Building a Culture of Participatory Collaborative Research within Charter Schools

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Our Research team acknowledge that we are located on Treaty Six Territory, and respect the history, languages, ceremonies and culture of the First Nations, Métis, Inuit and all Indigenous Peoples of Canada

Alberta Government

Outline

1. Background to our research

2. Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR)

3. Selected findings from our research

4. Activities
   - ❑ Developing a Community Advisory Board (CAB)
   - ❑ Developing research questions

1. Background to our Research

Research Partners

- Principal Investigator: **Dr. Malcolm Steinberg**, Simon Fraser University

- Co-Investigator: **Dr. Paul Wozny**, Aurora Academic Charter Schools

- Co-Invesigator: **Dr. Owen Livermore**, EPSB

- Co-Investigator: **Dr. Nicole Ofosu**, University of Alberta

- Co-Investigator: **Dr. Paul Veugelers**, University of Alberta

- Research Partner Administrator: **Jan Favel**, EPS

Importance of Research in our Charter Praxis

- Non-profit autonomous public education system
- High parental involvement
- Innovative, different or enhanced pedagogical methods to improve student learning, skills, knowledge, and curricular achievement coupled with an active research and knowledge mobilization integration

    There is therefore the expectation to conduct research and share evidence with school jurisdictions and stakeholders throughout Alberta

Alberta Education Act: Section 25 1

c) ….. demonstrates collaboration or engagement with a post-secondary institution or a school division, and

d) ….. has the potential to provide improvements to the education system as a whole and to ***enhance education research and innovation in Alberta***.

Source: Alberta Education Act, 2019

Teaching Quality Standard: Section 2 (d)

d) ….. seeking, critically reviewing and applying *educational research* to improve practice;

Source: Alberta Education Act, 2019

Leadership Quality Standard: Section 2 (c)

c) …. seeking, critically reviewing and applying ***educational research*** to inform effective practice;

Source: Alberta Education Act, 2019

- Alberta Education RPP (Round 2)
  - Implementation of Professional Practice Standards for teachers and leaders
  - Indigenous education (acting on the Promising Practices in Supporting Success for Indigenous Students study's findings and furthering the research)
  - Supporting diversity
- Research Collaboration between Charter and all Alberta school jurisdictions

THE ASSOCIATION OF
ALBERTA
PUBLIC
CHARTER
SCHOOLS

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Research Proposal

- <u>Project Purpose</u>: To improve engagement and social connectedness within the school community

- <u>Project Title</u>: Addressing Parent Voice and Perspectives for Improvement of Engagement and Social Connectedness within the Multicultural Fabric of Aurora Academic Charter Schools

- <u>Current Study Objective</u>: To assess the engagement of parents in parent-teacher interview processes

Research Hypothesis and Questions

- □ Research Hypothesis:
  - ■ Improved parent/teacher engagement coupled with healthy and robust social connectedness, within school communities, will address student and community diversity and improvement of student academic outcomes and well-being.
- □ Research questions:
  - ■ What are parents'/guardians' perceptions about, and suggestions for
    - □ the improvement of social connectedness within school communities, and;
    - □ the strengthening of Parent – Teacher engagement?
  - ■ How can Parent – Teacher interview processes be improved to enhance parental engagement and social connectedness?

Research Methodology

Study participants:

- Parents/guardians of Kindergarten to Grade 12 students in the participating schools (Aurora Public Charter Schools & Edmonton Public Schools)

Data collection:

- In-depth interviews
- Focus group discussions

Research approach:

- Our research is grounded in a participatory approach
- Our research is informed by Community Advisory Boards (CAB) and Indigenous research methodology
- We analyzed our data thematically

Anticipated Outcomes

- ❑ Parental feedback may inform development of novel parent-teacher interview protocols to improve engagement and social connectedness.

- ❑ Capacity development and ongoing improvement of parent/teacher interview processes with a lens to improve social connectedness with all stakeholders.

- ❑ Insights into future research to strengthen community connectedness.

Research Ethics

- Why is this important?
- How are we seeking ethics approval for this project?
- What do we mean by 'minimum risk'?
- Research in which the possible harms implied by participation in the research is no greater than those encountered by participants in the aspects of their everyday life
- Is this project a 'minimal risk' study?

2. Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR)

What is Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR)?

- A process of engaging community members in **what is** (i.e. the needs, resources and constraints within their present community) and **what could be** (i.e. the community they envision) (Mayan, 2009)

- A **transformative research opportunity** to unite the growing interest of professionals, academics and communities in giving underserved communities a genuine voice in research, thereby increasing the likelihood of the success of the intervention (Wallerstein & Duran, 2010)

- A process that fosters **collaborative relationships** between the academic institution and community partners throughout the entire research process

How CBPR Addresses the Challenges of Translational Research

Challenge	CBPR Response
External Validity	Engages community stakeholders in adaptation within complex systems
The privilege of academic knowledge	Creates space for post-colonial and hybrid knowledge
Language incompatibilities between academia and community	Broadens discourse to include cultural and social meanings
Business as usual	Shifts power through bi-directional learning, shared resources, collective decision making
Lack of trust	Formal agreements to equalize partnerships and promote mutual benefit
Non-sustainability of programs beyond research	Integration with existing programs, local ownership, and capacity development

Source: Wallerstein & Duran, 2010

OCAP Principles for CBPR

- **Ownership**: This concerns the relationship of the school community to its cultural knowledge/data/information
- **Control**: This recognizes the aspirations of the school community to participate in all stages of the decision making in the research process from conception to completion
- **Access**: This requires respectfully seeking the informed consent and support of the community to approach individuals to participate in the research process
- **Possession**: This involves mechanisms by which ownership of information can be asserted and protected, including through stewardship arrangements governed by protocols

The Purpose of a Community Advisory Board (CAB)

- To promote a participatory approach and support an accountable governance process for the tenure of the project

- Our vision of a relationship with a CAB is that this is informed by the OCAP Principles developed for Indigenous related research. Our intention is not to appropriate these principles but rather to let them inform a relationship with our CAB that is build on respect, trust and accountability

4. Selected Findings from our Research
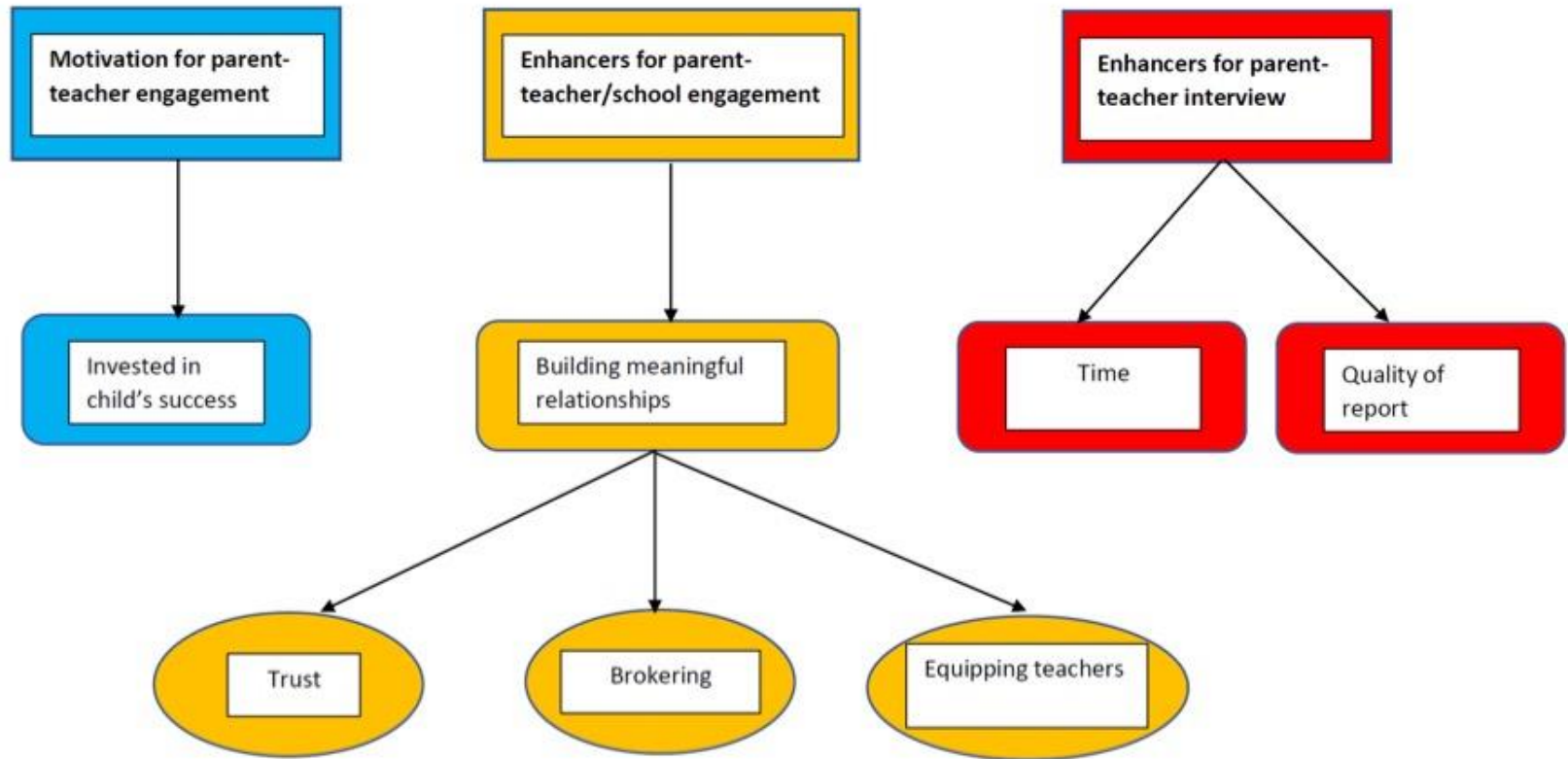
Thematic findings

Fig. 1 Framework for understanding parents/guardians perspectives on enhancing connectedness between parents and teachers

Motivation for parent-teacher engagement

□ Invested in child's success

■ *"I go [for parent-teacher interviews] every time because I am truly invested in him being successful. So, I think how I can do that is to remain engaged with his teachers"*. (Eralia)

■ *"Like the reason why the kids are here is because of the White Cloud program. Because they were really great giving you know… We don't know Cree. So we learn Cree, another language, and being Cree. It's awesome! We do encourage that"*. (Marcela)

Enhancers of Parent-Teacher Interviews – Building Meaningful Relationships

❑ Trust

- *"It's good to get to know the teachers on a personal level just so that you know that they don't have a negative attitude. So, it's comforting, I guess you could say".* (Tony)

- *"Maybe even at the beginning of the year, … have a barbecue so that all the parents can come in ….. It's kind of, you crack the shell. You start knocking on that shell when you go out to meet people. Because, again, coming from our culture we're not going to come up to you to talk to you. …. Unless you come and talk to us". (Star)*

Enhancers of Parent-Teacher Interviews – Building Meaningful Relationships

❑ Brokering

■ *"If the teachers took into account… I mean my understanding is that a lot of kids have different methods of learning. If the teachers asked the parents what the child's strengths are as far as how they absorb knowledge, perhaps any special needs that a child has as far as gaining knowledge, you know sort of their learning styles".* (Tony)

Enhancers of Parent-Teacher Interviews – Building Meaningful Relationships

- ❑ Equipping Teachers
  - ◾ *"I think teachers and workers here in every school should have this kind of training too that we attend so they know what's going on with [different cultures], so you understand …..Understanding different cultures is not only because they [the teachers] grew up here, they stay here and they work here, they understand everything because they're educated. It is not that. I mean they have to deal with those kinds of things also".* (Lillian)

Enhancers of parent-teacher/school engagement

□ Time

- *"You know, I have four kids. When I come here for parent teacher interview, it's very tough for me …. Yeah! I'm running. Exactly!"* (Hamda)

□ Quality of Report

- *"When I go to a parent-teacher meeting and he just says it's green and good, and... Now I know there is always room for improvement. There is always! [If] the teacher cannot identify that room for me, where we can improve, I think the teacher didn't pay attention. And this interview is not solving this problem that much".* (Hamda)

Q & A

Discussion and Activities

Activity 1: Developing a CAB

1. How do we create a CAB that is representative of the school community and stakeholders?

2. How can the CAB be engaged, including frequency of participation?
    a. Recruitment of participants
    b. Data collection
    c. Data analyses
    d. Interpretation

3. Terms of reference / working guidelines for this relationship

4. Communication strategies

Activity 2: Developing Research Questions

1. **STEP 1: NAME YOUR TOPIC**

What interests you?

I am interested in studying …

2. **STEP 2: ADD THE QUESTION**

Why?

Because I want to find out what/why/how …

3. **STEP 3: MOTIVATE YOUR QUESTION**

What for?

In order to understand …

Source: Booth, Wayne C. et al. (2003). Chapter Three: From Topics to Questions. Pp. 40-52, in *The Craft of Research*. 2nd Edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.