed, *strong group loyalties* on Japanese industrial shop floors (such as in Japanese Honda car production factories) can be seen to be a key ingredient behind much of Japan's industrial success in recent years. In Japanese manufacturing companies, such as car production facilities, individual workers bond together early-on in "assigned worker groups" and work together as "productivity teams" in incremental steps to ensure "continuous improvement" in the group's productivity and group's performance over time. In fact, modern Japanese manufacturing supervisors and workers collectively refer to this centuries-old approach to "communal work productivity" in modern Japanese industries as the art and practice of *kaizen*: i.e., "greater team productivity through continuous incremental improvement". The art and practice of *kaizen*, as understood by Japanese factory employees and supervisors working in Japan's modern production facilities, is historically grounded in

Japan's collaborative work culture and has evolved over multiple generations through the Japanese people's collective lifetimes of communal work caring for their rice fields in small villages throughout Japan. In addition to the primacy of "group membership" and "group loyalty" which define how the typical Japanese industrial worker approaches his/her job, supervisor-supervisee relationships in Japanese manufacturing companies in general are also much more *paternal/mentor-like*, not just work-related. In Japanese companies, *socialization between and among workers and supervisors* is an integral part of the overall supervisory relationship. This blurring of the lines between "work time" and "off-work time" through blending regular worker job activities with evening socialization events (such as group dinners and similar kinds of informal interactive activities), during which workers can relax together with their supervisors and build strong bonds centered around group camaraderie and company loyalty, helps explain the strong sense of commitment Japanese workers feel for the companies that employ them and the "industrial production groups" they are associated with. Indeed, in modern Japanese society, many Japanese workers stay employed for life with the same company (i.e., their "company family"). This centuries-old "group culture" way of life in Japan originally developed to ensure successful rice farming practices in Japanese villages—defined by a core emphasis on the importance of each individual community member's *relationship to the communal group* and the supremacy of arriving at *collective unanimity and consensus* as a prerequisite for ensuring group success—has continued to endure into modern Japanese life. These central "motivating cultural forces" of group loyalty and group decision-making continue to underpin and drive how the Japanese, *working together in groups* in both their industrial undertakings and within their community lives in general, achieve the twin goals of ensuring optimal production efficiency and quality effectiveness in all that they do.

Key Attributes of Japanese Rice Farming Culture:

Two key attributes of Japanese Rice Farming Culture, and the broader Japanese cultural way of organizational life, stand out as distinctive markers of Japanese society: 1) the primacy of group relationships (i.e., group loyalty) over individuation; and 2) commitment to shared decision making in both civic/communal and work/industrial productivity–related organizations. Notably, the Japanese think of "organizational effectiveness and improvement" in all of their various civic/communal and industrial work–related activities as involving the practice of *kaizen*—that is, a patient day-by-day, week-by-week *continuous process of discovery that never ends* (taking small steps that make the functioning of the organization increasingly a little better all the time, over time). Americans, by contrast, "think" of organizational effectiveness and improvement in terms of the "silver bullet" perspective. People in many western cultures—such as the American culture in the United States, for example—typically approach a problem of organizational change and improvement (i.e., an organizational effectiveness problem) from the "silver bullet" perspective. Americans typically look for a breakthrough invention—a "silver bullet" that represents a whole new approach to a problem. Americans work very strenuously in short bursts of activity that we hope will "turn things around" quickly—so Americans think in terms of programs, projects, and task forces. And like a ball game, Americans want a clear "beginning" to the process of change and an equally clear "final ending" signal that leaves us the unambiguous winners. In the American education system, for example, Americans typically approach school reform itself (i.e., another organizational effectiveness problem) from this same "silver bullet" perspective. Americans look for something that can be "put in place" and left to "run on its own" while we move on to other interests. By contrast, the Japanese "think" of organizational effectiveness and improvement in a completely different

way, as *kaizen*—the principle of continuous incremental improvement over time. Thus, a key element of kaizen involves the "differences" between American (Western) and Japanese perceptions of job functions. In the West, employees are generally seen as having two types of duties: *Maintenance*—keeping things running and doing the work; and *Innovation*—coming up with bold new ways of doing things, such as a new technology, new systems, etc. However, in organizations in the West, a *relatively few specialists* are typically given the task of "innovating", while most employees are expected to devote their energies almost exclusively to "maintenance" activities. The Japanese view of job functions is much different. The Japanese believe that employees also have two job functions, but they are somewhat different functions: *Maintenance*—as in the West, this is doing the work; and *Improvement*—making the process better. Thus, there are really two "kinds" of organizational improvement: "innovation" and "kaizen". Rather than some bold new way of doing things developed by a few specialists (such as a new technology), kaizen is the ongoing pursuit of improvement *by every employee*. It is this distinctive notion of *kaizen*—i.e., *continuous improvement by every employee* versus the notion of *specialist-driven innovation* that is the key difference between Japanese and Western conceptions of organizational effectiveness and improvement. Ultimately, the Japanese people's embrace of kaizen as an overarching organizational principle to guide all of their civic/communal and industrial work–related endeavors permeates their approach to productivity and defines their overall cultural way of life.

Social Sciences Cultural Framing Exemplar No 2: *Acadian Communal Culture*

The history of the French Acadian people in North America is one of incredible grit, determination, and resilience in the face of immense hardship. In the mid 1750s in the Nova Scotia region of northwestern America, war between the British and the French was imminent. To prevent the French Acadians from allying with the French forces, the British expelled the French Acadians from Nova Scotia. Deported from Nova Scotia by the British in 1755, the French Acadians were forced *en masse* to board ships and sail south down the Atlantic seaboard, around the tip of the Florida peninsula, and across the Gulf of Mexico to eventually find a new homeland in the marshes and bayous of south Louisiana. These Acadians' constant struggles to cope with the hardships of everyday survival in the harsh, semi-tropical environments of the unfamiliar wildland marshes and bayous of their new South Louisiana habitat, along with the attendant challenges of having to obtain sustenance through foraging for wild game in dense swamps and marshes and fishing in muddy bayous, molded these new "South Louisiana French Acadian immigrants" into a tough people with a fiercely loyal and team-oriented communal culture. The need to survive in difficult circumstances and an unfamiliar environment helped to shape the distinctive communal culture of these South Louisiana French Acadians in unique ways. Notably, these French immigrants were compelled early-on as a people to quickly respond to the challenges of their new South Louisiana surroundings through: 1) adapting hunting and fishing techniques gleaned from indigenous Indian tribes in the region; 2) learning how to creatively extend and maximize available limited resources; and 3) developing and refining distinctive cultural mores that focused on the ingenious use of collaborative teaming methods as a means to extend the quality of life for their families and enhance the overall prospects for these French Acadians—as a collective group—of surviving and flourishing in their new homeland. The French Acadians started with the notion of "surviving" and turned that into "flourishing". Their intense desire and commitment to "surviving" enabled the French Acadians, as a tight-knit communal people, to eventually "flourish" in their new South Louisiana environment through learning how to leverage their

available natural surroundings and resources in creative ways to benefit their entire community. The South Louisiana French Acadian immigrants combined a strong multi-generational learning and sharing-based collective mindset with a conscious determined focus on constantly seeking experience-informed, just-in-time solutions to real-world problems to forge a *communal culture–grounded way of life* that enabled the French Acadian people to not only survive but ultimately flourish in their new South Louisiana home.

Key Attributes of Acadian Communal Culture:

There are three notable key attributes that exemplify the Acadian people's communal-driven cultural way of life. These three attributes include: 1) an emphasis on multi-generational collaborative teaming; 2) a practical ingenuity in leveraging and using available tools, technologies, and resources to ensure community survival and facilitate communal life; and 3) an intentional focus on real-world problem solving. These distinctive "distributed leadership attributes" of the Acadian communal way of life reflect—and are operationalized in practice—by a set of deeply embedded *shared core values* about communal living and working together (embedded within each of the three primary distributed leadership attributes) that are directly applicable to the challenges of collaborative leadership in educational communities. These collective distributed leadership attributes and embedded core communal values of Acadian culture suggest a number of key insights that can inform the everyday practices of personnel leaders in teaching and learning organizations.

The first attribute of Acadian communal culture (i.e., an emphasis on *multi-generational collaborative teaming* as a means to facilitate and ensure community survival) is reflective of two core communal values that the Acadian people personify and exude in their social interactions. The first core value centers on the importance of *learning across generations*. The Acadian people, because of their collective group experiences and the brutal hardships they were forced to endure as a result of their expulsion from Nova Scotia by the British forces in 1755 and their subsequent struggles to make a new home for themselves and survive in the harsh swampland environments of southwestern Louisiana, instinctively recognized and valued the importance of cultural knowledge and the need to preserve this cultural knowledge through passing this knowledge on from one generation of Acadians to the next. For the Acadians, an emphasis on maintaining strong family ties while simultaneously cultivating active community–building are bedrock principles that define their social interactions. These dual principles are most discernible in the ways Acadians strive to create multiple opportunities during their communal gatherings for younger generations to not only observe but to participate actively in "hands-on collaborative learning activities" with their more experienced elders. Whether it be through being part of a group that engages together in handfishing for catfish in the myriad bayous and marshes of southwestern Louisiana or participating in the hog slaughtering and the varied cooking team activities that comprise a *cajun boucherie* (a large-scale communal event involving multiple "multi-generational groups" of community members), the younger generations of Acadians (both male and female) were (and still are) encouraged from an early age to actively participate alongside their elders in these communal cultural events. Through participating as active members of the group, younger Acadians are afforded multiple opportunities to acquire and refine important cultural skills that will ensure that the group mores and interactive social values of the larger community (i.e., the Acadian way of life) will continue to flourish over time. In this sense, the group's mores and community values serves an integral and integrative *cultural structures* that

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facilitate multi-generational social bonding and robust mentor-mentee relationship-building. The second core communal value associated with the first attribute of Acadian cultures (i.e., an emphasis on multi-generational collaborating teaming) is the fact that the Acadian people have internalized and model within their daily endeavors an acute understanding that a positive, flourishing group culture essentially coheres around a *few simple but powerful ideas*. These simple ideas center around: 1) celebrating the power of the kinds of social learning and camaraderie that bind individuals and groups together within the larger Acadian community; and 2) the critical importance of everyone within the community enthusiastically participating together (both within and across generations) in the ongoing varied communal activities (handfishing excursions, boucherie events, music/dancing festivities, etc.) that define the Acadian way of life and that help weave together and strengthen the overall cultural fabric of the Acadian community.

The second attribute of Acadian communal culture centers on the Acadian people's *practical ingenuity in leveraging and using available tools, technologies, and resources* to ensure their survival and facilitate communal life. Upon arriving in southwestern Louisiana, the Acadian people's most critical initial concern was to be able to build adequate shelters and to find sufficient food in the immediate environment to feed themselves and their families. Through observing the sustainable home-building and hunting practices of the local Indian tribes, Acadians quickly learned how to construct cabins using natural marshland materials and to fish in the local bayous. One fishing technology, in particular, the Acadians picked up early on from the local Indians was the practice of *handfishing*. Handfishing was a local technology long-practiced by the indigenous Indian tribes in which members of the tribe would wade in the shallow parts of the bayous and search with their bare hands for the large numbers of catfish that could frequently be found swimming in knee-deep waters under sunken logs and near bayou-side tree stumps. The native Indians would feel for the smooth backs of the catfish swimming close to the mud at the bottom of the bayou floor. They would then use their bare hands to latch on to an unsuspecting catfish's jaws and tail and lift it out of the water and then throw the catfish onto to the side of the bayou where it was sacked by other tribal members. Through keen observation of these techniques and lots of real-world practice in the multiple bayou habitats, the Acadians became quite adept at handfishing themselves, which quickly became a routine part of the food-gathering and survival practices of the southwestern Louisiana Acadians. In large part because of the Acadians' natural predilection for *collaborative teaming*, groups of Acadian men (both older male adults and younger adolescent male members of the community) relished the practice of working in handfishing teams to scour the muddy bayou bottoms with their bare hands for catfish and then bag the freshly caught catfish to be filleted and cooked by other community "cooking teams" (consisting of both male and female community members). This practice quickly evolved into regular *handfishing communal events* among large groups of Acadians who built their communities in the marshlands and alongside the banks of the local bayous that are plentiful throughout southern and southwestern Louisiana. In addition to the cooking teams, other members of the community would band together to provide festive music to enliven the multiple groups' activities and singing and dancing were encouraged to promote an overall festive atmosphere to the handfishing communal event. It is through their adoption of these kinds of native Indian "living off the environment" survival techniques, such as the group handfishing practices, and the ready integration of these practices into their ongoing social life that the Acadians transformed their own natural "practical ingenuity" in leveraging and using available tools, technologies, and

resources available in their environment into an ongoing team-learning adventure and shared communal experience. It is indeed these two intertwined core values of community survival and prosperity as a *team-learning adventure* and learning itself as a *shared communal experience* that serve to operationally define in daily practice the Acadian people's propensity for and natural ingenuity in utilizing tools, technologies, and resources readily available in their environment to provide for and sustain their "uniquely Acadian" communal way of life.

The third attribute of Acadian communal culture revolves around the Acadian people's focus on *real-world problem solving*. Perhaps one of the most illustrative examples of this penchant for real-world problem solving is the Acadians' well-established practice of staging *cajun boucheries* (i.e., hog slaughtering and communal cooking events) that historically were engaged in by the Acadian peoples dating from the 1750s onward as a means for Acadian communities living in southwestern Louisiana to prepare and store food to help families survive through the lean winter months. To respond in very practical ways to the challenges of surviving and flourishing in their new southwestern Louisiana environment, the French Acadian immigrants quickly developed distinctive cultural traditions, such as the boucherie, that focused on the ingenious use of *collaborative teaming methods* as a means to extend the quality of life for their families and enhance the overall prospects for these French Acadians—as a collective group—of surviving and flourishing in their new homeland. As engaged in by the original French Acadian settlers and continually refined by subsequent generations of Acadian communities, the cajun boucherie evolved into a richly creative communal event that emphasized the multiple practical payoffs of community-wide collaborative teaming. The traditional cajun boucherie was (and still is today as practiced by local cajun communities throughout southwestern Louisiana) a day-long communal event involving multiple groups of community members who would spontaneously form *ad hoc cooking teams* to turn particular segments of the freshly slaughtered hog into specially prepared delicacies for consumption. Some teams would work on cutting away the backbone meat from the hog and cooking it in large pots to prepare "backbone stew". Other teams would work on cooking down the head to make "hogshead cheese". Still other teams would prepare "andouille sausage", and on and on until every bit of the animal (including ears, snout, brains, feet, and all) were boned-out, carved, cooked, and consumed. Two distinctive features of the Acadian people's approach to collaborative teaming are that these kinds of communal events (such as the cajun boucherie) are very much *multi-generational* in nature and or *peer coaching intensive*. Older, more experienced Acadians would naturally work together with younger community members in multi-generational cooking teams to engage in robust mentoring and hands-on coaching of effective cooking and food preparation practices (including encouraging team members to engage in active "role swapping" on routine and non-routine tasks to expand team members' multiple "practical skills set" development) and to ensure that the most provenly effective cooking techniques and food preparation practices would be broadly shared and internalized across the entire community. These kinds of "role swapping" behaviors (i.e., taking on and learning different roles in the communal culture) served to build organizational cohesion and a strong sense of stewardship among French Acadian community members and encouraged all members of the community to *work for the common good*. Indeed, "working for the common good" is very much a core cultural attribute that is highly valued and highly rewarded among the French Acadian people. Moreover, intriguingly, both "music" and "creative cooking" in the French Acadian (i.e., Cajun) way of life continued to evolve to serve as important *multi-generational communication bridges* connecting the older, experienced generations with the younger

generations. These "communication bridges" helped over time to blend together and integrate the beliefs, tastes, and perspectives of multiple generations of French Acadians, as well as served as important "living cultural heritage vehicles" for passing on the core foundational values of the French Acadian (i.e., Cajun) culture.

From a long-term culture-building perspective, these intensely communal boucherie events—initially engaged in as a "survival practice" by the original Acadian immigrants in the mid- to late 1770s—continued to evolve over time into a well-established "cultural tradition" among subsequent generations of Acadian communities. In this sense, the cajun boucherie, as a communal event, came to be representative of the Acadian people's central "core cultural value" that focused on the importance of *team-centered continuous learning and renewal*. Moreover, this "team-centered approach" to continuous learning and renewal—as a core cultural value of Acadian communal living—reflects the Acadian people's foundational cultural beliefs that: 1) collaborative inquiry (learning) and productive work are total immersion experiences; 2) daring, flamboyant creativity in the execution and practice of collaborative teaming should be strongly encouraged and rewarded by the community; and 3) the potential of the "group" is always greater than the sum of "individual" potentials. And this *team-centered communal mindset* in regard to ensuring the continuous learning and renewal of all community members was (and still is) anchored in the Acadian people's practical approach to real-world problem solving—an approach which emphasizes nurturing their community's "distributive leadership capacities" (i.e., broadly sharing opportunities for cross-generational learning, sharing, and leading among multiple groups within the overall community) that ensure both the survival and continued flourishing of the Acadian way of life.

Social Sciences Cultural Framing Exemplar No 3: *Venezuelan "El Sistema" Underprivileged Youth Music Education Culture*

Venezuela is a country with a troubled history of entrenched poverty and economic challenges that has all too often stymied the ability of its population—and, in particular, young children and adolescent youth growing up in Venezuelan slum tenements in poverty-stricken areas of large cities as well as in small towns and villages across the country—to find meaningful opportunities for individual and social development. The historically long-standing entrenched nature of Venezuela's social poverty and economic difficulties (prevalent throughout the twentieth century and continuing even into the twenty-first century) has served as a hotbed for fomenting a seemingly intractable array of social problems, such as systemic poverty, gang violence, drug cartels, and the lack of meaningful employment opportunities, that have prevented the country's governmental leaders from implementing programs that can effect positive social change. These kinds of systemic social problems become engrained over time in the very fabric of society and—as they remain unaddressed from decade to decade—these social problems continue to grow and fester and become even further entrenched and exacerbated. The result is that the country's leaders in each generation are faced with what appears to be an impossible conundrum of how to transform these widespread, seemingly "intractable" social problems into positive growth and development opportunities for the country's people.

Given such a setting, perhaps there was no other individual better suited—because of his peculiar mix of personal background, education, and leadership vision—to address these complex social challenges than José Antonio Abreu. Born in Valera, Venezuela in 1939, Abreu

was a pianist, economist, educator, social activist, and politician. Abreu's leadership vision and passionate commitment to social improvement enabled him, beginning in the early 1970s, to envision and make reality a remarkable national "social activist program" initiative—an initiative that's been growing and thriving since its inception and is continuing to expand even today—that targets the provision of life-enhancing opportunities to underprivileged youth. Like many creative social change agent leadership initiatives, Abreu's program "idea" of developing a *national youth orchestra* began very tentatively in his own garage. Indeed, Abreu recounted in later years how dismayed and discouraged he was when he was only able to recruit a small band of eleven youngsters in 1975 who were brave enough to show up for a first rehearsal of his fledgling "youth orchestra" in the basement of his home in Caracas. With the spirited enthusiasm of a committed change agent leader, Abreu had meticulously set up 25 chairs and music stands, with music sheets in place, across his garage with high hopes of successfully initiating his new "youth orchestra" program. When only nine children showed up at the appointed time to that first garage rehearsal meeting, Abreu became disheartened. However, as he started the rehearsal with only these nine children, after a short time, one, two, and then several more young children began to gradually shuffle into his garage carrying their violin cases and sitting down ready and eager to learn. It was then that Abreu became convinced that his program "idea" could take hold, that with determination and persistence (and a great deal of hard work) his vision of a *national youth orchestra*—the Venezuelan "El Sistema" program of music education to benefit the underprivileged, at-risk youth of Venezuela—could become a reality.

Key Attributes of Venezuelan "El Sistema" Music Education Culture:

Two noteworthy key attributes serve to define the Venezuelan "El Sistema" underprivileged youth music education culture. First, José Antonio Abreu's admirable change agent leadership in creating and building the "El Sistema" music education program to support the development and growth needs of underprivileged children and adolescent youth in Venezuela reflects Abreu's natural inclination toward leveraging *convergent thinking* to solve societal problems. Many social change agent leaders, as well as creative thinkers in general, routinely utilize the power of convergent thinking to mentally tackle and solve tough, intransigent problems that others dismiss as inherently unsolvable. These kinds of creative change agent leaders freely use convergent thinking as a powerful tool—a kind of cognitive crowbar— for enacting positive, transformative social change. In the case of the "El Sistema" initiative, Abreu was able to fuse (i.e., *converge*) his own love of music and his professional experiences and expertise as a music educator with his accumulated real-world insights as an economist, politician, and social activist to envision and forge into reality a bold and innovative social change vision. And this bold vision involved creating and building (from the ground up) a radical *national youth orchestra* education program for underprivileged children and adolescent youth throughout Venezuela that would provide new opportunities for these Venezuelan young people to learn about and experience the joys of music-making while also helping them develop important life skills of self-discipline, team camaraderie, social responsibility, and dedication to the value of using music as a means for advancing the principled pursuit of economic freedom and social justice for all. Thus, through his own use of convergent thinking, Abreu was able to leverage his own accumulated knowledge, experiences, and insights to create a broad-based social change program initiative that would benefit the learning and development of multiple generations of Venezuelan underprivileged youth.

A second key attribute of Venezuelan "El Sistema" underprivileged youth music education culture centers around the generative power of *peer-to-peer coaching and collegial mentoring* as a defining core design characteristic or "ingredient" of the El Sistema model. This core design characteristic enabled this program to not only begin to achieve positive results early-on during its initial humble inception in Caracas but to continue to grow and expand exponentially via the creation of multiple El Sistema "associate programs" in multiple towns and villages throughout Venezuela. From the initial tentative beginnings of Abreu's youth orchestra project, the young children and teenage youth attending Abreu's garage orchestra practice sessions experienced a natural sense of camaraderie and group esprit de corps through the natural peer bonding that took place as these youngsters collaborated together in learning the fundamentals of their chosen instruments and in group music making. As the El Sistema model began to take shape organizationally and the instructional practices defining the system began to solidify, the first young "students" in the program, as they grew older, evolved naturally into "instructors" of younger students entering the system. The multiple El Sistema youth training orchestras that sprung up in various towns and villages across Venezuela thus served as natural training grounds to "grow" new teams of advanced players who would be identified and recruited as "instructors". This organic kind of youth-driven *peer-to-peer coaching and collegial mentoring* learning design captivated the natural collaborative learning instincts of young children and adolescent youth who were attracted to the program. Moreover, this distinctive "peer-to-peer coaching and collegial mentoring" design characteristic, which was so fundamentally intrinsic to the program, also served as a natural propelling force to help expand the notoriety and geographic reach of the program across the country. As a result, the "El Sistema" program—an education program model providing critical social skills development through music education to multiple generations of underprivileged children and adolescent youth throughout Venezuela—continued to expand exponentially over the ensuing decades in both the number of new youth joining the program and in the quality of the instructors delivering the program's musical and social skills development training.

DISCUSSION

This section presents a *practical application* discussion regarding how professors, instructors, and other academic professionals working in university-based, graduate-level K-12 school administrator preparation programs can utilize key organizational leadership insights and strategies generated from the three Social Science Cultural Framing Exemplars presented above to inform their teaching of *change agent leadership* principles to students studying to become personnel and instructional leaders (such as: district-level superintendents, human resource managers, and academic program directors; and campus-level principals, assistant principals, academic department heads, instructional coaches, etc.) in K-12 elementary and secondary school organizations. The discussion highlights the practical applicability of key organizational change agent leadership insights and strategies derived from the three Social Science Cultural Framing Exemplars for informing the teaching and practice of *change agent leadership in K-12 school organizations* within the areas of: 1) distributive leadership capacity–building; 2) utilizing multileveled analyses of students' learning performance data to inform instructional improvement; 3) involving teaching personnel directly in day-to-day school leadership decision making and in creatively designing their own professional/staff development; and 4) revitalizing and expanding instructional program offerings to enhance student learning success.

Leveraging Insights and Strategies from the Three Social Science Cultural Framing Exemplars to Inform Teaching about *Change Agent Leadership* in K-12 School Organizations – Enhancing School Leaders' *Change Agent Leadership Thinking and Practice* in Multiple Practical Application Areas

- **Practical Application No 1: Build Educators' Distributive Leadership Capacities – *Create multiple opportunities for educators to become immersed in the day-to-day communal work of leading their school organization*.**

As a campus principal or personnel leader working in a school district central office, you always want to maximize the *number and kinds of opportunities* available to personnel to become motivated to want to take active ownership in the day-to-day communal leadership work of their school organization. When you work conscientiously to involve educators in practical ways in the day-to-day communal leadership of their school through creating a variety of collaborative leadership roles for your teachers to take on and make their own, teachers will begin to feel like they are being offered opportunities to assume more genuine responsibility for the overall success of their school. As a result, your teachers will begin to think more seriously as fully engaged "organizational co-leaders" about their school's improvement efforts and how to expand them. Doing this helps instructional leaders build *distributive leadership capacity* throughout the school organization.

Importantly, employing insights derived from key attributes associated with the Japanese Rice Farming Culture (i.e., the key attribute of "commitment to shared decision making") and the Acadian Communal Culture (i.e., the key attributes of "multi-generational collaborative teaming" and "an intentional focus on real-world problem solving"), instructional leaders can build teachers' distributive leadership capacities in multiple practical ways. First and foremost, instructional leaders can provide teachers with targeted professional development (PD) training and resources to learn how to *conduct "drill down data digs"* to delve deep into their classroom data to identify students' reading and math learning "root causes" and then use the results of these "root causal analysis data digs" to design "multi-culturally sensitive" instructional materials and student learning assessments. Secondly, school leaders can support teachers as teachers themselves take the lead within their grade-level teams in developing *highly diversified "multi-culturally sensitive"* sets of reading and math lessons to meet the specific learning needs and interests of their diverse students and in learning how to integrate these lessons into their classroom teaching instructional practices. Third, campus leaders can encourage (and find creative ways to provide time for) teachers to engage in intensive "collaborative peer teaching" efforts to develop and integrate "multi-cultural instructional strategies"—such as individual English Language Learner (ELL) student-intensive reading level screening, diagnostic assessment, and reading coaching—directly into their daily reading and math classroom teaching and learning practices. Fourth, instructional leaders can work creatively to initiate *math and reading "tutoring labs"* within-school and after-school programs as a means to provide enhanced learning support for their campus's English Language Learner (ELL) and Limited English Proficient (LEP) students. Fifth, school leaders can work to implement aggressive ELL and LEP student progress monitoring programs that include *multiple learning remediation opportunities* so students are provided the individualized learning support they need to stay on track. Sixth, campus-based leaders can work to clearly communicate to teachers the *"multiple learning payoffs"* (instructionally and professionally) to themselves and to the students and families they serve of embracing and becoming actively

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involved in nurturing a *dynamic "all-hands-on-deck" Professional Learning Community (PLC) culture* in their school. And, finally, instructional leaders at both campus- and district-levels can work to move their educator personnel from a "minimalist, silo-thinking (echo chamber)–driven "*self-defeating* student accountability mindset and culture" to a forward-thinking and productivity-oriented "*high-engagement, deeper learning* mindset and culture" for all learning community stakeholders.

- **Practical Application No 2: Data is Key – *School instructional leaders should encourage teachers, as an integral part of their day-to-day professional work, to scrutinize, collaboratively discuss, and leverage their own classroom- and grade-level student learning performance data to improve and enhance instruction.***

Utilizing insights on effective change agent leadership derived from key attributes identified in both the Acadian Communal Culture (i.e., "practical ingenuity in leveraging and using available tools, technologies, and resources to facilitate successful communal living and learning") and the Venezuelan "El Sistema" Culture (i.e., "leveraging convergent thinking to solve real-world problems"), school leaders should work proactively to nurture a collaborative *professional learning culture* that encourages teachers to intentionally analyze their own classroom- and grade-level student-learning performance data and to use insights gleaned from these "deep dive" data analyses—along with effective teaching and learning insights and practical pedagogical strategies gleaned from the instructional improvement literature—as the basis for designing and implementing "data-specific learning interventions" that target clearly identified learning improvement goals. This process of leveraging analysis results of real-world data as the basis for designing and implementing data-specific learning interventions to achieve clearly identified "improvement goals" should become an integral part of teachers' day-to-day professional planning and teaching practices. Importantly, developing this kind of "data-informed schoolwide vision for learning improvement" *mindset*—along with the collaborative leadership skills to be able to work effectively with teacher teams to conceptually and operationally "link" classroom- and grade-level data analyses to practical efforts to attain larger school-wide "learning performance goals" for students—is a critically important initial step toward becoming a *performance-ready principal for struggling schools*.

- **Practical Application No 3: Real Data-Informed School Improvement is a Participatory Enterprise – *The more eyes viewing and reflecting on your school's data the better.***

Mindful of key attributes characteristic of the Japanese Rice Farming Culture (i.e., a "commitment to shared decision making"), the Acadian Communal Culture (i.e., an "emphasis on multi-generational collaborative teaming" and an "intentional focus on real-world problem solving"), and the Venezuelan "El Sistema" Culture (i.e., "leveraging convergent [multi-perspectivist] thinking to solve real-world problems"), school leaders should encourage all educators in their school to *work together in data teams* to proactively scrutinize and reflect on their school's teaching and learning data to generate as many *multiple interpretations* of that data as possible. Teachers and other educators in the school can engage in meaningful school data review and reflection both as individuals and by working together in collaborative groups within grade-level academic teams, campus-wide improvement teams, etc. Doing this will ensure that instructional teams in the school will have at their disposal as many creative ideas as possible for generating sensible action strategies to improve and enhance teaching/learning effectiveness. This emphasis on including as many educators as possible in the practice of

reviewing and analyzing students' learning performance data is reflective of the organizational psychologist Margaret Wheatley's insight regarding enhancing overall organizational effectiveness: *the more organization members reviewing, thinking about, and massaging an organization's data the better*. As Wheatley explains: "We need a constantly expanding array of data, views, and interpretations if we are to make sense of the world. We need to include more and more eyes. We need to be constantly asking, 'Who else should be here? Who else should be looking at this?' …As each observer interacts with the data, he or she develops their own interpretation. We can expect these interpretations to be different, because people are. Instead of losing so many of the potentials contained in the data, multiple observers elicit multiple and varying responses, giving a genuine richness to the observations. An organization rich with many interpretations *develops a wiser sense of what is going on and what needs to be done* [emphasis added]. Such organizations become more intelligent." (Wheatley, 1999, 66-67)

- **Practical Application No 4: Encourage Teachers to Reinvent Their Own Staff Development – *Teachers learn best from each other, not from administrators or outside consultants*.**

Educators' professional learning should be a *shared experience.* In communal learning experiences, such as the French Acadian cultural practice of the *cajun boucherie*, individuals would engage in multiple communal activities together and actively participate in role swapping and inter-generational peer coaching and sharing of practical knowledge and skills that were critical to the survival and welfare of the entire group. These cultural practices themselves served as an important "multi-generational cultural *communications bridge*" connecting older, more experienced community members with the younger generations coming up. Taking a cue from the Acadian Communal Culture's emphasis on the importance of "multi-generational collaborative teaming" to expand and enhance both individual and group learning throughout a learning community as well as from the Venezuelan "El Sistema" Culture's understanding of the "generative power of peer-to-peer coaching and collegial mentoring" as a defining characteristic or ingredient of effective collaborative learning, educators working in diverse school organization settings can leverage the *connecting power* of the multiple kinds of digital social media tools that are readily available today to further expand the impact of this kind of "multi-generational peer coaching and sharing" on their ongoing collaborative professional learning. These kinds of digital tools become an additional twenty-first-century kind of "multi-generational *communications bridge*" uniting the accumulated knowledge and wisdom of experienced master teachers with new generations of educators. Teachers, in fact, can take direct ownership in *reinventing* their own staff development through leveraging mobile digital technologies and social media to engage in "informal sharing" of professional best practices. Teachers working together in individual schools or even across multiple campuses within a school district can explore ways to creatively leverage available digital technologies (including mobile technologies such as laptops, iPads, iPods, and the like) along with widely accessible social media resources (e.g., Facebook, Twitter/X, Pinterest, LinkedIn, blogs, wikis, social bookmarking, shared annotation services, RSS readers) as new kinds of teaching and learning enabling tools to build flourishing *e-learning communication networks* for teachers, students, parents, and other learning stakeholders in their school and district communities. Indeed, teachers can develop new excitement for their teaching roles by taking on new technology-integration challenges to expand the impact of their instructional planning and teaching endeavors—such as through learning about podcasting and vodcasting and how to develop digital video streaming "flipped classroom" lessons for students, and

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directly integrating blogs, wikis, Facebook, Twitter/X, RSS feeds, etc. into their teaching. Moreover, teachers can utilize insights gleaned from analyzing their own classroom data to help them tap into the power and leveraging potential of twenty-first-century mobile technologies and internet social media tools to better reach and meet the diverse learning needs of their students. Additionally, teachers in an individual campus setting can engage in "inter-school visitations"—either physically or virtually using Zoom or LinkedIn—with teachers in other campus settings so teachers can easily share and learn from peers in other schools who've already gone through successful improvement initiatives to share insights that can inform change agency improvement efforts in multiple school settings.

- **Practical Application No 5: Promote the "flipped classroom" instructional model on your campus –** ***Teachers can utilize flipped classroom teaching to substantively expand interactive learning opportunities for students.***

Emulating core attributes of Acadian Communal Culture (i.e., a "practical ingenuity in leveraging and using available tools, technologies, and resources to enhance communal life and learning" and an "intentional focus on real-world problem solving"), campus principals can promote the *flipped classroom* instructional model as a creative way to assist teachers in further expanding the kinds of interactive teaching and learning modalities they are able to create to enhance students' learning opportunities. For example, a campus principal and a few teachers who might be technology proficient could model the "flipped classroom" instruction process to multiple grade-level teams of teachers at their campus for several weeks (including the process of preparing and recording videos, vodcasts, podcasts, etc., and how to upload them to the school's website and/or directly email these lessons to students). Teachers already engaging in flipped classroom teaching could also invite other teachers to observe their flipped classroom teaching practices (e.g., these teachers' instructional and homework support interactions with students during class time) and then set up a school-wide teacher sharing meeting at the school so the teachers engaging in the flipped classroom instruction process "modeling" could share their ongoing student progress monitoring data with fellow teachers and respond to teacher questions. Of course, the real key to school turnaround leadership success in implementing the "flipped classroom" instructional model is getting veteran teachers (who may be voicing very legitimate "lack of time and training" concerns about learning how to implement the flipped classroom instruction design) on board with the flipped classroom change initiative. Therefore, a very specific turnaround leadership goal for campus principals would be to work to develop clear understandings in the minds of these veteran teachers on the real purposes and payoffs of flipped instruction. To achieve this mental buy-in among veteran teachers, part of the flipped instruction modeling that the campus principal and some technology-proficient teachers would engage in at the school should include multiple *data-informed open conversations* among all campus teachers regarding how utilizing flipped instructional techniques in their classroom teaching can benefit teachers' collaborative efforts in their ongoing instructional team planning activities, including student progress monitoring and analyzing and leveraging of students' learning performance data to inform teacher team instructional decision making, etc. To help facilitate the successful implementation of the flipped classroom instructional model on individual campuses, it also might be possible to find one or a few parents and/or small business entrepreneurs in the community with mobile technology and video/audio expertise who could provide some assistance with technology training and support needs for teachers who may need some help with video/audio recording of lessons. Additionally, it also might be possible for school leaders to connect with a regional

university college of education to find university-based faculty who have an interest in technology-integrated instructional designs (such as flipped instruction) and who might be willing to provide technical assistance and training support to teachers at the school. Additionally, an individual campus principal or group of campus principals, working collaboratively with the school district superintendent, might be able to identify one or more other schools in the region (who have already had some success in implementing the flipped instruction model on their campuses) who would be willing to serve as "collaborative partner campuses" to share the creative strategies and insights they have gleaned through their own flipped instruction implementation efforts. Finally, campus principals should aways take advantage of available roll-over technology funds and work to develop as part of their campus's five-year improvement plan some well-articulated S.M.A.R.T. goals for the campus. These goals can include incentivizing teachers to actively seek creative ways to incorporate new technology components into their lesson plans on a regular reporting period basis, as well as requiring teachers to participate in district-sponsored communication and technology professional development offerings as ways to expand and deepen teachers' full support and ownership in "flipped instruction" and other similar kinds of creative technology integration initiatives.

- **Practical Application No 6: Coach teachers on Grant Writing to Obtain Funding to Support their Instruction – *Assist teachers in learning how to write and submit multiple kinds of "teaching and learning improvement grants", including how to respond effectively to grant proposal reviewer feedback.***

Modeling their own change agent collaborative leadership practices on insights gleaned from key attributes associated with the Acadian Communal Culture (i.e., a "practical ingenuity in leveraging and using available tools, technologies, and resources to ensure effective community-wide learning" and an "intentional focus on real-world problem solving") as well as on insights on the advantages of engaging in "creative, outside-the-box leadership thinking" derived from a key attribute of the Venezuelan "El Sistema" Culture (i.e., "leveraging *convergent thinking* to solve societal problems"), campus-based principals can assist teachers directly, through hands-on professional development experiences, in learning how to develop and implement a variety of technology-integrated curriculum and individualized instructional learning resources designed to meet individual students' specific identified learning support need areas. Students will then be able to easily access these individualized instructional learning support resources (that complement the curriculum) to provide students with additional technology-integrated instruction to further enhance their learning in the classroom. It is well known among staff development consultants and school improvement specialists that teachers rarely receive adequate training (i.e., up-to-date, content-specific, and useful professional development) on learning creative instructional strategies relating to how to teach and evaluate math (for example) effectively. To directly address this specific professional training and learning need area for teachers, campus-based instructional leaders, such as principals, assistant principals, and instructional coaches, can collaborate with grade-level teachers to help teachers develop a variety of different kinds of instructional materials—such as "iBook Math Lessons" and "iBook Math Learning Programs"—for their students and then provide targeted program development modules to these same teachers on how to develop and implement customizable "iBooks Math Lessons" (again, using "math instructional materials development" as one example) to other schools and districts (as well as, of course, to other schools within the teachers' own school district). This would provide an important

collaborative learning and professional sharing opportunity for administrators, teachers, and learning stakeholders based in multiple regional school districts.

Additionally, campus-based instructional leaders, working with their teachers as program co-designers, could develop these program development modules so that they could be uploaded as a "professional learning website" on the internet (along with some "iBooks Math 'math learning proficiency instruction and evaluation' teacher resource materials" and even perhaps a few YouTube "how to get started videos"), so that administrators, teachers, and learning stakeholders in other schools and districts could access and learn from these modules. This would represent another level of *digital turnkeying* (i.e., "internet-enabled" collaborative learning and professional sharing among administrators, teachers, and learning stakeholders across multiple districts) that could be part of the overall development and dissemination of the "technology-integrated instructional learning resources" program design. Importantly, doing this would be a way to initiate a potentially expanding *collaborative network* (or consortium) among multiple schools and districts who either have already developed or are interested in developing similar "iBooks Math Learning" programs for the purpose of sharing program ideas and techniques, business contacts (including regional businesses and "mentors" who may want to participate in the program, such as individuals working in newspaper outlets, radio and TV stations, area chambers of commerce), etc. This also could be a creative way to attract some businesses who might want to eventually provide grant monies of their own to support the continued sustainability of these kinds of "iBooks Math Learning" programs (again, using this "math instructional materials development" effort as one example of the multiple kinds of technology-integrated instructional learning resources that teachers can collaboratively develop and disseminate)—and the reviewers of these kinds of grant proposals would definitely be thinking along these lines since reviewers always want to read program proposals that they feel show promise in terms of being able to become "self-sustaining on their own" through the ability of the proposal's program "idea" to attract further funding support. Additionally, as a general rule, administrators and teachers always should strive to include as many *turnkeying* opportunities as possible within their overall instructional program grant proposal designs to maximize the potential for impacting as many educational stakeholders as possible—in other words, focus on "maximizing the bang for the funding agency bucks", which is exactly what grant proposal reviewers are looking for when they review proposal submissions. These kinds of "turnkeying" opportunities can be emphasized in instructional program grant proposals to demonstrate to grant agency proposal reviewers that educators are thinking about the *long-term expandability* (multiple stakeholder impact) as well as *self-sustainability* of their program ideas through developing as many kinds of multi-stakeholder communication and sharing networks as possible. "Multiple stakeholder impact potential" and "long-term self-sustainability of the program idea" are two important proposal design elements that proposal reviewers always look for in assessing the fundability of instructional program grant proposals.

- **Practical Application No 7: Emphasize Whole Community Involvement in Real-World Problem Solving to Enhance Student Learning Success – *Administrative leaders can work to make "Change Agent Collaborative Leadership Thinking" part of the foundational fabric of school- and district-wide instructional improvement cultures through: 1) encouraging and supporting teachers in actively focusing their community-based, grant funding–supported instructional planning and teaching***

efforts on real-world teaching and learning problems; and 2) assisting teachers in learning how to write and submit multiple kinds of "teaching and learning improvement grants", including how to respond effectively to grant proposal reviewer feedback.

Employing insights and strategies derived from key attributes characterizing the Japanese Rich Farming Culture (i.e., a "commitment to shared decision making" and an "active embracing of the Japanese cultural practice of *kaizen*: greater team productivity through continuous incremental improvement"), the Acadian Communal Culture (i.e., a "practical ingenuity in leveraging and using available tools, technologies, and resources to ensure effective community-wide learning" and an "intentional focus on real-world problem solving"), and the Venezuelan "El Sistema" Music Education Culture (i.e., "leveraging *convergent thinking* to solve societal problems"), school change agent leaders working in a variety of diverse elementary and secondary campuses in K-12 school districts can significantly energize their school turnaround efforts through encouraging a variety of school community stakeholders to become immersed and actively involved in *targeted learning intervention projects* focused on achieving realistic student learning improvement goals. Forward-moving schools thrive on "school–community partnerships" as a way to include many kinds of education stakeholders and community partners directly in ongoing school improvement efforts. The creative idea here is to leverage *school-community partnership building* as a means to expand collaborative instructional teaming among multiple kinds of education stakeholders to energize school-wide student learning improvement.

In school communities where school leaders have internalized a robust school turnaround (i.e., change agent leadership) mentality, teacher grade-level and interdisciplinary teams at the elementary, middle, and secondary levels are continually working to mine and analyze their own classroom- and grade-level student performance data to identify areas of low student performance. These low student learning performance indicators could appear in any one or more of a number of specific content areas, such as reading and language arts, writing, social studies, etc., or in one or more STEM (i.e., science, technology, engineering, and math) disciplines. These student learning performance indicators present campus-based school leaders (teachers, principals, assistant principals, instructional coaches, student learning behavior analysts, school counselors, etc.) with excellent opportunities to leverage these data to engage proactively in data analysis–informed, problem-based decision making as a means to brainstorm and identify creative intervention program designs to improve students' learning effectiveness. (See: Love, 2009; Love et al., 2008). Educators can utilize data mining and analysis techniques to work in their grade-level and interdisciplinary teams to carefully review student benchmark and progress monitoring data to identify very specific learning improvement "need areas". Teams of educators can then begin to work collaboratively to brainstorm creative *learning intervention program designs* that directly target these identified student improvement need areas. Once these learning intervention program designs are fully developed, they can then be incorporated into various "learning improvement grant proposals" which individual campus education personnel (working through their district central offices) can submit to a variety of local and regional funding agencies (e.g., private foundations, regional businesses, corporate sponsors, etc.) to obtain funding support for intervention program implementation. For example, one instructional challenge that educators currently face in many school contexts is how to creatively address the learning needs of "English as a Second Language" (ESL) or "Emergent Bilingual" (EB) learners. The core challenge in responding

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effectively to the learning needs of these ESL/EB students is developing *creative immersive learning experiences* for these students to assist them in developing their oral and written English language applied communication skills. One creative strategy that has proven effective in many school contexts is to design and implement intervention projects utilizing the concept of *Literature Learning Circles*. Teacher planning teams can utilize the Literature Learning Circle concept to design a variety of interactive learning projects that incorporate several noteworthy instructional design features to address the unique language learning needs of ESL/EB learners, as well as addressing the learning needs of the school's general population of English Language Arts (ELA) students. Literature Learning Circle projects involve students directly in immersive collaborative learning through group reading and active peer sharing and discussion of reading content. Students' overall language skill development is enhanced through the multiple opportunities provided within Literature Learning Circle activities for peer modeling of oral and written language communication skills and positive language acquisition reinforcement. Interestingly, ESL/EB students are often less involved in school co-curricular activities (such as after-school sports, music groups, etc.) because they are needed to assist their parents in everyday family activities (such as: helping with home chores, babysitting younger siblings, serving as a translator during parents' business and medical appointments, etc.). Because of this, many principals face the added challenge of needing to reinvent the school's entire *organizational and instructional leadership culture* to motivate not only their teachers, but also ESL/EB parents, community members, and the students themselves to adopt a more proactive, engaged, and inclusive *instructional leadership mentality* in order to nurture and support the learning success of present ESL/EB students, as well as future generations of ESL/EB learners. To address this specific challenge, a variety of individuals (parents, business leaders, senior mentors, etc.) from the larger school community can be invited to participate in the Literature Learning Circle projects as "adult mentors".

Teachers are well aware of the importance of making language arts learning appealing to the 21st century learner (via such 21st century teaching and learning tools as iBooks, iTunes U, etc.), and giving students the opportunity to access teacher-developed digital oral and written language communication lessons from home. Thus, a foundational premise of many fundable program ideas and program curricular designs is that all students need to learn how to access and utilize technology-enabled, digital instructional content to optimize their learning. Because of this, in terms of the creative dimensions of an overall "language learning improvement" intervention project, teachers could consider as part of their intervention project's curricular design involving the students directly via hands-on learning in creating their own "Literature Learning Circles" website. Students could continuously develop and refine this website as part of their involvement in the "Literature Learning Circles" project. Elementary and secondary school students today are "digital natives" (they were born after the start of the internet age), so these students are naturally enthusiastic about using and learning creatively via any kind of digital and internet-enabled means. Thus, one creative way to enhance students' learning engagement is through involving students directly in their own "Literature Learning Circles website" creative development effort with website mentoring assistance from their classroom teachers as well as perhaps from some area business mentors (such as: mentors from local newspapers, radio and TV stations, area chambers of commerce, as well as from other kinds of news organizations, large and small business entrepreneurs, etc.). My experiences over the years in assisting educators in schools and school districts with their learning intervention efforts have been that many area business leaders are typically eager to offer their assistance

to help mentor and immerse area elementary- and secondary-level students in using and leveraging real-world, 21st century technology applications to enhance their language learning and communication skills development. This would also be a big "selling point" to potential grant proposal reviewers, who are always looking to see how a grant proposal incorporates creative ways to *directly involve multiple community partners* in the teaching and learning design of the proposal. Students participating in the Literature Learning Circles project could further develop and enhance their real-world applied "language learning and communication skills" through learning how to use simple available digital design tools (such as: iMovie, Prezi, Strip Designer, Slide Rocket, and the like) to develop digital content about their ongoing creative literature and language arts learning activities, which they could then upload and link to their "Literature Learning Circles" program website. And, again, since elementary and middle school-age students are definitely "digital natives" (they were born during the internet age), developing their own website showcasing their own "literature and language learning adventures" would really appeal to them. Importantly, this would help students acquire valuable "21st century digital content development and writing communication skills" which many business employers would consider to be very valuable job skill assets (as these kids grow up and begin to enter the job market).

In addition, it is well known among staff development consultants and school improvement specialists that teachers rarely receive adequate training (i.e., up-to-date, content-specific, comprehensive, and useful professional development) on creative instructional strategies relating to how to teach and evaluate content area subjects—particularly in ways that appropriately support ESL/EB students' learning effectiveness. To directly address this specific professional training and learning need area for teachers, educators working collaboratively in individual schools (teachers, department heads, instructional coaches, principals and assistant principals, counselors, etc.) can "turnkey" their intervention project or program designs further through providing targeted *learning intervention project development modules* on how to develop and implement "Literature Learning Circles" and other kinds of interactive learning programs to other schools and districts (as well as, of course, to educators and education stakeholders within their own district). Doing this would provide an important *collaborative learning and professional sharing opportunity* for administrators, teachers, and learning stakeholders in other school districts and regions of the state. Additionally, these school educators—working collaboratively as the intervention program designers—could develop these *learning intervention project development modules* so that they could be uploaded as a "professional learning website" onto the internet, so that administrators, teachers, and stakeholders in other schools and districts could access and learn from these modules. Again, this would represent another level of *digital turnkeying* (i.e., "internet-enabled" collaborative learning and professional sharing among administrators, teachers, and learning stakeholders in other districts) that could be part of the school's overall "learning intervention program curriculum design".

Of course, the above learning intervention project ideas and associated grant proposal development strategies targeting the learning needs of English Language Arts (ELA), English as a Second Language (ESL), and Emergent Bilingual (EB) students are only offered as one example among many possible fundable intervention projects that collaborative teams of educators could develop for their campuses. Educators in elementary and secondary schools can easily adapt the above ideas to design a wide range of customized learning intervention

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projects and programs to address students' identified learning improvement needs in a number of content areas, such as math, science, social studies, music and fine arts, and health and physical education.

CONCLUSION

This article has sought to demonstrate how professors and instructors working in university-based school administrator preparation programs can utilize the concept of *cultural framing exemplars* as a creative instructional tool to help teach aspiring administrative leaders in the field of education enrolled in advanced graduate education programs about processes and practices of *change agent leadership* in K-12 schools and school district organizations. The three "cultural framing exemplars" selected from the social sciences highlighted in this article—namely: Japanese Rice Farming Culture, Acadian Communal Culture, and Venezuelan "El Sistema" Underprivileged Youth Music Education Culture—each represent highly interactive communal cultures with rich histories and cultural traditions. Through examining the interactive dynamics and community-centered relational practices of the generations of people living and working within these cultures, multiple distinctive "key cultural attributes" were able to be discerned that yielded important insights that can be leveraged to directly inform the teaching of change agent leadership processes and practices in multistakeholder-interactive organizations such as K-12 schools and school districts. Administrative leaders working in diverse elementary and secondary campus-based settings, as well as personnel and program leaders based in school district offices, may find the insights presented and discussed in this article of practical use in providing both aspiring and current K-12 school leaders with readily implementable "improvement-focused strategies" they can employ to motivate and empower their teachers and related instructional staff to learn how to expand and enhance their collaborative endeavors in ways that can move their school communities forward in positive ways and create meaningful teaching and learning improvement opportunities for all learners.

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