THE TEACHING QUALITY STANDARD AND LEARNER ENGAGEMENT: HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS

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A thesis submitted
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF EDUCATION

in

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Faculty of Education
University of Lethbridge
LETHBRIDGE, ALBERTA, CANADA

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Date of Defence: June 9, 2021

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated first and foremost to my mentor, Dora Jean Olson, the first and only member of her family of origin to receive post-secondary degrees including a BA/B.Ed. from University of Lethbridge and an M.Sc. in Education from University of Nevada, Las Vegas where she graduated *summa cum laude*. Dora dedicated her professional life to full time classroom teaching of Grades 2, 3, and 4 and was a reading interventionist over a 26-year career while she raised three children. She published a thesis on the topic of the use of writing portfolios in Early Literacy, which she researched and wrote while her son was an infant. Her courage, tenacity, and commitment to education has been a model to me all my life and has given me strength when my own determination has faltered.

This work is also dedicated to the students of Alberta, Qatar, China, and Jordan whom I have had the honour to work with over the past 19 years. They taught me how to be the type of teacher they needed me to be, and the person they needed me to be, with more patience and love than I deserved. I hope to be ever mindful of their voices.

ABSTRACT

What indicators of quality teaching, as defined by the *Teaching Quality Standard (TQS)* (Alberta Education, 2018c), are perceived by Alberta high school students to be of importance to their intellectual engagement? Do students of varying grades place different value on indicators of quality teaching? Indicators from the *TQS* were scored in a quantitative survey, using a Likert-type scale, as to their importance to students' intellectual engagement. Participants rated their teachers' demonstration of respect highest of the 51 indicators as a whole cohort as well as when disaggregated by grade levels. They scored teacher engagement in career-long learning highest of the competencies, and items related to teachers' growth mindset and belonging mindset (Rattan, Savani, Chugh, & Dweck, 2015; Yeager et. al, 2019) were of greatest importance to participants, including: the provision of feedback, equality, response to student strengths and areas for growth, and the provision of a safe and welcoming classroom.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My deep gratitude to my co-supervisors, Dr. Pamela Adams, and Dr. Carmen Mombourquette without whom I would never have begun this study, much less followed through with it. They believed in me and were able to communicate their encouragement in such a way that I was upheld by their strength as my own failed me. They are both wonderful examples of accomplished scholars who are simultaneously deeply kind and generous human beings. I am also grateful to Dr. Balderson and Dr. Marynowski for agreeing to be part of this committee. My graduate studies at University of Lethbridge have surpassed my expectations threefold thanks to the wise, learned, and generous professors who guided me.

I must acknowledge a high school principal, Matt Fell, who unknowingly nudged me into my research topic while we were supervising a basketball tournament one weekend.

There are several members of my family to thank including my mom and her husband, who gave me a home away from home during graduate school, packed my lunches and breakfasts, made my dinners, walked my dog, and read my first graduate school papers, fearlessly giving me feedback I needed to improve without dashing my self-esteem. I must also thank my husband, Paul for encouraging me to spend three years at my laptop, and my siblings Amber and Ethan for celebrating every success. Lastly, I must thank my stepson, Brody Evans, without whom I would never have become the teacher I am today and who never begrudged me a weekend at the books.

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> When I was in the first grade, I was afraid of the teacher and had a miserable time in the reading circle, a difficulty that was overcome by the loving patience of my second-grade teacher.
>
> -Beverly Cleary, American Author (1916 – 2021)

The importance of an intellectually engaging teacher cannot be underestimated, if for no other reason than most everyone, whether a legendary author or not, can name at least one teacher who they consider having been fundamental to their success, achievement, or growth as a student. Without the intervention of Beverly Cleary's Grade 2 teacher, the world may never have had Ramona Quimby or Henry Huggins. The *Teaching Quality Standard* (Alberta Education, 2018c) (Appendix A) mandates to all Alberta certificated teachers what the provincial education ministry, Alberta Education considers to be indicative of competent and qualified teachers. The standard itself consists of a broad overarching statement followed by six competencies, each with a list of indicators that help to clarify the meaning and practice of each competency. By setting the standard, Alberta Education implies that these competencies are those they deem to be characteristic of an effective teacher. In establishing this professional standard, Alberta Education selected the competencies they expect teachers to demonstrate to maintain their professional standing and suggested indicators of those competencies. The *Teaching Quality Standard* suggests that "students, parents and other partners in education should be confident that Alberta teachers demonstrate the *Teaching Quality Standard* throughout their careers" (Alberta Education, 2018c, p. 2) with institutional confidence.

However, Glickman (2002) presented a compelling question regarding perceived competencies: "Are you certain about what good teaching is…and how students should interact,

respond, and shine? Certainty can become arrogance and dogmatism" (p. 3). The indicators attached to each competency are suggestions that are meant to outline how each competency may be demonstrated by a teacher. While once intended to be a sampling of suggestions, this list is quickly becoming a checklist of requirements of teachers, recalling the sentiment that, teaching is not rocket science, it is harder (Green, 2017). This implication that teachers are faced with complex demands reflects the importance of an ability to prioritize which of the indicators of competency would be of most benefit to students. Therefore, it may be of benefit for Alberta teachers ask their students to respond to the question: What is your present perception of the indicators of quality teaching in the province of Alberta and its impact on your intellectual engagement?

"Good teaching is when you have a teacher that you understand and the teacher understands you" (Daniels, Bizar, & Zemelman, 2001, p. 103). This high school student summarized an important and complex idea in the most basic terms: good teaching results in increased understanding. This begs consideration of the idea that while quality teaching may be definable by educational professionals, the fundamental characteristic of an effective teacher from a learner's point of view may reside in reciprocity. Quality teaching makes a profound impact on student learning. In fact, quality of teaching has been shown to be the most powerful variable in student learning, stronger by far than socio-economic factors (Daniels, Bizar, & Zemelman, 2001; Haynes, 2011). To be more specific, the importance of teacher effectiveness was highlighted by Alton-Lee (2003) in a synthesis of best research evidence. It was reported internationally that quality teaching in a quality learning environment comprised of students and the teacher is the key variable responsible for a 59% or higher variance in student scores. Alton-Lee asserted that quality teaching resulted not only in enhanced student achievement, but also in

increased quality of student involvement and participation. In Alberta, teachers must seek to "ensure all Alberta students have access to quality learning experiences that enable their achievement of the learning outcomes outlined in programs of study" (Alberta Education, 2018c, p. 2). When considering a plethora of anecdotal evidence, opinions, perceptions, and research-based evidence, it is generally left to teachers to determine what makes a learning experience one that will be significantly impactful to students.

Aspiring teachers in the province of Alberta took courses in their Bachelor of Education degrees that both asked and answered the question; What is quality teaching? As they proceeded through their student teaching semesters, these same teachers were exposed to professors and a mentor or partner teacher who likely either shared explicitly, or demonstrated implicitly, their beliefs or experiences regarding what it means to be an effective teacher. As the novice teacher embarked on their first years of teaching and became an increasingly experienced professional, they probably developed their own pedagogical practices that amalgamated both their education and their ongoing experiences in the field. As the teacher became experienced, it may have come as a surprise to learn that colleagues' definitions of quality teaching can be vastly different from one another and that other stakeholders in education also have their own perspectives on what defines effective teaching practice. With so much professional input as to quality teaching, why do educators seldom ask *students* to define what excellent teachers do that leads to student intellectual engagement? Why were students not consulted in what defined quality teaching for them?

The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore Alberta students' perceptions about what constitutes quality teaching specific to the legislated standard of professional practice and which

components reflect what high school students believe they need from their teachers to support their intellectual engagement. Since their voice was not sought or acknowledged in the creation of the current professional standard, when seeking to engage students, there may be much to be learned from Alberta high school student voice as to their perceptions of the indicators of competent teaching. Therefore, the primary research question was: What indicators of quality teaching, as defined by the *Teaching Quality Standard (TQS)* (Alberta Education, 2018c), are perceived by Alberta high school students to be of greatest importance to their intellectual engagement? The secondary research question was: Do Alberta high school students of varying grade levels place different value on indicators of quality teaching? These research questions formed the parameters of inquiry as to why this study is necessary and significant as the exploration of student intellectual engagement provided the rationale for the research.

Rationale and Significance

According to an infographic on student engagement in Canada (Dunleavy & Willms, 2011), less than half of Canadian high school students were intellectually engaged in school - also described as engaged in learning content - with the number dropping as low as 41% in Grade 11. While 75% of Canadian students reported social engagement at school in the form of friendships, only 31% of the 67, 248 students surveyed reported an interest in, or motivation for, learning the content being taught in classrooms. Alberta Education (2018a) statistics illustrated a slight incremental rise in high school completion rates in Alberta, including the most recent available from the 2015-2016 school year that reflected 77.9% of Alberta students completed high school in three years and 83.2% completed high school in five years. This statistic accompanies the caveat that the Alberta high school completion rate includes students who enter a post-secondary institution or an apprenticeship program in the province. In these instances,

students have completed sufficient high school courses to continue in post-secondary schooling (Alberta Education, 2018a) though they may not have graduated with a diploma or certificate. Therefore, while Alberta students completed enough schooling to enter a post-secondary program, these numbers neither confirm nor refute national engagement statistics. Nor is it clear what became of the 16.8% of students in the province who did not graduate or complete coursework sufficient to enter other types of post-secondary institutions.

The Fraser Report (Cowley & MacLeod, 2018) shone a sobering light on completion statistics when disaggregated by individual schools. While Alberta's aggregate statistics seemed to tell a story of upward trends in success at the secondary level, the Fraser Report demonstrated discrepancies between schools in the private system and those in the public system. The report demonstrated for example, private schools where, due to application processes, 0% of the students enrolled had exceptionalities or language learning needs as compared with schools in the public system where almost a quarter of students had exceptional needs. While these detailed reports showed some examples of public high schools with strong completion rates, there were also specific examples of public schools with completion rates well below 50%. To respond to these poor results, various stakeholders joined the discussion about what may be done, as "recent learning sciences research findings compel educators to invent new learning environments better suited to meet the demands of the 21st century" (Friesen, 2009, p. 7). School authorities, provincial government, school leaders, and teachers do not take these numbers lightly. Knowing that teaching is key to student success, teachers are evaluated in the first few years of being hired, a process that is almost exclusively based on the provincial standard for teachers in Alberta.

The province of Alberta has, for several decades now, published standards of what is expected of its teachers. Most recently, Alberta Education published the *Teaching Quality Standard* (2018c) which was an updated statement as to the standard itself and the accompanying competencies that Alberta teachers are expected to meet. The standard and competencies apply for all certificated teachers in the province, to all subject disciplines and across age or grade divisions. The standard itself outlined, "Quality teaching occurs when the teacher's ongoing analysis of the context, and the teacher's decisions about which pedagogical knowledge and abilities to apply, result in optimum learning for all students" (Alberta Education, 2018c, p. 3). As such, involving students to discover which strategies, actions, and behaviors teachers may undertake are of greatest value to the students themselves has become not only desirable, but necessary. As Flutter and Rudduck (2004) proposed, there have been significant attempts to reform and change education on the part of governments, but this has not led to equally significant solutions. As all other avenues have been exhausted, learning must be explored through the eyes of the students themselves. This would allow teachers to develop strategies based on a firm understanding of student voice in teaching and learning. It is time for Alberta to join many countries such as Germany, Denmark, and Sweden where the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child (Centre for Human Rights, United Nations, 1989) has been taken up vigorously by educators and educational leaders in the form of meaningful student participation in the governance of schools and student voice in decision making in matters of teaching and learning (Flutter & Rudduck, 2004). Doing so would include seeking high school students' perceptions of the importance of the competencies and indicators indicated in the standard of teaching practice.

Context

When I began teaching over 17 years ago, I was unconcerned with what students might want or need in a teacher, predominantly because I believed that I already knew. I had recently been a K-12 student in various public schools in Lethbridge and Sherwood Park, Alberta, and a public secondary school in Las Vegas, Nevada. I had also just completed university studies to understand what educational researchers and experienced educators considered to be pedagogically sound practice and felt that I had a solid grasp of what an excellent teacher should know and be able to do. When in doubt, I had new colleagues, department heads, and school leaders who were only too eager to inform me of what they perceived students needed from me. Lastly, I grew up with a mother who was an elementary school teacher and a stepfather who was a professor of education, therefore a substantial amount of household conversation growing up centred on teaching and learning.

I first began my career teaching in urban Alberta, for a short time with junior high students and then - for eight and a half years - with senior high students in an upper middle-class community high school. As I predominantly taught elective classes in everything from fine and performing arts to cooking and baking, I mostly worked with students who were happy to be in my classes and did what they were asked. Particularly in my drama classes, students had a consistent success rate. The first decade of my career was spent with students who had supportive families and, if they did not exactly have an intrinsic desire to learn, they demonstrated enough compliance to convince me they had learned. When the occasional student was non-compliant or non-achieving, I tried some standard interventions like phoning their parents, which often was enough to get the student back on track. Students who outright failed were non-attenders and in my mind, I did not have time for them, nor did I believe I had any

control over the many issues that were keeping them out of school. It was only years later that I learned many of these students had dealt with real life complexities and traumas including addiction, mental health barriers, life-threatening eating disorders, and serious family problems.

As a student, I had been driven by a love of learning early in elementary school. I built my vision of what I would do as a teacher based on that version of myself. Looking back on it, I am not sure how I conveniently ignored my junior high and early high school experiences. During a four-year period, I refused to attend school but still somehow managed to achieve high marks in my classes. In fact, I would receive on the same day in our mailbox, truancy letters and letters of commendation for achieving 97% in Social Studies or even one semester 100% in French, signed by the principal. I remember my mother's exasperation at this. I did not really start to reengage in school until halfway through tenth grade and then I picked up where I had left off, becoming not just an "A" student, but an attending student once again. I did not want to think about that drop-out, school-loathing version of myself as I began teaching. I felt a lot of shame about that phase of my young life. I was not using drugs, being sexually exploited, or trying to run away and join a commune but I had become completely disengaged from schooling, almost overnight. I was not able to connect my own experience to what my students were going through in my early teaching career. At that time, I assumed that most of my students were that elementary school version of me, excited about school and eager to please. I had compassion for students who struggled with exceptionalities that held them back from what I believed they wanted. However, I had limited understanding of what some students had to overcome and believed I had even less control of those factors than I had understanding. If one or two students in a class did not pass the course each semester, I comforted myself that I had done all I could for them, and that some students simply did not want what I had to offer, were not ready to be

learners, or suffered from a case of bad attitude. I would have gone on like this for some time, perhaps my entire career, but my career path led me to teach elsewhere in Alberta and the world.

Over the next five years, I taught students in every grade level from pre-Kindergarten to Grade 12 in four other cities: Doha, Beijing, Amman, and then a smaller urban center in northern Alberta. I taught art, drama, music, or was an elementary generalist, as circumstances dictated. I worked with populations including the wealthy elite, refugee students of means, and working-class children who were being raised by foreign nannies due to their parents' punishing work schedules or high-demand society schedules of the wealthy. Toward the end of this experience, I came to see those past high school students through a vastly different lens. No matter what privileges or challenges students had been born into, all students I observed came to school with a hunger to learn, to be accepted and supported by their teacher, to feel welcomed at school, and to have happy, fun, and successful days. Working with elementary school students in these environments, I started to see the needs in children that went beyond curriculum and pedagogy. I realized that those same children were sometimes the ones growing up to be disaffected, disengaged, and discouraged high school students who had simply given up the idea of ever being able to find success, create a comfortable home at school, or achieve approval.

I returned to my original urban Alberta school board, but this time to a high school with extremely low socio-economic demographics and students who were statistically unlikely to complete high school, or even to complete Grade 12 subjects (Cowley & Macleod, 2018). Over the next three years I met disengaged students whose background stories gave me migraines, so unimaginable were their histories. I met students who managed to get themselves to school despite multiple past school failures, legal problems, dysfunctional families, addictions, responsibilities for the care of young siblings, abject poverty, hunger, homelessness, mental

illness, severe learning exceptionalities, discouragement from their family regarding the value of education, and survivors of every imaginable sort of abuse and trauma. Yet, they still arrived at school most days, as if clutching to a shadow or the memory of hope. As Monica Nawrocki (2018) shared in her book, *Thanks for Chucking That at the Wall Instead of Me: Teaching At-Risk Children and Youth,* "kids in the classroom who look like 'troublemakers' are gifted, sensitive, potential-packed little souls, often hurting, and always desperate to succeed, regardless of the fact that their actions might suggest exactly the opposite" (p. 8). This bore out in my own experience of getting to the root of student disengagement or misbehavior and finding that students were filled with anxiety, misunderstanding, fear, or resentment.

The more I worked with school leaders and teachers to meet the needs of these students, the more baffled I became that the interventions I had learned over 14 years were ineffective. I began to believe that the band-aids and strategies that were being applied in other settings were not as effective as I thought and that I had to approach each student from a completely personal starting place, asking each: What does success look like to you? What do you need to be successful? I worked with both students and their teachers to develop school-based interventions, involve outside agencies, and provide a safe space for students to retreat to at school for extra emotional and intellectual support. I encountered students daily who were discouraged, downtrodden, angry, or fed up with school, learning, and teachers despite the professionals in the building working hard and long hours to provide every imaginable support to these students.

In pursuing my graduate degree, I began to study the new *Teaching Quality Standard* (Alberta Education, 2018c) in Alberta and to apply it in my context. It was suggested to me that I could bring teachers together to work towards the pursuit of these attributes. I was told that by doing so, we would all see how to improve our practice, thereby improving the daily lives of

students. I attempted to build trust with colleagues, collaborate with them, and undertook a process of learning how to incorporate generative dialogue (Adams, Mombourquette, & Townsend, 2019) in my leadership practice. My whole workday was focused on two main activities: direct contact with students to help them surmount barriers or supporting teachers through a form of instructional leadership. While I consistently observed teachers working hard to advance student learning, I continued to lose students that failed classes, dropped out of school, transferred to other schools or programs serving their needs, or simply faded out of school life.

One poignant and personal example occurred in my homeroom class. In Grade 10 there were 24 students registered, and by mid-Grade 12 that number had dropped to just 12, with only two that I knew of still attending school in a different institution; this meant ten students had left school entirely. Of these 12 students remaining, four would not be graduating without at least another year or more of high school. I was discouraged. I had sent personal letters of encouragement many times a semester to their homes and arranged one-on-one conferences with each of them regularly to discuss their academic, social, and personal well-being. I had fist-pumped, waved at, high-fived, and hugged them when I saw them out in the hallways. I had tracked their progress in classes and advocated for them when they got into trouble for negative behavior, required academic support, or needed to break some news to their parents. I had designed fun and engaging activities for our 40-minute homeroom blocks that encouraged teamwork, deep thinking, hands-on activities, and laughter. The school principal provided statistics that lead me to believe if I engaged in these behaviors, I would be able to change the life patterns of these students; however, in the end, my homeroom connection was not enough to

keep ten of these students in school and only eight of the original 24 students would receive either a high school diploma or certificate of completion within three years.

More than at any previous point in my career, I became curious about what students believed they needed from their teachers to be successfully intellectually engaged in learning. I was holding myself up to this standard of professional practice, as determined by the Alberta government but how was I to know that the TQS competencies were having any impact on students? If so, which ones did they perceive were of most help to them? Which aspects of the standard mattered to students? Which of these many competencies would make an impact on their perceptions and their desire to engage with learning? I wanted to allow the student voice to determine where to concentrate my energy and time, but I had limited understanding of what students believed they needed from me and from those teachers with whom I was collaborating. This is not to say that I was willing to abandon my own experience or the valuable contribution of educational research, but "how things are is often less important than how people think – or perceive – things are" (Flutter & Rudduck, 2004, p. 6) and for this reason, I became compelled to explore student perceptions of quality teaching. "Students know what good teaching looks like – but we rarely ask them" (Phi Delta Kappa International, 2012, p. 14). I began to look at that early teen version of myself and ask what had happened to cause the disengagement from school and what was it that brought me back?

Definition of Key Terms and Constructs

A student can be defined in many terms, but the *Teaching Quality Standard* allows for a broad description that serves this study well. A student is, "for the purpose of this standard, an individual enrolled in a school or required by law to attend*"* (Alberta Education, 2018c, p. 3). This study will focus on secondary students in the province of Alberta who are currently enrolled

in Grade 10, 11, or 12 in an Alberta accredited educational institution and engaged with the Alberta Program of Studies.

Many types of teachers may enter an individual's life; for the purpose of this study, teacher "means an individual who holds a certificate of qualification as a teacher" (Alberta Education, 2018c, p. 3) in the province of Alberta. This will only include teachers currently employed with a public or private school within the province, as they are the educators who would be expected to uphold the competencies of the *TQS* to be employed as professional teachers.

The term student voice may be used to describe a variety of efforts to engage students in choosing the experiences they have in schools. The term may be used to describe activities from a basic level of students providing their opinions to collaborative involvement with adults in school decision-making. Student voice describes ways in which students can be involved in school decisions that will directly impact their lives at school (Fielding, 2001; Levin, 2000, Mitra, 2009; 2018; Mitra & Gross, 2009). This study will explore student voice as it relates to their perceptions of the competencies necessary for quality teaching to impact student engagement in learning.

For the purpose of this study, the teaching standard is synonymous with the *Teaching Quality Standard* best described as "a framework for the preparation, professional growth, supervision and evaluation of all teachers…that Alberta teachers demonstrate…throughout their careers…[as] a consistent standard of professional practice for all teachers in the province" (Alberta Education, 2018c, p. 3). Within this standard, smaller clusters of competencies refer to "an interrelated set of knowledge, skills and attitudes, developed over time and drawn upon and applied to a particular teaching context in order to support optimum student learning as required

by the *Teaching Quality Standard"* (Alberta Education, 2018c, p. 3). Therefore, the standard is the umbrella, and the competencies are the spokes that hold the fabric of the umbrella – or the indicators - in its shape and provide the structure of the standard.

Student engagement is difficult to define and there is confusion as to what constitutes engagement or its sub-categories (Parsons & Taylor, 2011). The term may be considered a multidimensional construct that can include numerous experiences or observable behaviors such as attendance, task completion, making eye contact, and participation in activities. Engagement may also be defined as connection to the school community, formation of teacher-student relationships, inclusion in peer groups, and meaningful involvement in learning (Stevenson, Swain-Bradway, & LeBeau, 2019). For this study, student engagement is defined as meaningful connection to the institution of school and what happens there. Three sub-definitions designate types of student engagement in school. Intellectual engagement has also been referred to as cognitive engagement and can be defined as "a serious emotional and cognitive investment in learning [which is] a composite of interest and motivation, effort, effective learning time, relevance, rigour, and instructional challenge" (Dunleavy & Willms, 2011, p. 2). Therefore, intellectual engagement and engagement in learning will be used synonymously. Social engagement refers to the people students make connections with and to "meaningful participation in the life of the school [which includes] participation in sports and clubs, sense of belonging, and positive friendships at school" (Dunleavy & Willms, 2011, p. 2). Institutional engagement can be defined as active participation in the requirements for school success [including] attendance, homework behavior, and the value students place on the outcomes of schooling" (Dunleavy & Willms, 2011, p. 2).

The purpose of this study was to gain insight into students' perceptions about Alberta's *Teaching Quality Standard,* and whether the indicators of teacher competencies in the standard are perceived by students to be important to their intellectual engagement. As educators attempt to address the gap in high school completion rates and student engagement, listening to students' voices in relation to pedagogy and practice may shed light on teachers' knowledge, skills, and attitudes that students believe to be of greatest benefit. This required an investigation of the power relationship between institutions, the teacher, and students, as it relates to context, quality teaching, student voice, and student engagement.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

The purpose of this study was to explore Alberta high school students' perceptions of quality teaching as mandated by the *Teaching Quality Standard* (Alberta Education, 2018c) and identify the indicators of competency that students perceive to be of greatest importance to their intellectual engagement. The study also sought to determine whether high school students of varying grade levels place different value on indicators of quality teaching. It examined the possibility that student voice may shed light on pedagogy and practice of high school teachers. This chapter will discuss quality teaching, and the role standards play in defining it, explore teaching standards set by other provinces, and present research into student perspective on quality teaching. The chapter will also discuss student engagement and the role of student voice in schools as pertaining to pedagogy and teaching. A theoretical and conceptual framework will be presented to support the research study.

Review Methods

To review the topics relevant to this study, a range of understanding was mostly sought from literature published since 2000. Despite decades of literature available on teaching and learning, relevance to the contemporary classroom was an essential factor in this search. The external expectations of what the school system needs to produce are relatively new in the past two decades for three fundamental reasons. The first reason is economics – high school students formerly were able to claim middle-class jobs that now require post-secondary education (Mehta & Fine, 2019). The second is equity – there is a demand for inclusive and equitable education regardless of skin color, nationality, economic status, or initial skills level. Thirdly, civic complexities – students are required to leave high school prepared to address global complexities that include challenges such as climate change, global economic inequality, ideological

polarization, an avalanche of sources of opinion masquerading as fact, and other forms of disinformation (Mehta & Fine, 2019). This search included a review of books, reports, web sites, trade magazines, newspapers, and empirical and theoretical peer reviewed journal articles. Besides the Internet, the following databases were used: ERIC, Google Scholar, ProQuest Dissertations and Theses, and University of Lethbridge Library.

Quality Teaching

An Internet search for quality teaching revealed over 893,000,000 results. One compelling article from the Washington Post online included a summary of writing by University of California Los Angeles Graduate School of Education and Information Studies professor, Mike Rose (Strauss, 2013). He critiqued the phrase quality teachers and pointed out that despite teacher preparation, school rankings, and test-taking statistics, teachers who become famous for their skills are just as often those who do not attend prestigious universities or have the highest-scoring students on standardized exams. This finding was supported by Harris and Sass (2010), who were unable to find any link between teacher training and student success, as well as Goldhaber and Anthony (2007) who proposed that there was no consistent evidence of specific, observable teacher practices that led to student success. On the other hand, a Dutch study by Gerritsen, Plug, and Webbink (2016) found that when studying various success factors in twins, teacher quality was the significant factor in student success, though the study did not define a list of indicators of a quality teacher.

The exemplar teacher presented by Rose was Ms. Harriet Ball, made somewhat famous by charter school founders Mike Feinberg and Dave Levin in an online tribute to her following her death in 2011. She was described to possess:

> …a keen intelligence about children, pedagogical creativity, humor, an…understanding of race and social class, a deep commitment to those students in her charge and belief in

> their ability….Education policy and mainstream reform do not address these qualities. (Strauss, 2013, para. 3)

This article reflected the assertion that a teacher is more than just a list of skills and that quality teachers are that way because of who they are just as much as what they do each day. "Essentially, good teachers are people of vision, who possess deep understandings about the child, the relationship between teaching and learning, the purpose of education…Good teaching is as much about being as it is about doing" (Hull, 2013, p. 24). On the other hand, quality teaching may be defined as practices that facilitate for students their access to information and ability to engage in activities or tasks with the results of meeting curricular outcomes (Alton-Lee, 2003). While it was clear that teacher quality is essential to student achievement, which qualities specifically might be necessary to define a quality teacher were more difficult to isolate.

In his book, *The Courage to Teach,* Parker J. Palmer (1998) proposed that quality teaching cannot be reduced to methods or attributes but comes from the teacher's own integrity and identity. He insisted that teachers teach according to who they are inwardly, whether that serves students for better or for worse. Palmer pointed out that while educators frequently ask what should be taught, often ask how to teach well, and occasionally ask why and to what ends they teach, it is rare for educators to ask, "who is the self that teaches" (p. 4)? Palmer argued that quality teachers do not attend merely to the intellectual, but also to the emotional and spiritual aspects of themselves and their students. In a later edition of his book (2007), Palmer explored the impact that Bryk and Schneider (2002) had in bringing to light the vital factor of relational trust between parents and teachers, teachers and teachers, and teachers and administrators in advancing the success of students. Palmer saw their findings as a data-driven support of the concept that teacher qualities such as empathy, compassion, and ability to be forgiving, are essential to quality teaching. These personal character attributes are not absent from the *Teaching*

Quality Standard, as Alberta Education (2018c) did recognize the importance of relationships in the Standard. The TQS used descriptors that may be considered more measurable, objective, or observable, words such as effective, productive, and positive, rather than the emotional and spiritual traits described by Palmer. Palmer has developed programs in a variety of related disciplines and continues to advocate for developing trust, spirituality, and heart in teaching (Center for Courage & Renewal, 2020).

Psychologist John Hattie (2009) synthesized hundreds of studies in his meta-analyses related to student achievement and proposed what he called "visible teaching and learning" (p. 22). He described the need for appropriately challenging goals for students; a focus on mastery of content over breadth; consistent feedback for learning; passionate student, parent, and teacher participants; reciprocal teaching and learning for students and teachers; and evidence of meta-cognitive processes on the part of both teacher and students, resulting in deep learning. According to Hattie, quality teachers demonstrate a range of skills that include methods, learning strategies, and formative assessment for learning, but must also be passionate and engaging people who are adaptable, open, forthright, and mindful of student context. The now-branded Visible Learning web site summarized Hattie's conclusions about quality teaching: "Visible Teaching and Learning occurs when teachers see learning through the eyes of students and help them become their own teachers" (as cited in Waack, 2020, Infographics Section). According to recent updates (Hattie & Corwin, 2021) continuing synthesis of over 1300 meta-analyses involving more than 300 million students and 252 factors related to student achievement, there are in fact, numerous attributes, beliefs, and practices of a quality teacher that have positive impact on student achievement, and these are quantifiable. These teaching effects include diverse influences such as the provision to students of formative evaluation, response to intervention,

feedback, reciprocal teaching, jigsaw teaching method, collective teacher efficacy, and many more (as cited in Waack, 2015). The educational trend to be reliant on more measurable behaviors and practices of teachers when defining quality teaching is evident in teaching standards upheld by some school authorities.

The role of standards in quality teaching. "Teaching matters. It matters a lot" (Daniels, Bizar, & Zemelman, 2001, p. 100). While some variance in the definition of quality teaching may exist, "In order to fundamentally transform education, explicit attention must be given to articulating the conception of high-quality teaching needed to create the conditions for powerful learning in high schools" (Haynes, 2011, p. 13). In addition to the report published by the Ministry of Education in New Zealand that revealed the large variance in student performance attributed to differences in teachers (Alton-Lee, 2003), there was also a report published by the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future that showed similar wide variances on standardized tests and achievement factors that could be explained by the variable of the teacher alone (Daniels, Bizar, & Zemelman, 2001, p. 101). The New Zealand Ministry report revealed 10 indicators of quality teaching, based on a synthesis of research and best practice demonstrated by teachers across the nation that lead to student success. The indicators included a definition of quality teaching as well as competencies that quality teachers demonstrated. Quality teachers: focused on student achievement, academically and socially; utilized a caring, inclusive, and cohesive pedagogical approach; created effective links between school and cultural contexts; responded to the student process of learning; offered sufficient and effective opportunities for learning; supported learning cycles when students were learning in a multiple task context; aligned curriculum, resources, technology, task design, pedagogy, and school practices; scaffolded tasks and provided feedback to students on their engagement with those tasks;

provided opportunities for students to self-regulate, discuss ideas with the class and the teacher thoughtfully, and employ metacognitive strategies; and engaged in assessments that were related directly to learning goals (Alton-Lee, 2003, p. vi-x). This standard of quality teaching was meant to guide teachers in the challenge of meeting the needs of all learners and included many examples of the characteristics of each competency to assist teachers in meeting the standard.

Author, researcher, and Professor Linda Darling-Hammond (2011) from the Stanford University Graduate School of Education further verified many of these same points on the faculty web site. In a presentation about the importance of teacher preparation titled, *Quality teaching: What is it and how can it be measured?* Darling-Hammond (2011) outlined seven competencies that defined quality teaching that led to student achievement which included: engaging students in active learning, creating intellectually challenging tasks, using a variety of strategies for learning, providing assessment of learning continuously and adapting to student needs, creating scaffolds and supports for task completion, providing students with clear standards, regular feedback, and opportunities to revise completed tasks after feedback, and managing a collaborative classroom where all students have a sense of belonging. When writing about teachers who successfully engaged learners, Darling-Hammond, in collaboration with colleagues, later added the assertion that while teaching standards focus on technical knowledge, skills, content, pedagogy, collaboration, and dispositions, they must also attend to "the whole child and his or her development across physical, social, emotional, physical, and moral domains— anticipating that the teacher's role is to support this development" (Darling-Hammond, et al., 2017, p. 14). This was a significant addition to the earlier list of skills related specifically to pedagogy. The competencies listed in Darling-Hammond's presentation arguably

ignored the physical, social, emotional, and moral domains of the whole student, and was rather focused on their intellectual or academic needs.

In Canada, each province mandates education differently in accordance with the founding constitutional document (Government of Canada, 1867). In Ontario for example, the standard of professional practice for teachers were stated as: inspiring a shared vision for teaching; delineating the values, knowledge, and skills necessary in teaching; guiding teachers' professional judgment and actions; and developing common language in and about teaching as a profession (Ontario College of Teachers, 2020). The standard consisted of five competencies, each with very little to explain or define outcomes or indicators of success that demonstrated them including, "Commitment to Students and Student Learning, Leadership in Learning Communities, Ongoing Professional Learning, Professional Knowledge, [and] Professional Practice" (Ontario College of Teachers, 2020, p. 1). There was limited further description of these competencies and no information as to how the indicators of success could be measured.

The British Columbia Teachers' Council recently published a list of competencies as well. In the case of BC, nine competencies were deemed crucial. Again, a short explanation of each competency is provided but there are no concrete indicators in the document. The standard went into effect on June 19, 2019 and addressed: valuing student success; caring for students; ethical practices; knowledge of student development; involvement of the teacher with families and communities; effective planning, instruction, assessment, and accommodations for learners; an understanding of subject content; engagement with professional learning and contributions to teaching as a profession; and respect for and explicit teaching of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit history, culture, knowledge, and ways of being (British Columbia Teachers' Council, 2019). While this list was more specific than that of Ontario and referred to more than the

intellectual needs of students, it too lacked descriptors that could be referred to by school leaders, teachers, or students when describing quality teaching practices, behaviors, or attributes. It did, however, describe the need for a professional standard very clearly as being vital to advancing the teaching profession, defining the work of educators, and highlighting the complexities and subtleties of teaching.

Standards set an expectation for teachers as professionals but should also serve as a source for teacher growth and professional learning (Adams, Mombourquette, & Townsend, 2019). This study will examine the Alberta *Teaching Quality Standard* (Alberta Education, 2018c) from the perspective of a literature synthesis conducted through a collaboration by several of Alberta's current top professors in Faculties of Education at University of Lethbridge, University of Calgary, and University of Alberta (Stelmach, Adams, & Brandon, 2019). Newly updated in 2018 and implemented in 2019, this professional standard contained a similar list of six competencies which are believed to be indicative of high-quality teaching. However, the competencies themselves had descriptors attached. They included:

1. Fostering Effective Relationships: A teacher builds positive and productive relationships with students, parents/guardians, peers and others in the school and local community to support student learning.
2. Engaging in Career-Long Learning: A teacher engages in career-long professional learning and ongoing critical reflection to improve teaching and learning.
3. Demonstrating a Professional Body of Knowledge: A teacher applies a current and comprehensive repertoire of effective planning, instruction, and assessment practices to meet the learning needs of every student.
4. Establishing Inclusive Learning Environments: A teacher establishes, promotes and sustains inclusive learning environments where diversity is embraced and every student is welcomed, cared for, respected and safe.
5. Applying Foundational Knowledge about First Nations, Métis and Inuit: A teacher develops and applies foundational knowledge about First Nations, Métis and Inuit for the benefit of all students.
6. Adhering to Legal Frameworks and Policies: A teacher demonstrates an understanding of and adherence to the legal frameworks and policies that provide the foundations for the Alberta education system. (Alberta Education, 2018c, pp. 4-7)

Each one of these competencies was followed by a list of indicators that may be thought of as evidence that a teacher met them (Appendix A). While foundational and research-based support was not immediately evident for the other provincial standards, the *TQS* has undergone a literature synthesis process that led to a publication available on the University of Calgary website wherein researchers from across Alberta reviewed academic literature to support the competencies and indicators of the standard (Allan; et al., 2019). In Chapter Four, Adams and Allan (2019) explored the rationale for a standards-based approach to quality teaching practice. In their exploration of teaching standards in successful school authorities within Canada and the world, they determined there were four emerging themes that provided the rationale for standards of teaching practice:

1. To support student learning and success.
2. To guide teacher professional growth and ensure competence.
3. To credential and evaluate teachers.
4. To uphold the social standing of the teaching profession. (p. 67)

This study focused on the first two themes of student success and teacher competence as it relates to students' perceptions of quality teacher practices. As such, it was necessary to review other research into what attributes or behaviors of teachers that students are currently reporting they value.

Student perceptions of quality teaching and teachers. The purpose of this study was to come to understand high school students' perceptions of teaching standards and whether they agree that what has been mandated by Alberta Education is of importance to their intellectual engagement. Students in contemporary high schools may share the desperation of Rosalinda Gutierrez, a tenth-grade student at Whitman High School, who exclaimed, "'They don't even see how students feel at this school. We're really dying inside.' In fact, students report that adults rarely listen to their views, and they rarely involve students in important decisions" (Mitra, 2014,

p. 1). While reviewing the literature for this study, there were opportunities to discover what students in other parts of the western world believe to be important qualities of a teacher.

One qualitative study (Phi Delta Kappa International, 2012) of secondary students resulted in student feedback such as: “Hands-on activities are always good”; “I think good teachers don’t just teach students, but [they] get to know them and understand them. Teaching is more than just lessons; it’s the art of creating future generations”; “Good teachers are passionate about their jobs and students”; “Good teachers are constantly finding ways to make their class fun and keep their students interested” (pp. 14-15). In *Rethinking High School*, researchers interviewed students at a high-performing school in the United States. What they were told by students included: “Good teaching is when we learn something and have fun at the same time”; “A good teacher listens and cares”; “A good teacher cares about the students in school and outside of school”; “Good teaching is when the teacher is not predictable. The integrated units have been the best experiences because they are so interactive”; “Good teaching is when the teacher pushes you to the limit”; “Good teaching is if you’re teaching and everyone is ‘getting it,’ and you’re working with your friends” (Daniels, Bizar, & Zemelman, 2001, pp. 102-103). These and other similar results were varied and included a broad range of teacher characteristics ranging from results-oriented and challenging to laid back, fun, and inspiring. The student comments were not compared to a list of qualities or characteristics. Secondary students were simply asked what they value in a teacher.

Another summary of qualitative interviews of Australian secondary school students’ opinions of quality teaching (Flutter & Rudduck, 2004) included several main themes:
A respect for students individually and collectively; fairness as a right and responsibility regardless of student background or ability; engaging, dynamic, and challenging learning

activities; academic and personal supports; and attention to safety and security. This summary of student needs does not necessarily contradict the quality teaching standards outlined earlier, and in fact has some items, such as challenging learning tasks, in common. However, students in this study did bring up terms that were interesting to note including respect, fairness, support, and security.

Teachers spend more time with their students than they do with any other adults or professionals in the school including colleagues, parents, or school leaders. As it may not be possible to judge teacher effectiveness in any way other than direct observations (Goldhaber & Anthony, 2007), students may be the best positioned to assess quality teaching. Alberta implemented an annual survey, called *The Accountability Pillar* (Alberta Education, 2017) that includes students as participants each year, along with parents and teachers. While it addressed the need for student voice in some aspects of the school such as whether stakeholders felt there was enough access to specific subject areas and whether the school was generally safe and caring, it did not specifically address many qualities or habits of their teacher.

The Accountability Pillar Survey. Alberta annually conducts its own review of school effectiveness or improvement (Alberta Education, 2020), though the review is focused on schools and school districts or authorities, rather than targeting specific teachers or overall teaching practices. The entire review includes results from standardized tests and student, parent, and teacher surveys. It also includes drop-out rates, high school completion, scholarship eligibility, and advancement to post-secondary in calculating school improvement. In the 5-point Likert secondary student survey, teachers are mentioned twice, where students are asked to agree or disagree with whether teachers are available to help them, and whether teachers care about them (Alberta Education, 2017). The term teaching is used once, where students are asked

whether the quality of teaching at their school is; very good, good, poor, very poor, or don't know (Alberta Education, 2017). Grade 10 students are asked to complete the survey half-way through their first year of high school. While student engagement and student voice are not mentioned as a goal of surveying students in Grade 4, 7, and 10, it may be considered an accidental benefit of the survey process, although there is no evidence to support or refute whether students value the instrument as an opportunity to directly have a say in their learning.

Despite a range of results in what may be considered quality teaching, Alberta Education legislated expectations for its teachers in the form of the standard. While the *TQS* (Alberta Education, 2018c) may yet prove to have value to teachers and school leaders that in turn benefits students, it is yet undetermined as to whether Alberta high school students concur that the competencies reflect those of greatest worth to them in influencing their intellectual engagement through the secondary years.

Student Engagement

Parsons and Taylor (2011) conducted a literature search that identified four themes concerned with activating and increasing student engagement. They included engagement with academic achievement and graduation as the goal, engagement with control as the goal including either: The teachers' sense of control over students and environment or the students' sense of control over learning and their school environment, engagement with emotional high or feeling good about learning as the goal, and engagement with deep learning as the goal. Engagement has been recognized as a significant issue in secondary education, as it is often linked with behavior, retention, and achievement rates (Parsons & Taylor, 2011; McMahon & Zyngier, 2009; Stevenson, Swain-Bradway, & LeBeau, 2019). Inversely, the lack of student engagement is usually seen as a problem with the students that requires some form of adult intervention to

change their circumstances, perceptions, attitudes, or experiences (McMahon & Zyngier, 2009; Stevenson, Swain-Bradway, & LeBeau, 2019).

To further complicate the issue in Canada, the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) study of students in 42 countries ranked Canada among the top three countries in reading but placed Canada 29th in student participation in school and 15th in sense of belonging at school, thereby bringing Canadian students' engagement into question, despite high literacy skills (Willms & Flanagan, 2007). This raises questions of what may be done to alter students' experiences and perceptions of their own engagement in schooling. Adam F. C. Fletcher, award-winning author, public speaker, and youth advocate founded both *The FreeChild Project* and *SoundOut.* Both projects were designed to improve engagement by giving students a meaningful voice in education:

> Ultimately, the most powerful step any of us can take is to continue to transform the ways we see and treat children and young people every day…we would see the complete engagement of young people emerge as a new cultural norm within a generation. (Fletcher, 2013, p. 21)

Fletcher's assertion that educators and other adults in positions of power could reengage students simply by how they treat them is worthy of further investigation and affirms the results of the student survey wherein students voiced the need for fairness, security, and respect.

In a survey of over 2000 Grade 10 – 12 students, researchers (Geraci, Palmerini, Cirillo & McDougald, 2017) set out to determine what factors influence student engagement. They hoped to find distinguishable groups that shared common behaviors and perceptions to define what students believed it meant to be intellectually, socially, or institutionally engaged. After dividing students into six engagement groups, the researchers surmised that students they described as predominantly engaged by emotional connection (whom they called *Emotionals)* and students who may have appeared to be disengaged but were thoughtful learners (whom they

called *Deep Thinkers*) were the two groups of students who reported they had considered leaving school. Other students who were more motivated by friends or academic outcomes were not likely to leave school and were considered engaged, at least on an institutional or social level.

A popular survey for determining high school engagement in the United States is the High School Survey of Student Engagement (HSSSE), a survey designed to evaluate multiple aspects of the student experience. When intensely studied, researchers determined that the results of the HSSSE were not likely to be reliable because "school personnel must ensure they select instruments that are appropriately fit to the school context" (Stevenson, Swain-Bradway, & LeBeau, 2019, p. 9). What may constitute successful engagement in one context may not be reflective of the same in another.

The *Tell Them from Me* survey (Willms & Flanagan, 2007) demonstrated world-wide that schools scoring high in categories of student advocacy, teacher-student relationships, and academically minded classrooms tended to have fewer students who reported themselves to be disengaged. Other measures of institutional engagement were also impactful on overall engagement such as attendance and participation in extracurricular activities. This survey is significant because its focus is on the value of students providing feedback to their schools and having a say in their own education. Another survey of over 2000 American high school students concluded that when it came to engagement, student choice was crucial: not just choice in institution, but choice in teachers, classes, mode of course delivery, and even instructional style and strategies (Geraci, Palmerini, Cirillo, & McDougald, 2017). While some teachers use student choice as a strategy in student task completion, it has rarely been considered relevant in pedagogy and teaching strategies.

Despite theoretical developments to the contrary, many schools continue a traditional approach to student engagement and to students' involvement in decision making, pedagogy, and curriculum:

> Much of the research essentialises engagement, portraying it and its supposed concurrent academic success as a function of the individual, ignoring the contribution of gender, socio-cultural, ethnic and economic status (class) factors, and then making a (tenuous) link with what happens in classrooms." (McMahon & Zyngier, 2009, p. 167)

As an added complexity, the belief that students are teachers' equal partners is not acceptable to all teachers (Gerwertz, 2016). In many cases, teachers may be aware that students are disengaged in learning but have no idea what to do about it (Mehta & Fine, 2019). Despite this, increasing student voice in schools in meaningful and significant ways has been shown to help to re-engage disaffected students by providing them with a stronger sense of ownership in their learning environments (Mitra, 2014). Often, when students reject school, re-engagement efforts do not involve commitments to agency or voice (Fielding, 2001). Engagement initiatives are often focused on student behaviors and habits, such as attendance, assignment completion, extra-curricular involvement, and even behavior contracts, wherein students agree to a prescribed list of actions that indicate to teachers or school leaders that they are committed to their schooling.

Mehta and Fine (2019) found in their study of high schools that the core programs in schools "are often fundamentally disconnected from who students are and what they can do" (p. 8). If student voice is a missing factor in unsuccessful attempts to re-engage them, then it may be that attending to youth perspective could be the connecting bridge between curriculum, schools, teachers, and disengaged students.

Student Voice

"Student voice is noticeably often absent from the majority of academic research, practice, and policy formation" (McMahon & Zyngier, 2009, p. 167). At the beginning of this

century, student voice initiatives were quite uncommon because of residual traditional status distinctions between adults and youth in school settings that made meaningful student voice initiatives difficult to sustain (Mitra, 2014). An Internet search for youth advocacy and engagement in Canada revealed several agencies that advocate to engage youth in a variety of social issues and initiatives including mental health, suicide, Indigenous advocacy, physical health, legal rights and obligations, creativity, citizenship, and social justice. In Alberta, the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate Alberta (OCYA) is specifically mandated to provide "education on the rights, interest and viewpoints of children and youth" (Office of the Child and Youth Advocate, 2020, p. Info for Adults, para. 2). The agency provides system and individual advocacy, and will make presentations to groups on related topics, yet there was no mention of advocacy specifically related to schooling or education. Despite this, "as the new century unfolded, teachers, principals, students, scholars, and advocates around the globe began to take up and act on these calls" (Cook-Sather, 2013, p. 17). Examples included *The Victorian Student Representative Council* (*VicSRC)* in Australia, the *Consulting Pupils About Teaching and Learning* project in England, the *SpeakUp* project of the Ontario Ministry of Education, and *SoundOut* in the United States. These early models offered resources to others and spurred the start of a global conversation about student voice (Cook-Sather, 2013).

Researchers explored the question, "What would happen if we treated the student as someone whose opinion mattered…" (Fullan, 2001, p. 165)? One such study asked what students had to say about teaching, learning, and barriers in physical education (Couturier, Chepko, & Coughlin, 2005); another about the impact of teachers' actions and behavior on students' mathematics learning in high school (Crane, 2014); a model created in consultation with students for developing curriculum with intellectually disengaged youth in their science courses (Seiler,

2011); an examination of students' perceptions of effective teacher practice at an online high school to increase student success in online learning (Borup & Stevens, 2017); and pedagogy negotiated with students as part of the culture of an entire school (Fraser, 2007; Gewertz, 2016). These case studies reported that working with students to develop meaningful learning experiences for them had positive results in some form, whether on student attendance, academic results, perceptions, attitudes, or behaviors. In the examples of studies about successful student voice initiatives, "…teenagers are deeply involved in shaping the pillars of school life, from the daily class schedule to the styles of teaching and learning that work best for them" (Gewertz, 2016, p. 5). While these examples are case studies, they demonstrate that a well-designed student voice initiate can have positive results.

Student voice can be liberating and contribute to the decolonization of education (Battiste, 2013). In the 21st Century, "learning can no longer be understood as a one-way exchange where 'we teach, they learn'" (Friesen, 2009, p. 6). The response to a colonizing mindset may be to acknowledge all stakeholder input, including that of students, as having equal value. "When placed into practice, student voice can describe instances in which young people collaborate with adults to address the problems in their schools and to improve teaching and learning in their classrooms" (Mitra, 2014, p. 2). In Nunavut, Inuit students were interviewed about teaching and learning to support the predominantly non-Inuit teaching and leadership staff to understand what Nunavummiut Inuit students identify as success and what pedagogical and social experiences in the classroom had the greatest impact on learning (Lewthwaite & McMillan, 2010). Recently in Turkey, a researcher developed a tool for principals whereby they could ask students questions about teaching quality and teacher effectiveness and then use the results to design professional development for their schools (Bozkus, 2019). In a socio-

economically disadvantaged school in the United States, high school students were consulted about the effects of the staff turnaround that resulted from the school reform process, in order to better understand the impact of system-based reforms on individual identity as well as other impacts of instability in staffing and school culture on students (Pazey & DeMatthews, 2019). One response from a teacher who included student voice in the development of their own teaching practice shared that the process was valuable to teachers as well as students: "It's important for students to realize they can have a big influence on their learning…we get a lot out of it…" (Gewertz, 2016, p. 7). In the literature reviewed, there were no negative short-term or lasting results found of incorporating student voice in schools or learning, other than the reports of teachers that resisted involvement in such undertakings in the first place.

The MetLife Foundation supported a series of videos that featured high school students speaking to the camera about teaching and learning. The series, first released in 2012, was called *Just Listen* and can be found on the *What Kids Can Do* web site. The students' one-minute messages convey what young people say they want for themselves: challenging and engaging classes, positive relationships with teachers in high school, and a feeling of success in learning (What Kids Can Do, 2018). Again, students asked to be challenged. In this case, they also reported the importance of feeling accepted and successful. The opportunity to have their voices heard on the topic of classrooms and learning was the point of this video blog though, regardless of what students said on the topic.

Despite logistical challenges and teacher and institutional resistance to the philosophical theories that support creating space for student voice, creating collaborative student-teacher partnerships, and increasing student voice is possible. Involving students in setting the direction of their own education creates meaningful experiences that meet students' developmental needs,

and student voice can strengthen teacher professional collaborations as well (Mitra, 2014). While student voice in schools may have had positive results, it is by no means the norm or even common in Alberta high schools for student voice to have direct impact on teaching and learning. Facilitating the struggles of rebellious or disengaged youth to democratic agents who have a confident voice in pedagogy "is a task for radicals; it cannot be carried out by sectarians" (Freire, 2000, p. 39) or by teachers who are fearful of what the student voice may have to say.

Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

In seeking a theoretical framework for this study, both power theory and critical theory were applied. The conceptual framework for the study was the *Teaching Quality Standard* (Alberta Education, 2018c).

Michel Foucault and Power Theory. Foucault was a French philosopher of the 20th Century who could also be described as a historian and social theorist associated with both structuralism and post-structuralism (Gutting & Oksala, 2018). Foucault protested near the end of his life that his ideas did not represent a theory or methodology because, by default, a theory assumes objectification of the individual which was the very phenomenon he held in question (Foucault, 1983). His writing focused on the relationships of power between individuals in opposition and proposed a theory of power relevant to education and the relationship between teachers and students. Regarding psychiatrists, medical doctors, and the modern prison system, Foucault examined "the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects" (Foucault, 1983, p. 208). He questioned the division between subject and object such as the healthy doctor who objectifies the sick, the detached psychiatrist who objectifies the mentally ill, the citizen who objectifies the criminal, and the teacher who objectifies the student. He extended this to several common societal oppositions including "the power of women over men,

of parents over children…of administration over the ways people live" (Foucault, 1983, p. 210). Foucault became known as a philosophical historian because of his examination of history as a method of questioning modern assumptions that institutions and society are superior today to what they were in the past. He examined modern power struggles and suggested commonalities between them: They are transversal struggles, the power effects are often uncontrolled, they are immediate struggles, they question the status of the individual causing separation from others, they are struggles against the privileges of knowledge or of someone else telling you who you are, and they all revolve around the fundamental philosophical question: Who are we? Foucault argued that these power struggles can be categorised in three themes: forms of domination, forms of exploitation, and forms of power that submit the individual to others (Foucault, 1983; Gutting & Oksala, 2018; Western philosophy: Michel Foucault, 2015; Waller, 2015).

Foucault (1995) addressed the structure of schools directly in *Discipline & Punish*. He examined the historical treatment of criminals and argued that punishment in today's prisons is far from superior to the corporal punishments meted out in the centuries past. He proposed that the modern form of punishment, imprisoning people, created the opportunity for hierarchal observation where others can impose a normalizing judgment on those in prisons, objectifying them by labelling them as inferior people. Foucault asserted that this modern model of punishment became a pattern for control of an entire society in the forms of factories, hospitals, and schools. The examination of either patients in hospitals or of students in schools, like the guard observes the prisoner, is a method of controlling the behavior of the objectified. Foucault argued that knowledge, power, and history interact and change not only what people think, but the way they think. The way they are educated, governed, and punished make people a product of the history of knowledge and power.

This theory about history, power, and modern Western schooling was echoed by psychologist Dr. Peter Gray (2008). He wrote of the destruction of play in education and outlined how the purpose of school as we know it today developed because of, first agriculture and then later industrialization. Prior to that time in hunter-gatherer cultures, children predominantly learned through play because their parents and elders recognized that it was the best way for them to learn. Formal education for everyone also developed in Western culture thanks at least in part to Protestantism and Martin Luther's insistence that all people must read the Bible to gain access to heaven (Gray, 2008). Thus, began schooling for children of all economic and social backgrounds, first operated in Germany in the 16th century by the Lutheran church. With fewer children needed to harvest crops in agricultural societies, or to work in factories in urban centres, child labour became outmoded and then illegal, and school became the place to develop literacy, control behaviour, and socialize children whose parents were away at places of work. The purpose of schools, Gray argued, became for children to fill a role much like they had in the factory or on the farm in the recent past, where adults prescribed what children had to learn and then provided whatever discipline was necessary to gain compliance from children. Behavioural challenges arose when children and young people resisted the inculcation of schools and sought to play, discover, and finding meaning for themselves. Modern day teachers are expected to maintain order and discipline and to teach a specific curriculum with outcomes provided by the province, state, or other governing authority, though by less corporal means that in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Gray's assertion is echoed in the history of Alberta schools.

Alberta joined Canadian Confederation in September 1905. In its early years, the purpose of public schooling was to educate new immigrants and Indigenous peoples in Canadian and Albertan (meaning Anglo-Saxon) ways (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 2008; Eli, 2005).

Children and young adults needed to learn English and to learn the laws of the land. In the case of Indigenous students, the government infamously legislated their assimilation and enforced it through Residential Schools. Residential Schools failed on every front, from the assumption that Indigenous Canadians had to be modernized by the colonizing culture to the horrific abuse that the students who attended them were regularly forced to endure. Alberta's provincial schools continued to operate, expanded in numbers, and becoming more organized and legislated as years went on, often modelled after Ontario's schools. As Alberta was predominantly rural at the commencement of the 20th century, many students did not continue to secondary school. As of 1955, students in Alberta were considered to have achieved an adequate education if they were able to read, write and do arithmetic to around a sixth-grade level. However, the province did prescribe some curricula that could be taught as optional learning if it were applicable to a particular region in Alberta. Teachers had inspectors who would visit their schools to ensure students were behaving and learning what the province had mandated.

The modern disciplinary system, whether in schools or prisons, has a conforming effect on society and individuals (Gutting & Oksala, 2018; Waller, 2015). Knowing this, an educator who is seeking to involve student voice in pedagogy must understand that self-depreciation is a characteristic of the objectified person. "They call themselves ignorant and say the 'professor' is the one who has knowledge…it is only natural that they distrust themselves" (Freire, 2000, p. 63). Therefore, a critical pedagogy is needed to "educate students to lead a meaningful life, learn how to hold power and authority accountable, and develop the skills, knowledge, and courage to challenge common sense assumptions…" (Giroux, 2012, p. 7). After a minimum of more than a hundred years of being told when, what, where, why, and how to learn, that students would struggle to find their voice in the first place, or to trust it. Students are taught by teachers who

were also taught in this same system, generation after generation. According to the current model of schools in Alberta, the powerful are the ones who know what is important, how society should run, and what the consequences ought to be when those who lack power find it difficult to conform.

Paulo Freire and Critical Theory. Freire was a Brazilian educator and philosopher, also of the 20th Century. He became known as one of the founding theorists of critical pedagogy (Cucinelli & Steinberg, 2012; Giroux, 2011). His first book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Freire, 2000) was a "critique of the dominant banking model of education [which led to] his democratic proposals of problem-posing education" (Macedo, 2000, p. 12) that would allow the oppressed (students) to realize their oppression and free themselves from it with the teacher acting as a facilitator of this self-liberation. He described the banking model of education as one which turns students into empty vessels needing the teacher to fill them. "The more completely she fills the receptacles, the better a teacher she is. The more meekly the receptacles permit themselves to be filled, the better students they are" (Freire, 2000, p. 72). Freire objected to this model as it was designed to maintain the power of the oppressor.

Dissonance is created in individuals when they perceive "that the deposits themselves contain contradictions about reality" (Freire, 2000, p. 75); that the oppressed are being domesticated, maintained, and dehumanized to the point when they sense that "their present way of life is irreconcilable with their vocation to become more fully human" (Freire, 2000, p. 75). At that point, disharmony and rebellion result as "the young perceive that their right to say their own word has been stolen from them…and…that the educational system today – from kindergarten to university – is their enemy" (Shaull, 2000, p. 34). Lacking the knowledge, skills,

and courage for a revolution, the unheard student may rely on disengagement as a passive-aggressive form of relief.

As a teacher himself, Freire did not blame teachers for this oppressive structure. In an interview given at a literacy conference in 1996, Freire explained his intentions in theorizing about critical pedagogy based upon the experiences he had as a teacher of language and literacy in Brazil:

> I defend the duty of the teacher to teach the cultivated pattern and I defend the rights of the kids or of the adults to learn the dominant pattern. But it is necessary in being a democratic and tolerant teacher…to make clear to the kids or to the adults that their way of speaking is as beautiful as our way of speaking. Second, that they have the right to speak like this. Third, nevertheless they need to learn the so-called dominant syntax for different reasons. That is, the more the oppressed, the poor people, grasp the dominant syntax, the more they can articulate their voices and their speech in the struggle against injustice. (International Literacy Institute, 1996)

When the oppressed involve themselves in the struggle for their own liberation, they can finally begin to believe in themselves. This discovery of their capacity must involve action and must not end at activism but also include reflection on that action. Teachers and students must co-intentionally unveil reality, examine it through a critical lens, come to know it through action and common reflection, and recreate reality together (Freire, 2000). Freire believed that teachers should not be considered technicians who carry out others' instructions. He declared that teachers ought to be scholars, researchers, agents of morality, philosophers, and insurgents (Cucinelli & Steinberg, 2012). Freire's critical pedagogy provided an opportunity for "educators and young people to develop and assert a sense of their rights and responsibilities to participate in self-governance…" (Giroux, 2011). Problem-posing education, wherein students are no longer empty bins or merely listeners, proposed that teachers constantly reflect on pedagogy within the context of their students' reflections, and that students "are now critical co-investigators in dialogue with the teacher" (Freire, 2000, p. 81). In pursuit of the democratic ends of critical

pedagogy, this study will attempt to pose the problem of student disengagement through the conceptual framework of the *TQS* (Alberta Education, 2018c) to begin to encourage student voice in the determination of quality teaching and bring students into a pedagogical dialogue with their teachers.

The Teaching Quality Standard and Critical Pedagogy. If reflection and re-creation is a mandatory aspect of critical pedagogy, then the *TQS* (Alberta Education, 2018c) offers teachers a conceptual framework whereby they may self-reflect on numerous competencies. Freire may not have ascribed to a skills and attributes list; however, he did instruct teachers to avoid waiting for a revolution that may never come and to instead "quest for mutual humanization" (Freire, 2000, p. 75) by partnering with students in critical thinking. By accessing student voice in what they believe are the qualities of a competent teacher as prescribed by the governing body, an educator may begin the praxis of Critical Theory.

In the United States, the state of Washington has taken up the work of enabling student voice in its schools by implementing a student perception survey. The state partnered with the Center for Strengthening the Teaching Profession (CSTP) (2020) to first develop a student survey in partnership with hundreds of the state's teachers, administer the student survey, provided numerous other tools including student self-reflections on the survey, teacher reflections, supports for using survey results, emotional supports for both teachers and students using the survey, teacher collaboration tools, and personal action plans. This illustrated an example of how students were involved in not only sharing their feedback but reflecting on the process of both the survey responses and the incorporation of those responses into the classroom. As the project web site described, "This can open avenues for on-going dialogue and feedback, exhibit to students the teacher's growth mindset and create stronger partnerships with students as

initiators of their own their own learning and growth" (The Center for Strengthening the Teaching Profession, 2020, para. 2). If the *TQS* (Alberta Education, 2018c) could be used for similar teacher and student growth, teachers could engage with students in critical pedagogy about learning, education, teaching, engagement, and curriculum.

This chapter has outlined the methods of literature review relevant to this study. Quality teaching was explored in general terms, as well as when held to a prescribed standard. Qualitative evidence of student perception of quality teaching was presented which had common themes such as fairness, fun, supportive, engaging, understanding, and safe. Student engagement, while a critical factor in student success was difficult to define and had numerous manifestations with few concrete factors, but rather ever-changing contextual basis. Student voice in schools and more specifically in matters affecting pedagogy was explored. Finally, the theoretical frameworks of power theory and critical theory were presented and tied to the conceptual framework of Alberta's standard of expectations for quality teachers.

Chapter 3: Research Methods

This chapter will outline the methodology of the study, including epistemological and ontological assumptions related to the research methodology, a description of the research methodology, a description of data sources and gathering, analysis, and interpretation. It will include ethical considerations, delimitations, limitations, assumptions, and researcher biases.

The purpose of this study was to explore Alberta high school students' perceptions of the teaching standard and the importance of the competencies therein to students' intellectual engagement. This was undertaken by examining in what ways the standard of professional practice, including the teacher competencies and indicators, reflect what high school students believe they need from their teachers to intellectually engage in school. The primary research question was: What indicators of quality teaching, as defined by the *Teaching Quality Standard (TQS)* (Alberta Education, 2018c), do Alberta high school students perceive to be of greatest importance in supporting their intellectual engagement? The secondary research question asked whether Alberta high school students of varying grade levels place different value on indicators of quality teaching. To answer these questions, a quantitative instrument was used in the pursuit of non-experimental research to understand the extent to which high school students perceive the competencies to be relevant to their experiences. The goal of this study was to learn whether and to what degree students perceive the *TQS* to be an accurate reflection of those teaching qualities that are most relevant to their engagement.

Epistemological and Ontological Assumptions

This study employed quantitative research to survey Alberta high school students to ascertain their experiences with and opinions of the institutionally constructed *TQS* (Alberta Education, 2018c). The epistemology was grounded in positivism for the social sciences,

adhering to the philosophical assumption that there is an external, objective reality but that reality is influenced by human thoughts, feelings, and values (Bryman, Teevan, & Bell, 2009), which is a modified form of positivism. Following the discussion of Power and Critical Theories, it may seem counterintuitive to turn to positivism, as this study sought to understand student perceptions, which may be different for each student as they have constructed meaning in the world around them. However, the *TQS* is an objective reality that teachers and students currently live with. Therefore, it was acceptable as a starting place in exploring student perceptions on this standard, to rely on a modified form of positivism, in which reality may be manipulated by human thought. The logical structure for this type of quantitative research was described by Spickard (2017) as descriptive research in the form of a social survey which does not attempt to assess causation, but which asks participants to report their own experiences. While participants' attitudes and beliefs may typically be assessed through qualitative methodology (Dawson, 2002), this study sought the response of many students throughout the province on one conceptual framework, therefore it was reasonable to use a descriptive social survey designed through quantitative methodology to achieve this.

While quantitative research may often be based in objectivist ontology (Bryman, Teevan, & Bell, 2009; Spickard, 2017), this study was approached with the soft constructivist ontological assumption that social reality may be negotiable and that, while some form of objective reality may exist, human ideas may not reflect objectivity because their perception of reality has been constructed in order for oppressors - in this case, institutions such as educational systems in general and schools in particular - to dominate the oppressed - in this case, students (Bryman, Teevan, & Bell, 2009). The concept of student voice is relevant to this assumption. While the parameters of this study form the objective reality of the *Teaching Quality Standard* (Alberta

Education, 2018c), findings and perceptions revealed in the data may lead the researcher to future studies that demand more qualitative exploration of participant responses. The study does not assume that the *TQS* or any other standard may be significant to student perception of quality teaching or that there will be a statistically significant response, despite the quantitative methodology being applied. As Bryman, Teevan, and Bell (2009) suggested, it is not necessary to draw a thick dividing line between qualitative and quantitative orientations as true social science research often requires a blurring of these lines with the depth and complexity of the issues and problems under inquiry.

Using a Descriptive Social Survey Method

Mertler (2017) described nonexperimental quantitative research as that which is not directly controllable by the researcher due to variables that are not able to be manipulated. Descriptive studies report information and seek to study details and while they may draw comparisons between research sites, they do not focus on cause and effect (Mertler, 2017; Spickard 2017). In this study, a social survey (Spickard, 2017) referred to as the *Evans Student Scale on the Teaching Quality Standard (ESS)* (see Appendix B) was applied to ascertain students' beliefs about and perceptions of the competencies and indicators outlined in the *TQS* (Alberta Education, 2018c) relative to their intellectual engagement.

The *ESS* was developed using guidelines outlined by Bryman, Teevan, and Bell (2009), Mertler (2017), and Spickard (2017) for Likert-type scales, surveys, and questionnaires, as well as other student perception surveys (Alberta Education, 2017; Colorado Education Initiative, 2014; Panorama Education, 2019; The Center for Strengthening the Teaching Profession, 2020; The Learning Bar Inc., 2019). The scale was based almost verbatim on the present *TQS* document, with only minor changes in consideration of the student reader. The resulting scale

contained one demographic question pertaining to the participant's grade level and 45 indicator statements where students are asked to rate the level of agreement about the item (Mertler, 2017) based on the scale: (1) Strongly Disagree with the Importance (2) Disagree with the Importance (3) Agree with the Importance (4) Strongly Agree with the Importance.

Informal feedback about the survey instrument was sought from Grade 12 students. They were informed of the future purpose of the study and asked to provide feedback about the length and vocabulary of the instrument. They were also assured that their responses would never be included in the study, as they were students known to the researcher and neither ethics nor school district approval had been granted at that time. The feedback was positive from the six respondents as to the length of the instrument and the ease with which they read and understood its contents. There was one criticism from a student that the statements about First Nations learning seemed to repeat many times over. The student found the repetition puzzling and wondered why similar statements were repeated with, in her perception, little change to the wording. The students involved in the feedback were all Grade 12 or returning Grade 12 students at the time who would be graduating and were of consenting age when their informal feedback was sought. Therefore, there would be no chance of them receiving the final version of the survey during the following school year when the survey would be conducted, and the data gathered. Some of the students were Canadian born with English as their first language, but half were not. This was an important consideration to be certain the scale was accessible to English Language Learners. All students who participated in offering informal feedback had exceptional needs codes which also ensured accessibility to a range of literacy levels. Neither of these demographic variables will be studied when the scale is administered. While I found these variables, among others, to be of interest, they did not relate to the parameters of this study.

Sampling Unit and Participant Selection

Participants in this study were Alberta high school students from a range of school divisions in different communities across Alberta. Convenience sampling (Mertler, 2017; Spickard, 2017) was used to apply to public school divisions (including public Catholic divisions) across Alberta for approval to conduct research in their district. To access authorities and remain within the scope of this study, private schools, charter schools, Federal, Federal First Nations schools, and Francophone schools were excluded at this time. After receiving ethics approval and then school division consent, an email was sent to the principals of high schools in the participating divisions, asking them to forward the invitation to participate (Appendix C) and Qualtrics link to the survey to the students in their school. The letter informed students about the purpose of the study and invited them to complete an anonymous online survey about the qualities they perceive to be important in a teacher. The instrument was conducted through Qualtrics to ensure optimal anonymity and confidentiality of all participants (Qualtrics, 2020).

Since the study sought to explore student perception of the importance of teacher competencies, and the variation in student intellectual engagement in school was considered, the researcher received one point of demographic information about each student: their grade in high school, which is linked to the earlier discussion regarding student intellectual engagement in school. This demographic question was asked to determine whether grade level may be a variable in responses. Each participant was assigned a random number in Qualtrics to analyze findings. All responses were sent directly to the researcher and no one else had access to them.

According to the Government of Alberta (2020), enrolment numbers for the 2019-2020 school year included 51 072 Grade 9 students, 51 508 Grade 10 students, 51 298 Grade 11 students, and 67 847 Grade 12 students. The total number of students in Grades 9-12 amounted

to 221 725 and the total number of students in Grades 10-12 totalled 170 653. The scale provided for participants in Grade 9 as certain school divisions in Alberta commence high school at Grade 9 while others begin at Grade 10. The sampling ratio will be expressed as:

> *n/N*
> where *n* is the sample size and *N* is the population size. (Bryman, Teevan, & Bell, 2009, 190)

According to Bryman, Teevan, and Bell, it is the absolute size of a sample that is far more important than the proportion of the population that the sample size represents, though a larger sample size would narrow the confidence interval and be a more precise representation.

Data Source: Evans Student Survey on the Teaching Quality Standard

The only source of data in this study came from the *Evans Student Scale on the Teaching Quality Standard (ESS)* (Appendix B) which was based on similar student perception surveys previously discussed and then aligned with the *TQS* (Alberta Education, 2018c). The scale was accessed through Qualtrics; therefore, participants had to access the survey online themselves and it was not read to them (Mertler, 2017). Students who used most computers, tablets, or other personal devices would have been able to access assistive technology to have the questions read to them if audio supports were needed. The survey itself passed Qualtrics own analysis of the formatting to allow people with disabilities to participate.

Validity and Reliability

Validity refers to the integrity of the conclusions that will be drawn as a result of this study and reliability refers to whether significantly similar results would be achieved if the same measurement were administered repeatedly to the same subject (Bryman, Teevan, & Bell, 2009).

Validity. As the study sought to understand the perception of students as to the level of importance placed on each of the competencies of quality teachers in the specific *TQS* (Alberta

Education, 2018c), relative to their intellectual engagement in schooling, there is evidence of validity based on the instrument content, as the *TQS* was the guiding document for preparing the scale (Mertler, 2017). The intended outcome of the scale was to understand which teacher competencies are valued most by students. To the extent that survey results contributed to a list of competencies and indicators most valued by participants as contributing to their learning, the data can be considered valid in addressing the research question(s).

Reliability. For the purpose of this study, the researcher used the internal consistency method to measure the reliability of the scale data, using the Kuder-Richardson formula 21 (KR-21) (Mertler, 2017) which is calculated using the formula below:

$$KR \sim 21 = \frac{(K)\,(SD^2) - \overline{X}\,(K - \overline{X})}{(SD^2)\,(K - 1)}$$

where

K = the number of items on the test or other instrument
SD = the standard deviation of the total scores
$\overline{X}$ = the mean of the total scores (Mertler, 2017, p. 156)

In addition, the scale included not only the larger teacher competencies, but also the indicators to prove internal reliability (Bryman, Teevan, & Bell, 2009) of the scale. Participants had multiple opportunities to express the importance of each of the six competencies, as each one is broken down into multiple indicators. In Qualtrics, prevention of ballot box stuffing was enabled to prevent participants from answering multiple times. Qualtrics also prevented indexing so that search engines cannot index this survey.

Scale Data Analysis

Data gathered from a scale is interval/ratio data (Mertler, 2017; Spickard, 2017). A measure of central tendency, the mean score was calculated for all 51 statements on the scale and a measure of dispersion, the standard deviation was also calculated. Qualtrics software was also able to compare grade level responses without the need for external analysis.

Ethical Considerations

The Tri-Council Guidelines (Government of Canada, 2018) provided a framework and requirements for conducting ethical research on human beings that sought to uphold the benefits of research without harming human participants. It required all research conducted on human to be approved by a research ethics board (REB). To receive approval to conduct this study, documented, informed consent needed to be obtained without the researcher practicing undue influence upon the participant. A full explanation of the study and all supporting paperwork was provided to school divisions and then pending their approval to principals for them to pass on to students. As this research only involved minimal risk to the participants, electronical consent and assent was sought. Participants were informed before beginning the survey of its purpose and that submission of fully completed responses were accepted as implied assent or consent to participate. Participants were informed that they may withdraw their consent/assent to the study at any time by leaving the scale incomplete and if they did so, their data was deleted from the results and reports in Qualtrics. Once responses were submitted, the anonymous nature of the responses made it impossible for the researcher to trace and retract them.

As it pertains to involving child age participants in human research, the Tri-Council Guidelines directed that:

> Article 4.6 Subject to applicable legal requirements, individuals who lack capacity to decide whether to participate in research shall not be inappropriately excluded from

> research. Where a researcher seeks to involve individuals in research who do not have decision-making capacity, the researcher shall, in addition to fulfilling the conditions in Articles 3.9 and 3.10, satisfy the REB that: a. the research question can be addressed only with participants within the identified group; and b. the research does not expose the participants to more than minimal risk without the prospect of direct benefits for them; or c. where the research entails only minimal risk, it should at least have the prospect of providing benefits to participants or to a group that is the focus of the research and to which the participants belong. (Government of Canada, 2018, p. 53)

As this study met all three requirements herein, there appeared to be no grounds on which to exclude high school aged children or adults from this scale. On the contrary, allowing student voice on quality teaching has the potential to prove beneficial to Alberta high school students as a group.

Privacy, confidentiality, security, and identifiable information are concerns that can be significantly mitigated through the collection of anonymous information, which is in keeping with the research method, method of contacting participants, and instrument. Qualtrics allowed the researcher to anonymize the response so no personal information of participants will be recorded, contact association will be removed, and only the researcher and invited study committee members had access to the responses. There was no known conflict of interest in this study. While the researcher is a teacher, teachers as individuals were not identified in this study, nor did the study ask to rate teacher ability or effectiveness. The researcher had no connection to *Alberta Education* or personal interest in the *Teaching Quality Standard* (Alberta Education, 2018c), other than the professional interest that any teacher in Alberta would have in meeting the provincial standard. There was no concern over dual roles in this study for, although the researcher was teaching in an Alberta high school at the commencement of this study, the teacher's school division would not permit teacher-researchers to conduct research on their own students. Therefore, the scale was not distributed to the students at the school where the

researcher teaches (See Appendix D for Human Participant Research application and Appendix E for approval).

Delimitations, Limitations, Assumptions, and Researcher Biases

This study did not attempt to deal with causation or explore why participants responded the way they did. A wide range of demographics was not requested from participants as this study and data analysis did not attempt to compare student responses based on socioeconomic status, nationality, first language, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, neighbourhood, school division, school, or specific teacher. The scale did not require students to rate their own past or present teachers' effectiveness, only to communicate which competencies and indicators of competency the students perceive to be important.

As stated in context, the researcher is a teacher who has a professional curiosity about student voice in teaching and learning. The bias of the researcher was that this opportunity to express their perceptions is a worthwhile one for students and that teachers and school leaders can glean information from students that could influence pedagogy and school operations. The researcher conducted the study under the assumption that participants would respond honestly about their perceptions when given the opportunity to do so.

Research Plan and Timelines

The timeline for the completion of the stages of this study is outlined below:

- September 2020 – Completion of Thesis Colloquium and subsequent amendments
- October 2020 – Completion of HSR Approval
- November 2020 – January 2021 – Data Collection
- January – March 2021 – Data Analysis
- Late Spring 2021 – Thesis Completion

- Late Spring 2021 – Thesis Defense

Conclusion

This chapter outlined the research methods for this study, including specifics about the participants, the instrument, and the method of analysis. Ethical considerations and processes were outlined, and limitations and biases were explored.

Chapter 4: Results of Study & Analysis

The purpose of this study was to explore Alberta students' perceptions about the indicators of quality teaching specific to the legislated standard of practice and to gain increased understanding of which competencies reflect what high school students believe they need teachers to demonstrate to support students' intellectual engagement. The primary research question was: What indicators of quality teaching, as defined by the *Teaching Quality Standard (TQS)* (Alberta Education, 2018b), are perceived by Alberta high school students to be of greatest importance to their intellectual engagement? The secondary research question was: Do Alberta high school students of varying grade levels place different value on indicators of quality teaching?

Participants for the study were sought by contacting the superintendent or research division of 31 Alberta public and separate school divisions. Of the contacted divisions, 13 declined to respond to the request and six divisions declined to participate in the study, two of those citing COVID-19 measures as the reason for refusal. The 12 divisions that granted permission comprised rural, urban, and metro school divisions as well as both public and separate divisions.

Each principal of a secondary school in consenting divisions was then contacted to request permission to conduct research involving the students attending those 88 schools. Seven principals responded in the affirmative to grant permission to conduct the study, one of whom later withdrew permission due to complications associated with COVID-19 health measures. Seven principals declined to participate, three due to the COVID-19 pandemic, three due to survey fatigue, and one who did not give a reason. The remaining 74 principals did not respond to two attempts to reach via electronic means. Of the six participating principals, rural, urban,

and metro public schools were represented; no separate school principals agreed to participate in the research study.

Results of Survey by Total Participants

Participants who responded to the study were distributed across Grades 9, 10, 11, 12, and returning 12. A total of 135 responses were received. As the data was being cleaned, 20 surveys were deleted due to the protocol indicating that incomplete surveys would be indicative of withdrawal of student assent and, accordingly, would be removed from the descriptive response analysis. This left 115 complete participant recorded responses to the survey. Table 1 provides a breakdown of the grade level of each participant where *n* is a subset of the 115 participants.

Table 1

Breakdown of Participants by Grade Level

Grade	*n*
9	10
10	31
11	34
12	39
Returning 12	1

Table 1 illustrates an unequal number of participant representation from each grade level as a convenience sampling method was used. In the tables that follow, Grade 9 students were combined with Grade 10 students, as the Grade 9 students in the study would have been in their first year of high school at the time of the survey, in divisions that have elected to include Grade 9 in high school, rather than junior high or middle school. The one returning Grade 12 participant was included in the Grade 12 charts, as there is no official separate designation for a returning Grade 12 student in Alberta, and they are in the same courses and classrooms as other Grade 12 students.

To glean an overall understanding of participant response as it pertained to the six competencies prescribed by the *Teaching Quality Standard (TQS)* (Alberta Education, 2018c),

simple descriptive statistics were applied to the data, resulting in an aggregate mean for the competencies. Each of the competencies is summarized and titled as follows:

1. Fostering Effective Relationships
2. Engaging in Career-Long Learning
3. Demonstrating a Professional Body of Knowledge
4. Establishing Inclusive Learning Environments
5. Applying Foundational Knowledge about First Nations, Métis, and Inuit
6. Adhering to Legal Frameworks and Policies

The minimum participant response to each survey statement was one and the maximum response was four. The descriptions that accompanied each response value were:

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Agree
4. Strongly Agree

Figure 1 illustrates the mean (M) of an aggregate of each indicator by competency.

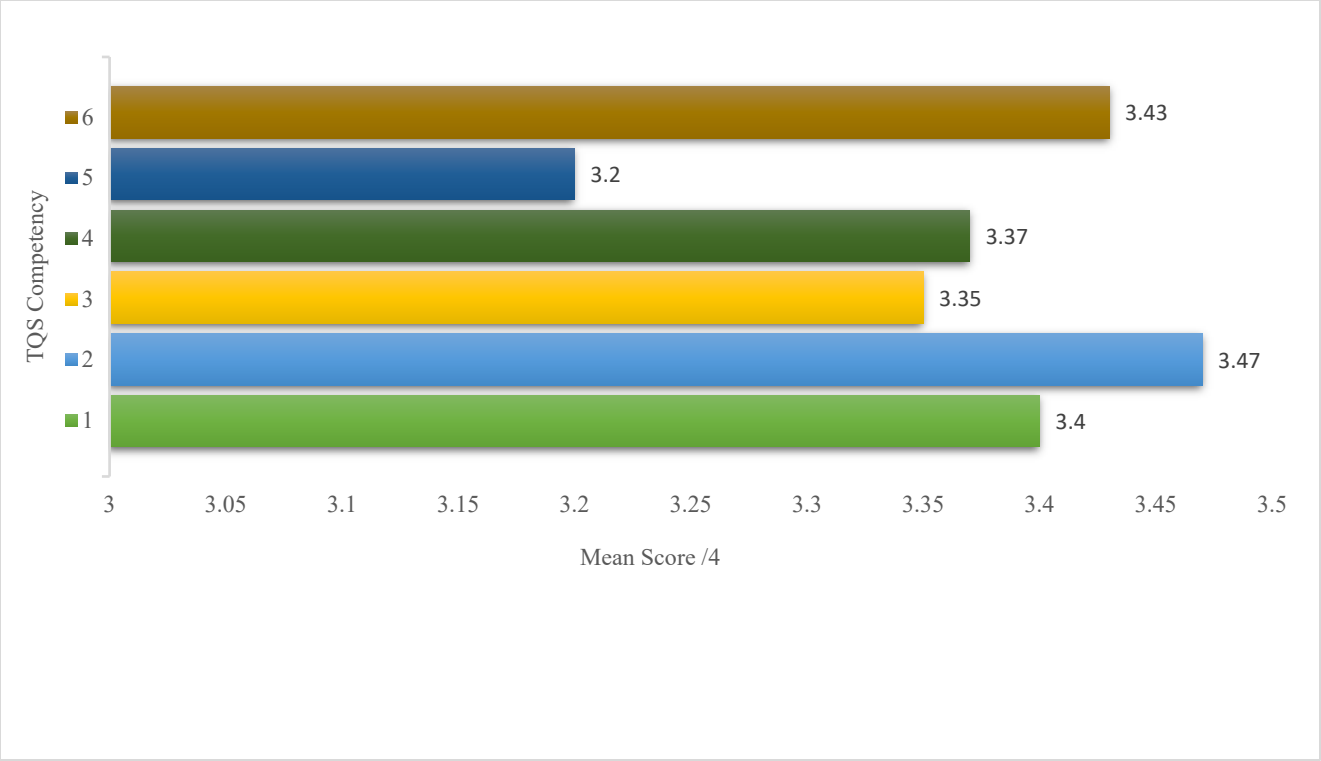

Figure 1 Participant Perception of Importance of TQS Competencies to Intellectual Engagement

As illustrated in Figure 1, the means for all competencies were well supported by participants, who agreed as to their importance. Competency two, which requires teachers to engage in career-long learning, scored the highest overall mean. Competency five, which compels teachers to apply foundational knowledge about First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students, scored the lowest overall mean. The following six tables detail the means, standard deviations, variances, and percent of total student response for each indicator within each competency. Abbreviations have been used in each table to illustrate the percent of participants who responded strongly disagree (sd), disagree (d), agree (a), and strongly agree (sa) with the importance of each statement to their intellectual engagement.

Table 2

Summary of Mean, Standard Deviation, Variance, and Percent of Participant Response: Fostering Effective Relationships

Field	M*	SD	Var	%sd	%d	%a	%sa
Acts consistently with fairness.	3.50	0.55	0.30	0.87	0.00	46.96	52.17
Acts consistently with respect.	3.76	0.55	0.31	1.74	0.87	17.39	80.00
Demonstrates a genuine caring for me.	3.40	0.63	0.40	1.74	2.61	49.57	46.09
Provides cultural learning opportunities for me.	3.06	0.68	0.46	1.74	14.78	59.13	24.35
Works with outside organizations.	3.30	0.70	0.49	1.74	8.70	47.83	41.74

Table 2 represents the mean of 115 participant scores for each indicator within the first competency which encourages teachers to foster effective relationships. The indicator related to respect scored the highest mean overall, 3.76 with 80.00% of participants acknowledging that they strongly agree with its importance to their intellectual engagement. This is the highest of any indicator score on the survey. Nearly 98% of students believed that it was important for teachers to act with respect when the agreed column is factored in and 99% agreed or strongly agreed that teachers must act with fairness for students to engage intellectually. The indicator related to the provision of cultural learning opportunities scored the lowest overall mean within this competency, with a mean of only 3.06 which also happens to be the third lowest indicator mean on the overall survey, and only 24.35% of participants indicating that they strongly agree with its importance to their intellectual engagement. The standard deviation and variance were not statistically significant and therefore are not discussed in the findings for this table or those that follow.

Table 3

Summary of Mean, Standard Deviation, Variance, and Percent of Participant Response: Engaging in Career-Long Learning

Field	M*	SD	Var	%sd	%d	%a	%sa
Collaborates with other teachers.	3.29	0.68	0.47	1.74	7.83	50.43	40.00
Seeks out feedback to enhance their practice.	3.52	0.59	0.35	0.87	2.61	40.00	56.52
Supports me in a welcoming and safe classroom.	3.54	0.61	0.37	1.74	0.87	39.13	58.26
Applies educational research to improve their teaching.	3.47	0.61	0.37	0.87	3.48	43.48	52.17
Maintains an awareness of emerging technologies related to the classroom.	3.41	0.64	0.42	0.87	6.09	44.35	48.70

Table 3 reports the mean of 115 participant scores for each indicator within the second competency which compels teachers to engage in career-long learning, and which scored the highest overall mean of all six competencies. The indicator related to a welcoming and safe classroom scored the highest mean in the competency, 3.54 with 58.26% of participants acknowledging that they strongly agree with its importance to their intellectual engagement. When adding the agreed column, this totals over 97% of participants who agreed or strongly agreed that it is critical for teachers to create a welcoming and safe environment to facilitate intellectual engagement. This is the fifth highest of any indicator score on the entire survey. The indicator related to the teacher collaboration scored the lowest overall mean within this competency, with a mean of 3.29 and 40.00% of participants indicating that they strongly agree with its importance to their intellectual engagement.

Table 4

Summary of Mean, Standard Deviation, Variance, and Percent of Participant Response: Demonstrating a Professional Body of Knowledge

Field	M*	SD	Var	%sd	%d	%a	%sa
Addresses the learning outcomes.	3.30	0.70	0.49	1.74	8.70	47.83	41.74
Reflects short, medium, and long-range planning.	3.31	0.69	0.48	2.61	5.22	50.43	41.74
Incorporates a range of instructional strategies.	3.45	0.61	0.37	0.87	3.48	45.22	50.43
Ensures that I develop skills in literacy and numeracy.	3.41	0.70	0.49	2.61	4.35	42.61	50.43
Communicates high expectations.	3.01	0.82	0.67	6.09	14.78	51.30	27.83
Links the learning activity with the intended learning outcomes.	3.31	0.66	0.44	1.74	6.09	51.30	40.87
Considers local, provincial, national, and international contexts and issues.	3.26	0.69	0.47	2.61	6.09	53.91	37.39
Uses activities that are varied, engaging, and relevant.	3.50	0.68	0.46	1.74	5.22	33.91	59.13
Builds my capacity for collaboration.	3.18	0.68	0.46	1.74	10.43	55.65	32.17
Incorporates digital technology and resources, as appropriate.	3.37	0.66	0.44	1.74	5.22	47.83	45.22
Encourages me to think critically when accessing, interpreting, and evaluating information from diverse sources.	3.27	0.70	0.49	2.61	6.96	51.30	39.13
Considers my personal, cultural, and school background and history.	3.36	0.83	0.68	4.35	9.57	32.17	53.91
Reflects the specialized knowledge of the subject areas they teach.	3.37	0.65	0.43	2.61	1.74	51.30	44.35
Accurately reflects the learner outcomes within the curriculum.	3.35	0.65	0.42	1.74	4.35	51.30	42.61
Offers me a balance of formative and summative assessment experiences.	3.31	0.65	0.42	0.87	7.83	50.43	40.87
Provides a variety of methods for me to demonstrate my achievement of the learning outcomes.	3.49	0.68	0.46	1.74	5.22	35.65	57.39
Provides accurate, constructive, and timely feedback on my learning.	3.63	0.59	0.35	1.74	0.87	29.57	67.83
Uses reasoned judgment to determine and report the level of my learning.	3.48	0.66	0.44	1.74	4.35	38.26	55.65

Table 4 illustrates the mean of 115 participant scores for each indicator within the third competency which details the importance of teachers' professional body of knowledge. The indicator stating that teachers provide accurate, constructive, and timely feedback on student learning scored the highest mean in this competency, 3.63 with 67.83% of participants acknowledging that they strongly agree with its importance to their intellectual engagement. Adding the other positive responses, over 97% of students agree that accurate, constructive, and

timely feedback is important. This is the second highest of any indicator score on the survey. Other indicators of note included that teachers should use a variety of instructional strategies, and teachers should reflect the specialized knowledge of the subjects they teach, which each received scores of 95.65% as participants agreed or strongly agreed as to their importance to intellectual engagement. The indicator encouraging teachers to communicate high expectations scored the lowest within this competency, with a mean of only 3.01 which is also the second lowest indicator mean on the overall survey, and only 27.83% of participants indicating that they strongly agree with its importance to their intellectual engagement.

Table 5

Summary of Mean, Standard Deviation, Variance, and Percent of Participant Response: Establishing Inclusive Learning Environments

Field	M*	SD	Var	%sd	%d	%a	%sa
Fosters equality as outlined in the Alberta Human Rights Act and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.	3.57	0.62	0.38	1.74	1.74	34.78	61.74
Addresses my strengths, learning challenges and areas for growth.	3.56	0.65	0.42	1.74	3.48	32.17	62.61
Communicates that I can learn and be successful.	3.41	0.68	0.47	1.74	6.09	41.74	50.43
Responds to my emotional and mental health needs.	3.53	0.70	0.49	1.74	6.96	27.83	63.48
Collaborates with specialists to provide specialized supports.	3.21	0.81	0.61	4.35	11.30	44.35	40.87
Classroom management promotes positive, engaging learning environments.	3.46	0.61	0.37	1.74	0.87	46.96	50.43
Incorporates my personal and cultural strengths.	3.23	0.75	0.56	2.61	11.30	46.09	40.00
Provides opportunities for me to practice leadership.	2.97	0.82	0.68	4.35	22.61	45.22	27.83

Contained within Table 5 are the means of 115 participant scores for each indicator within the fourth competency, compelling teachers to establish and sustain an inclusive classroom. The indicator describing equality and the upholding of human rights and freedoms scored the highest mean overall, 3.57 with 61.74% of participants acknowledging that they strongly agree with its importance to their intellectual engagement. This is the third highest of

any indicator score on the survey. The indicator related to the provision of leadership opportunities for students scored the lowest within this competency, with a mean of only 2.97 which also happens to be the lowest indicator mean on the overall survey, and 27.83% of participants indicating that they strongly agree with its importance to their intellectual engagement.

Table 6

Summary of Mean, Standard Deviation, Variance, and Percent of Participant Response: Applying Foundational Knowledge about First Nations, Métis, and Inuit

Field	M*	SD	Var	%sd	%d	%a	%sa
Understands treaties and agreements with First Nations; legislation and agreements made with Métis; and residential schools and their legacy.	3.19	0.83	0.69	4.35	13.91	40.00	41.74
Engages in school wide approaches to promote capacity building in First Nations, Métis, and Inuit education.	3.15	0.86	0.73	6.09	12.17	42.61	39.13
Provides opportunities for me to develop respect for the histories, cultures, languages, contributions, perspectives, experiences, and contemporary contexts of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit.	3.29	0.83	0.69	5.22	8.70	38.26	47.83
Uses resources that accurately demonstrate the strength and diversity of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit.	3.10	0.89	0.79	5.22	19.13	35.65	40.00
Invites First Nations, Métis, and Inuit community members into my classroom.	3.22	0.86	0.74	5.22	13.04	36.52	45.22
Enhances their own understanding of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit worldviews, cultural beliefs, languages, and values.	3.23	0.83	0.70	4.35	13.04	38.26	44.35

Table 6 represents the mean of 115 participant scores for each indicator within the fifth competency which compels teachers to apply their foundational knowledge about First Nations, Métis, and Inuit. The indicator related to respect for all aspects of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit context scored the highest mean overall, 3.29 with 47.83% of participants acknowledging that they strongly agree with its importance to their intellectual engagement. The indicator related to the provision of resources that accurately represent strength and diversity scored the lowest overall mean within this competency, with a mean of only 3.10 which also makes it the fourth

lowest indicator mean on the overall survey, and 40.00% of participants indicating that they strongly agree with its importance to their intellectual engagement. The indicators in this competency have the highest strongly disagree scores of any competency.

Table 7

Summary of Mean, Standard Deviation, Variance, and Percent of Participant Response: Adhering to Legal Frameworks and Policies

Field	M*	SD	Var	%sd	%d	%a	%sa
Adheres to legal requirements authorized under the School Act and other relevant legislation.	3.45	0.59	0.35	0.87	2.61	46.96	49.57
Practices are consistent with policies and procedures of the school division.	3.34	0.73	0.54	2.61	7.83	42.61	46.96
Recognizes that their professional practice is bound by standards expected of a caring, knowledgeable, and reasonable adult entrusted with my custody, care, or education.	3.51	0.69	0.48	3.48	0.87	36.52	59.13

Table 7 represents the mean of 115 participant scores for each indicator within the sixth competency, which references adhering to legalities and policies. The indicator describing a caring, knowledgeable, and reasonable teacher entrusted with their students scored the highest mean overall, 3.51 with 41.74% of participants acknowledging that they strongly agree with its importance to their intellectual engagement. The indicator describing adherence to school division policies scored the lowest within this competency, with a mean of 3.34 while 46.96% of participants indicated that they strongly agree with its importance to their intellectual engagement. As shown in Figure 1, the aggregate score of this competency was second highest of the six. In all preceding tables, standard deviation and variance were not discussed as they were not found to be of statistical significance.

Results of Survey Disaggregated by Grade Level

The figures and tables that follow further disaggregate the means and percent of participant responses to each indicator by grade level of the students. Grades 9 and 10

participants, when considered together as first year high school students, totalled 41. There were 34 Grade 11 participants, and the combination of Grade 12 and returning Grade 12 participants equalled 41.

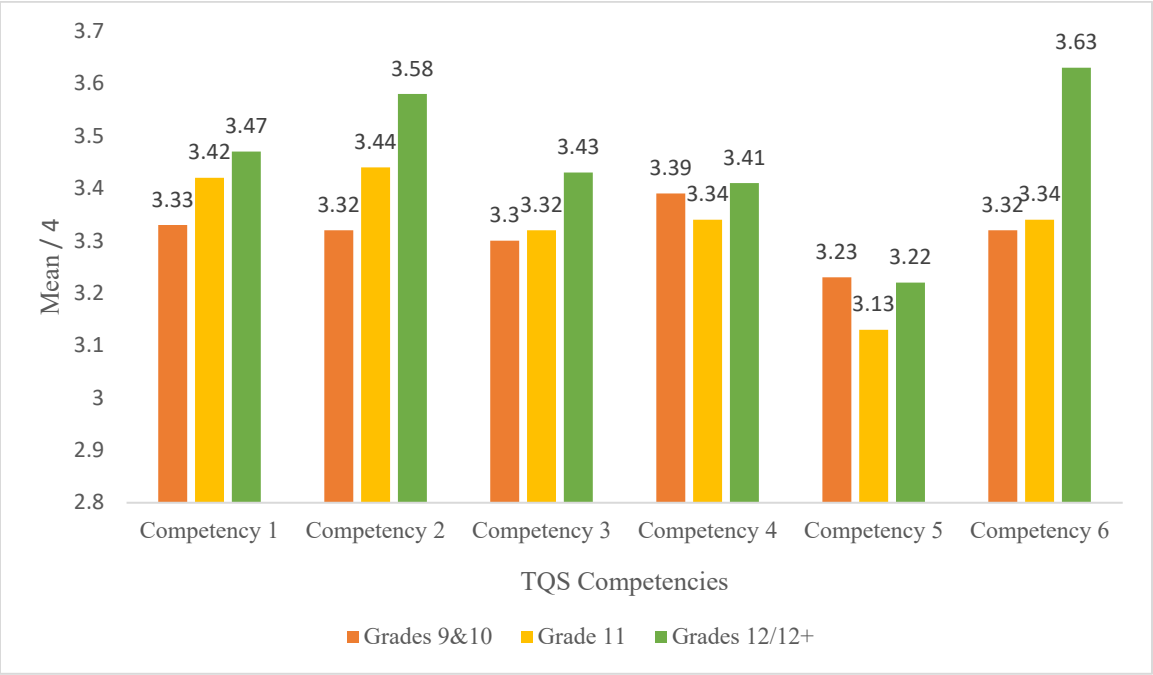

Figure 2 *Importance of TQS Competencies to Intellectual Engagement by Grade Level*

Figure 2 illustrates the mean of each competency by grade level by finding the means of all the indicators in each competency by grade level. It is clear from this figure that the Grade 12 and Grade 12+ participants scored all indicators higher than did the other grade levels, except for the fifth one, which received a score 1/100th% higher by the Grades 9 and 10 participants than it received from the Grades 12 and 12+ participants. Figure 2 also illustrates that Grade 12 and 12+ participants scored Competency 6 highest of all, while Grade 11 participants scored Competency 2 highest, and Grades 9 and 10 students scored Competency 4 highest. All three groups scored Competency 5 lowest. The tables that follow with further illustrate the means of each indicator, as well as the percentage of each grade level that strongly disagreed, disagreed, agreed, or strongly agreed with the impact on intellectual engagement.

Table 8

Grades 9 & 10 Summary of Mean and Percent of Participant Response: Fostering Effective Relationships

Field	M*	%sd	%d	%a	%sa
Acts consistently with fairness.	3.34	2.44	0.00	58.54	39.02
Acts consistently with respect.	3.56	4.88	2.44	24.39	68.29
Demonstrates a genuine caring for me.	3.41	2.44	4.88	43.90	48.78
Provides cultural learning opportunities for me.	3.10	2.44	12.20	58.54	26.83
Works with outside organizations.	3.22	2.44	12.20	46.34	39.02

Table 8 shows that the participants in Grades 9 and 10 scored the respect indicator highest within this competency at mean 3.56 with 68.29% of participants selecting to strongly agree with its importance to their intellectual engagement. If both agreed and strongly agreed were to be considered together however, 97.56% of participants indicated that fairness is critical to intellectual engagement while 96.68% were in overall agreeance with respect being important. The respect indicator received the highest mean score of any in the survey by the 41 participants at this grade level. Grades 9 and 10 rated the provision of cultural learning opportunities lowest of the five indicators in this competency at 3.10 with 26.83% choosing to strongly agree.

Table 9

Grade 11 Summary of Mean and Percent of Participant Response: Fostering Effective Relationships

Field	M*	%sd	%d	%a	%sa
Acts consistently with fairness.	3.62	0.00	0.00	38.24	61.76
Acts consistently with respect.	3.91	0.00	0.00	8.82	91.18
Demonstrates a genuine caring for me.	3.38	2.94	2.94	47.06	47.06
Provides cultural learning opportunities for me.	3.06	2.94	14.71	55.88	26.47
Works with outside organizations.	3.15	2.94	8.82	58.82	29.41

Table 9 illustrates that the 34 participants in Grade 11 also rated the respect indicator highest by mean 3.91 as 91.18% of participants selected to strongly agree with its importance to their intellectual engagement while the remaining 8.82% agreed and 0.00% of participants either

disagreeing or strongly disagreeing as to its importance. This indicator also received the highest score of any in the survey by the 34 participants at this grade level. Fairness also had 0.00% of Grade 11 participants who chose to disagree or strongly disagree with its importance. Grade 11 participants rated the provision of cultural learning opportunities lowest of the five indicators in this competency at 3.06 with 26.47% choosing to strongly agree and 17.65% of participants choosing to disagree or strongly disagree.

Table 10

Grade 12 & 12+ Summary of Mean and Percent of Participant Response: Fostering Effective Relationships

Field	M*	%sd	%d	%a	%sa
Acts consistently with fairness.	3.58	0.00	0.00	42.50	57.50
Acts consistently with respect.	3.83	0.00	0.00	17.50	82.50
Demonstrates a genuine caring for me.	3.43	0.00	0.00	57.50	42.50
Provides cultural learning opportunities for me.	3.03	0.00	17.50	62.50	20.00
Works with outside organizations.	3.50	0.00	5.00	40.00	55.00

Table 10 elucidates that the 40 participants in Grade 12 and 12+ also scored the respect indicator highest within this competency at 3.83 with 82.50% of participants who strongly agreed and the remainder who agreed with its importance to their intellectual engagement. This indicator also received the highest score of any in the survey by the 40 participants at this grade level and had 0.00% responses in either the disagree or strongly disagree columns. This group did not select disagree or strongly disagree as to the respect indicator, but neither did any participant disagree with the fairness indicator or the genuine caring indicator. 95% of Grade 12s also agreed with the importance of teachers' work with outside organizations. Grade 12 participants rated the provision of cultural learning opportunities lowest of the five indicators in this competency at a mean of 3.03 with 20.00% choosing to strongly agree and 17.50% selecting

to disagree as to the importance of cultural learning opportunities to their intellectual engagement.

Table 11

Comparison of Participant Response by Mean: Fostering Effective Relationships

Field	Gr 9/10	Gr 11	Gr 12/12+
Acts consistently with fairness.	3.34	3.62	3.58
Acts consistently with respect.	3.56	3.91	3.83
Demonstrates a genuine caring for me.	3.41	3.38	3.43
Provides cultural learning opportunities for me.	3.10	3.06	3.03
Works with outside organizations.	3.22	3.15	3.50

Table 11 compares the mean scores of each indicator surveyed within the first competency. From this comparison it is apparent that across all grade levels, students perceive the most important indicator contributing to their engagement intellectually is that teachers act consistently with respect. Grade 11 participants scored this indicator at a mean of 3.91, which was the highest mean score of any indicator in the survey, when disaggregated by grade. The lowest rated indicator is teachers providing cultural learning opportunities. This is consistent with the findings presented in Tables 2, 8, 9, and 10.

Table 12

Grades 9 & 10 Summary of Mean and Percent of Participant Response: Engaging in Career-Long Learning

Field	M*	%sd	%d	%a	%sa
Collaborates with other teachers.	3.12	2.44	14.63	51.22	31.70
Seeks out feedback to enhance their practice.	3.34	2.44	2.44	53.66	41.46
Supports me in a welcoming and safe classroom.	3.44	2.44	2.44	43.90	51.22
Applies educational research to improve their teaching.	3.37	2.44	2.44	51.22	43.90
Maintains an awareness of emerging technologies related to the classroom.	3.32	2.44	7.32	46.34	43.90

Table 12 illustrates that the 41 participants in Grades 9 and 10 scored the indicator *welcoming and safe* as the highest within this competency with a 3.44 mean and 51.22% of participants strongly agreeing with its importance to their intellectual engagement. When adding those participants who scored it as a three, the total agreeance is 95.12% of participants. Grades 9 and 10 participants rated the collaboration among teachers to be lowest of the five indicators in this competency with a mean of 3.12 with 31.70% choosing to strongly agree and 14.63 disagreeing with its importance.

Table 13

Grade 11 Summary of Mean and Percent of Participant Response: Engaging in Career-Long Learning

Field	M*	%sd	%d	%a	%sa
Collaborates with other teachers.	3.26	2.94	2.94	58.82	35.29
Seeks out feedback to enhance their practice.	3.56	0.00	5.88	32.35	61.76
Supports me in a welcoming and safe classroom.	3.53	2.94	0.00	38.24	58.82
Applies educational research to improve their teaching.	3.44	0.00	8.82	38.24	52.94
Maintains an awareness of emerging technologies related to the classroom.	3.41	0.00	5.88	47.06	47.06

Table 13 illustrates that the 34 participants in Grade 11 scored teachers seeking out feedback as the highest indicator within this competency at 3.56 mean with 61.76% of participants selecting to strongly agree with its importance to their intellectual engagement. When the scores of agreed and strongly agreed were combined, 94.12% of participants believed that teachers' awareness of emerging classroom technologies also contributed to students' intellectual engagement. Grade 11 participants rated the collaboration of teachers lowest of the five indicators in this competency at 3.26 with 35.29% choosing to strongly agree.

Table 14

Grade 12 & 12+ Summary of Mean and Percent of Participant Response: Engaging in Career-Long Learning

Field	M*	%sd	%d	%a	%sa
Collaborates with other teachers.	3.48	0.00	5.00	42.50	53.50
Seeks out feedback to enhance their practice.	3.68	0.00	0.00	32.50	67.50
Supports me in a welcoming and safe classroom.	3.65	0.00	0.00	35.00	65.00
Applies educational research to improve their teaching.	3.60	0.00	8.82	40.00	60.00
Maintains an awareness of emerging technologies related to the classroom.	3.50	0.00	5.00	40.00	55.00

Table 14 illustrates that the 40 participants in Grade 12 and Grade 12+ also scored the teachers seeking feedback indicator highest within this competency at 3.68 mean with 67.50% of participants selecting to strongly agree with its importance to their intellectual engagement and 0.00% of participants selecting either disagree or strongly disagree. Grade 12 and 12+ participants rated the collaboration of teachers lowest of the five indicators in this competency at 3.48 mean with 53.50% choosing to strongly agree.

Table 15

Comparison of Participant Response by Mean: Engaging in Career-Long Learning

Field	Gr 9/10	Gr 11	Gr 12/12+
Collaborates with other teachers.	3.12	3.26	3.48
Seeks out feedback to enhance their practice.	3.34	3.56	3.68
Supports me in a welcoming and safe classroom.	3.44	3.53	3.65
Applies educational research to improve their teaching.	3.37	3.44	3.60
Maintains an awareness of emerging technologies related to the classroom.	3.32	3.41	3.50

Table 15 compares by grade level the mean of each indicator in the professional learning competency. Participants in Grades 12 and 12+ scored each of these indicators higher than did the Grade 11 participants, and they scored the professional learning competencies as being of

greater importance to their intellectual engagement than did the Grades 9 and 10 participants. This table also demonstrates that within this competency, Grade 9 and 10 students scored the indicator related to a safe and welcoming classroom highest of those included, while Grade 11, 12, and 12+ students scored teachers seeking feedback to enhance their practice highest of the indicators.

Table 16

Grades 9 & 10 Summary of Mean and Percent of Participant Response: Demonstrating a Professional Body of Knowledge

Field	M*	%sd	%d	%a	%sa
Addresses the learning outcomes.	3.17	4.88	9.76	46.34	39.02
Reflects short, medium, and long-range planning.	3.20	2.44	7.32	58.54	31.71
Incorporates a range of instructional strategies.	3.32	2.44	4.88	51.22	41.46
Ensures that I develop skills in literacy and numeracy.	3.34	4.88	2.44	46.34	46.34
Communicates high expectations.	3.17	12.20	12.20	41.46	34.15
Links the learning activity with the intended learning outcomes.	3.39	2.44	2.44	48.78	46.34
Considers local, provincial, national, and international contexts and issues.	3.29	4.88	4.88	46.34	43.90
Uses activities that are varied, engaging, and relevant.	3.39	2.44	4.88	43.90	48.78
Builds my capacity for collaboration.	3.20	2.44	12.20	48.78	36.59
Incorporates digital technology and resources, as appropriate.	3.32	2.44	2.44	56.10	39.02
Encourages me to think critically when accessing, interpreting, and evaluating information from diverse sources.	3.27	2.44	9.76	46.34	41.46
Considers my personal, cultural, and school background and history.	3.17	7.32	12.20	36.59	43.90
Reflects the specialized knowledge of the subject areas they teach.	3.29	4.88	2.44	51.22	41.46
Accurately reflects the learner outcomes within the curriculum.	3.34	2.44	2.44	53.66	41.46
Offers me a balance of formative and summative assessment experiences.	3.34	2.44	4.88	48.78	43.90
Provides a variety of methods for me to demonstrate my achievement of the learning outcomes.	3.32	4.88	4.88	43.90	46.34
Provides accurate, constructive, and timely feedback on my learning.	3.49	2.44	0.00	43.90	53.66
Uses reasoned judgment to determine and report the level of my learning.	3.44	2.44	2.44	43.90	51.22

Table 16 shows that Grades 9 and 10 participants scored the provision of accurate, constructive, and timely feedback the highest of the indicators in this competency with a mean of 3.49 where 53.66% of them selected strongly agree and 97.56% of participants agreeing in total. There were three indicators that scored the lowest mean in this competency. Addresses the learning outcomes had 39.02% select strongly agree and 14.64% of participants select to disagree or strongly disagree. Communicates high expectations had 34.15% select strongly agree and 24.40% select disagree or strongly disagree. Considers my personal, cultural, and school background had 43.90% select strongly agree and 19.52% of participants who selected to disagree or strongly disagree with its importance. All three of these indicators had a mean of 3.17 each, the lowest means within this competency.

Table 17

Grade 11 Summary of Mean and Percent of Participant Response: Demonstrating a Professional Body of Knowledge

Field	M*	%sd	%d	%a	%sa
Addresses the learning outcomes.	3.35	0.00	8.82	47.06	44.12
Reflects short, medium, and long-range planning.	3.21	5.88	5.88	50.00	38.24
Incorporates a range of instructional strategies.	3.50	0.00	5.88	38.24	55.88
Ensures that I develop skills in literacy and numeracy.	3.44	2.94	2.94	41.18	52.94
Communicates high expectations.	2.91	5.88	17.65	55.88	20.59
Links the learning activity with the intended learning outcomes.	3.12	0.00	11.76	64.71	23.53
Considers local, provincial, national, and international contexts and issues.	3.18	2.94	5.88	61.76	29.41
Uses activities that are varied, engaging, and relevant.	3.56	2.94	5.88	23.53	67.65
Builds my capacity for collaboration.	3.03	2.94	11.76	64.71	20.59
Incorporates digital technology and resources, as appropriate.	3.35	2.94	8.82	38.24	50.00
Encourages me to think critically when accessing, interpreting, and evaluating information from diverse sources.	3.21	2.94	8.82	52.94	35.29
Considers my personal, cultural, and school background and history.	3.56	5.88	2.94	20.59	70.59
Reflects the specialized knowledge of the subject areas they teach.	3.38	2.94	0.00	52.94	44.12
Accurately reflects the learner outcomes within the curriculum.	3.29	2.94	5.88	50.00	41.18
Offers me a balance of formative and summative assessment experiences.	3.15	0.00	11.76	61.76	26.47
Provides a variety of methods for me to demonstrate my achievement of the learning outcomes.	3.44	0.00	11.76	32.35	55.88
Provides accurate, constructive, and timely feedback on my learning.	3.65	2.94	2.94	20.59	73.53
Uses reasoned judgment to determine and report the level of my learning.	3.35	2.94	8.82	38.24	50.00

Table 17 illustrates that Grade 11 participants also scored the provision of accurate, constructive, and timely feedback the highest of the indicators in this competency with a mean of 3.65 and that 73.53% of them selected strongly agree. The indicator that scored lowest among the Grade 11 participants was communicates high expectations with a mean of 2.91 where 20.59% selected strongly agree and 23.53% selected disagree or strongly disagree.

Table 18

Grade 12 & 12+ Summary of Mean and Percent of Participant Response: Demonstrating a Professional Body of Knowledge

Field	M*	%sd	%d	%a	%sa
Addresses the learning outcomes.	3.35	0.00	7.50	50.00	42.50
Reflects short, medium, and long-range planning.	3.53	0.00	2.50	42.50	55.00
Incorporates a range of instructional strategies.	3.55	0.00	0.00	45.00	55.00
Ensures that I develop skills in literacy and numeracy.	3.45	0.00	7.50	40.00	52.50
Communicates high expectations.	3.13	0.00	15.00	57.50	27.50
Links the learning activity with the intended learning outcomes.	3.40	2.50	5.00	42.50	50.00
Considers local, provincial, national, and international contexts and issues.	3.30	0.00	7.50	55.00	37.50
Uses activities that are varied, engaging, and relevant.	3.58	0.00	5.00	32.50	62.50
Builds my capacity for collaboration.	3.30	0.00	7.50	55.00	37.50
Incorporates digital technology and resources, as appropriate.	3.43	0.00	5.00	47.50	47.50
Encourages me to think critically when accessing, interpreting, and evaluating information from diverse sources.	3.33	2.50	2.50	55.00	40.00
Considers my personal, cultural, and school background and history.	3.38	0.00	12.50	37.50	50.00
Reflects the specialized knowledge of the subject areas they teach.	3.45	0.00	2.50	50.00	47.50
Accurately reflects the learner outcomes within the curriculum.	3.40	0.00	5.00	50.00	45.00
Offers me a balance of formative and summative assessment experiences.	3.25	0.00	7.50	42.50	50.00
Provides a variety of methods for me to demonstrate my achievement of the learning outcomes.	3.60	0.00	0.00	30.00	70.00
Provides accurate, constructive, and timely feedback on my learning.	3.68	0.00	0.00	22.50	77.50
Uses reasoned judgment to determine and report the level of my learning.	3.63	0.00	2.50	32.5	65.00

Table 18 elucidates that, like their peers, Grade 12 participants scored the provision of accurate, constructive, and timely feedback the highest of the indicators in this competency with a mean of 3.68, 77.50% of them selecting strongly agree, and the remaining 22.50% of participants selecting agree. The indicator that scored lowest among the Grade 12 participants

was the indicator that encourages teachers to communicate high expectations with a mean of 3.13 where 27.50% selected strongly agree and 15.00% selected disagree.

Table 19

Comparison of Participant Response by Mean: Demonstrating a Professional Body of Knowledge

Field	Gr 9/10	Gr 11	Gr 12/12+
Addresses the learning outcomes.	3.17	3.35	3.35
Reflects short, medium, and long-range planning.	3.20	3.21	3.53
Incorporates a range of instructional strategies.	3.32	3.50	3.55
Ensures that I develop skills in literacy and numeracy.	3.34	3.44	3.45
Communicates high expectations.	3.17	2.91	3.13
Links the learning activity with the intended learning outcomes.	3.39	3.12	3.40
Considers local, provincial, national, and international contexts and issues.	3.29	3.18	3.30
Uses activities that are varied, engaging, and relevant.	3.39	3.56	3.58
Builds my capacity for collaboration.	3.20	3.03	3.30
Incorporates digital technology and resources, as appropriate.	3.32	3.35	3.43
Encourages me to think critically when accessing, interpreting, and evaluating information from diverse sources.	3.27	3.21	3.33
Considers my personal, cultural, and school background and history.	3.17	3.56	3.38
Reflects the specialized knowledge of the subject areas they teach.	3.29	3.38	3.45
Accurately reflects the learner outcomes within the curriculum.	3.34	3.29	3.40
Offers me a balance of formative and summative assessment experiences.	3.34	3.15	3.25
Provides a variety of methods for me to demonstrate my achievement of the learning outcomes.	3.32	3.44	3.60
Provides accurate, constructive, and timely feedback on my learning.	3.49	3.65	3.68
Uses reasoned judgment to determine and report the level of my learning.	3.44	3.35	3.63

Table 19 illustrates a comparison of the means of participant responses to each indicator in the professional knowledge competency. The greatest variation in means across grade levels is for the indicator related to short, medium, and long-term planning. Grades 9 and 10 scored it 0.33 below, and Grade 11 scored it 0.32 below Grade 12 and 12+ participants. Across grades, students were most consistent in their perception that teachers incorporate digital technology as

appropriate with only a 0.11 spread in the three means and in their perception about continued development of literacy and numeracy, also with a maximum 0.11 spread in the three means.

Table 20

Grades 9 & 10 Summary of Mean and Percent of Participant Response: Establishing Inclusive Learning Environments

Field	M*	%sd	%d	%a	%sa
Fosters equality as outlined in the Alberta Human Rights Act and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.	3.51	2.44	0.00	41.46	56.10
Addresses my strengths, learning challenges and areas for growth.	3.49	4.88	0.00	36.59	58.54
Communicates that I can learn and be successful.	3.39	2.44	4.88	43.90	48.78
Responds to my emotional and mental health needs.	3.54	2.44	4.88	29.27	63.41
Collaborates with specialists to provide specialized supports.	3.17	2.44	14.63	46.34	36.59
Classroom management promotes positive, engaging learning environments.	3.37	2.44	0.00	56.10	41.46
Incorporates my personal and cultural strengths.	3.24	2.44	12.20	43.90	41.46
Provides opportunities for me to practice leadership.	3.07	4.88	19.51	39.02	36.59

Within the fourth competency which relates to inclusivity, Table 20 demonstrates that teacher responsiveness to emotional and mental health needs was the highest ranked indicator among Grades 9 and 10 participants. It scored a mean of 3.54 with 63.41% of them selecting to strongly agree that this indicator is important to their intellectual engagement. The lowest score of these indicators was the provision of leadership opportunities, with 36.59% of participants selecting strongly agree and 24.39% choosing to disagree or strongly disagree, resulting in a mean of 3.07. 17.07% of Grades 9 and 10 participants also scored collaborating with specialists as either disagree or strongly disagree. 14.64% of them chose to disagree or strongly disagree with the importance of incorporating the students' personal and cultural strengths.

Table 21

Grade 11 Summary of Mean and Percent of Participant Response: Establishing Inclusive Learning Environments

Field	M*	%sd	%d	%a	%sa
Fosters equality as outlined in the Alberta Human Rights Act and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.	3.53	2.94	0.00	38.24	58.82
Addresses my strengths, learning challenges and areas for growth.	3.59	0.00	5.88	29.41	64.71
Communicates that I can learn and be successful.	3.32	2.94	11.76	35.29	50.00
Responds to my emotional and mental health needs.	3.44	2.94	5.88	35.29	55.88
Collaborates with specialists to provide specialized supports.	3.24	8.82	5.88	38.24	47.06
Classroom management promotes positive, engaging learning environments.	3.47	2.94	2.94	38.24	55.88
Incorporates my personal and cultural strengths.	3.24	5.88	5.88	47.06	41.18
Provides opportunities for me to practice leadership.	2.88	2.94	23.53	55.88	17.65

Table 21 illustrates that teacher responsiveness to learning strengths and challenges was the highest indicator in this competency by Grade 11 participants. It scored a mean of 3.59 with 64.71% of them selecting to strongly agree that this indicator is important to their intellectual engagement. The lowest score of these indicators was the provision of leadership opportunities, with 17.65% of participants selecting strongly agree and 26.47% choosing to disagree or strongly disagree, and a mean score of 2.88. On the indicator compelling teachers to communicate that students can learn and be successful, 14.70% of Grade 11 participants selected to disagree or strongly disagree. The same total percentage selected to disagree or strongly disagree with the importance of teacher collaboration with specialists.

Table 22

Grades 12 & 12+ Summary of Mean and Percent of Participant Response: Establishing Inclusive Learning Environments

Field	M*	%sd	%d	%a	%sa
Fosters equality as outlined in the Alberta Human Rights Act and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.	3.65	0.00	5.00	25.00	70.00
Addresses my strengths, learning challenges and areas for growth.	3.60	0.00	5.00	30.00	65.00
Communicates that I can learn and be successful.	3.50	0.00	2.50	45.00	52.50
Responds to my emotional and mental health needs.	3.60	0.00	10.00	20.00	70.00
Collaborates with specialists to provide specialized supports.	3.23	2.50	12.50	45.00	40.00
Classroom management promotes positive, engaging learning environments.	3.55	0.00	0.00	45.00	55.00
Incorporates my personal and cultural strengths.	3.23	0.00	15.00	47.50	37.50
Provides opportunities for me to practice leadership.	2.93	5.00	25.00	42.50	27.50

Table 22 illustrates that fostering equality was the highest scored indicator in the inclusivity competency by Grade 12 and Grade 12+ participants. It scored a mean of 3.65 with 70.00% of participants selecting to strongly agree and another 25% selecting to agree that this indicator is important to their intellectual engagement. The lowest score of these indicators was once again, as it was with other grade levels, the provision of leadership opportunities, with 27.50% of participants selecting strongly agree and 30.00% choosing to disagree or strongly disagree, resulting in a mean score of 2.93. Collaborating with specialists and incorporating students' personal and cultural strengths each had 15% of participants in Grade 12 and 12+ disagree or strongly disagree with their importance.

Table 23

Comparison of Participant Response by Mean: Establishing Inclusive Learning Environments

Field	Gr 9/10	Gr 11	Gr 12/12+
Fosters equality as outlined in the Alberta Human Rights Act and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.	3.51	3.53	3.65
Addresses my strengths, learning challenges and areas for growth.	3.49	3.59	3.60
Communicates that I can learn and be successful.	3.39	3.32	3.50
Responds to my emotional and mental health needs.	3.54	3.44	3.60
Collaborates with specialists to provide specialized supports.	3.17	3.24	3.23
Classroom management promotes positive, engaging learning environments.	3.37	3.47	3.55
Incorporates my personal and cultural strengths.	3.24	3.24	3.23
Provides opportunities for me to practice leadership.	3.07	2.88	2.93

Table 23 illustrates that all grade levels scored practicing leadership as of low importance to their intellectual engagement, with Grade 11 participants giving it the lowest mean score of the three grade groups. The mean 2.88 assigned to this indicator by Grade 11 participants is the lowest mean when disaggregated by grade level of any in the survey. This competency is the only one wherein each grade level scored a different indicator as the highest of those listed. The Grade 9 and 10 highest mean score was for teachers responding to their emotional and mental health needs. Grade 11 participants scored their teacher's ability to address their strengths, learning challenges, and areas for growth the highest. Grade 12 and 12+ participants scored the fostering of equality as the highest indicator in this competency.

Table 24

Grades 9 & 10 Summary of Mean and Percent of Participant Response: Applying Foundational Knowledge about First Nations, Métis, and Inuit

Field	M*	%sd	%d	%a	%sa
Understands treaties and agreements with First Nations; legislation and agreements made with Métis; and residential schools and their legacy.	3.22	7.32	9.76	36.59	46.34
Engages in school wide approaches to promote capacity building in First Nations, Métis, and Inuit education.	3.20	7.32	4.88	48.78	39.02
Provides opportunities for me to develop respect for the histories, cultures, languages, contributions, perspectives, experiences, and contemporary contexts of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit.	3.24	7.32	9.76	34.15	48.78
Uses resources that accurately demonstrate the strength and diversity of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit.	3.05	7.32	19.51	34.15	39.02
Invites First Nations, Métis, and Inuit community members into my classroom.	3.34	2.44	12.20	34.15	51.22
Enhances their own understanding of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit worldviews, cultural beliefs, languages, and values.	3.34	7.32	4.88	34.15	53.66

Table 24 informs that Grades 9, and 10 participants scored the invitation of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit community members as well as teachers enhancing their own understanding concerning this competency both with means of 3.34 and over 50% of participants indicating that they strongly agree with the importance of both. Using resources that accurately reflect First Nations, Métis, and Inuit strength and diversity was the indicator that received the lowest mean score of 3.05, with 39.0% selecting strongly agree and 26.83% strongly disagreeing or disagreeing with its importance.

Table 25

Grade 11 Summary of Mean and Percent of Participant Response: Applying Foundational Knowledge about First Nations, Métis, and Inuit

Field	M*	%sd	%d	%a	%sa
Understands treaties and agreements with First Nations; legislation and agreements made with Métis; and residential schools and their legacy.	3.12	0.00	20.59	47.06	32.35
Engages in school wide approaches to promote capacity building in First Nations, Métis, and Inuit education.	3.15	2.94	14.71	47.06	35.29
Provides opportunities for me to develop respect for the histories, cultures, languages, contributions, perspectives, experiences, and contemporary contexts of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit.	3.29	0.00	11.76	47.06	41.18
Uses resources that accurately demonstrate the strength and diversity of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit.	3.09	2.94	20.59	41.18	35.29
Invites First Nations, Métis, and Inuit community members into my classroom.	3.03	8.82	8.82	52.94	29.41
Enhances their own understanding of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit worldviews, cultural beliefs, languages, and values.	3.09	2.94	20.59	41.18	35.29

Table 25 illustrates that Grades 11 participants agreed most strongly with the importance of being provided opportunities to develop respect for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit knowledge and context with a mean of 3.29 and 41.18% of participants indicating that they strongly agree with its importance. The invitation of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit community members into the classroom with a mean of 3.03 was the indicator that received the lowest mean score, with 29.41% selecting to strongly agree with its importance. 23.53% of participants in Grade 11 also disagreed or strongly disagreed with the selection of accurate resources and with the suggestion that teachers should enhance their own understanding. Lastly, while 0.00% of participants strongly disagreed, 20.59% of Grade 11 participants disagreed that teacher knowledge of treaties and agreements is of importance to students' intellectual engagement.

Table 26

Grade 12 & 12+ Summary of Mean and Percent of Participant Response: Applying Foundational Knowledge about First Nations, Métis, and Inuit

Field	M*	%sd	%d	%a	%sa
Understands treaties and agreements with First Nations; legislation and agreements made with Métis; and residential schools and their legacy.	3.23	5.00	12.50	37.50	45.00
Engages in school wide approaches to promote capacity building in First Nations, Métis, and Inuit education.	3.10	7.50	17.50	32.50	42.50
Provides opportunities for me to develop respect for the histories, cultures, languages, contributions, perspectives, experiences, and contemporary contexts of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit.	3.33	7.50	5.00	35.00	52.50
Uses resources that accurately demonstrate the strength and diversity of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit.	3.18	5.00	17.50	32.50	45.00
Invites First Nations, Métis, and Inuit community members into my classroom.	3.25	5.00	17.50	25.00	52.50
Enhances their own understanding of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit worldviews, cultural beliefs, languages, and values.	3.23	2.50	15.00	40.00	42.50

Table 26 illustrates that Grades 12 participants agreed most strongly with the importance of being provided opportunities to develop respect for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit knowledge and context with a mean of 3.33 and 52.50% of participants indicating that they strongly agree with its importance. Engaging in school wide approaches to this competency scored 3.10 and therefore was the indicator that received the lowest mean, with 42.50% selecting to strongly agree with its importance but 25.00% who disagreed or strongly disagreed. 22.50% of Grade 12 and 12+ participants disagreed or strongly disagreed with the importance of the use of accurate resource or the invitation of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit community members into the classroom to students' intellectual engagement.

Table 27

Comparison of Participant Response by Mean: Applying Foundational Knowledge about First Nations, Métis, and Inuit

Field	Gr 9/10	Gr 11	Gr 12/12+
Understands treaties and agreements with First Nations; legislation and agreements made with Métis; and residential schools and their legacy.	3.22	3.12	3.23
Engages in school wide approaches to promote capacity building in First Nations, Métis, and Inuit education.	3.20	3.15	3.10
Provides opportunities for me to develop respect for the histories, cultures, languages, contributions, perspectives, experiences, and contemporary contexts of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit.	3.24	3.29	3.33
Uses resources that accurately demonstrate the strength and diversity of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit.	3.05	3.09	3.18
Invites First Nations, Métis, and Inuit community members into my classroom.	3.34	3.03	3.25
Enhances their own understanding of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit worldviews, cultural beliefs, languages, and values.	3.34	3.09	3.23

Table 27 illustrates that mean scores were lowest across the participant grade levels for the indicators in this competency. Participants in Grade 9 and 10 scored the invitation of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit community members into the classroom highest, as well as the indicator that teachers should enhance their own understanding within this competency. Participants in Grade 11, 12, and 12+ indicated that the provision of opportunities to develop respect within this competency were of highest importance to intellectual engagement.

Table 28

Grades 9 & 10 Summary of Mean and Percent of Participant Response: Adhering to Legal Frameworks and Policies

Field	M*	%sd	%d	%a	%sa
Adheres to legal requirements authorized under the School Act and other relevant legislation.	3.34	0.00	4.88	56.10	39.02
Practices are consistent with policies and procedures of the school division.	3.24	2.44	12.20	43.90	41.46
Recognizes that their professional practice is bound by standards expected of a caring, knowledgeable, and reasonable adult entrusted with my custody, care, or education.	3.39	7.32	2.44	34.15	56.10

Table 28 indicates that Grades 9 and 10 participants chose to score the indicator referring to the expectation that teachers' professional conduct is caring, knowledgeable, and reasonable as the highest of the three indicators with a mean of 3.39 and 56.10% participants who strongly agreed with its importance. They chose to score teachers' consistency with school division policies lowest of the competency at a mean of 3.25 with 41.46% who strongly agreed.

Table 29

Grade 11 Summary of Mean and Percent of Participant Response: Adhering to Legal Frameworks and Policies

Field	M*	%sd	%d	%a	%sa
Adheres to legal requirements authorized under the School Act and other relevant legislation.	3.41	2.94	0.00	50.00	47.06
Practices are consistent with policies and procedures of the school division.	3.18	5.88	8.82	47.06	38.24
Recognizes that their professional practice is bound by standards expected of a caring, knowledgeable, and reasonable adult entrusted with my custody, care, or education.	3.44	2.94	0.00	47.06	50.00

Table 29 illustrates that Grades 11 participants chose to score the indicator referring to the expectation teachers' that professional conduct is caring, knowledgeable, and reasonable as the highest of the three indicators with a mean of 3.44 and 50.00% of participants who strongly

agreed with its importance. They chose to score teachers' consistency with school division policies lowest of the competency at a mean of 3.18 with 38.24% who strongly agreed.

Table 30

Grade 12 & 12+ Summary of Mean and Percent of Participant Response: Adhering to Legal Frameworks and Policies

Field	M*	%sd	%d	%a	%sa
Adheres to legal requirements authorized under the School Act and other relevant legislation.	3.60	0.00	2.50	35.00	62.50
Practices are consistent with policies and procedures of the school division.	3.58	0.00	2.50	37.50	60.00
Recognizes that their professional practice is bound by standards expected of a caring, knowledgeable, and reasonable adult entrusted with my custody, care, or education.	3.70	0.00	0.00	30.00	70.00

Table 30 illustrates that Grades 12 and Grade 12+ participants chose to score the indicator referring to the expectation that teachers' professional conduct is caring, knowledgeable, and reasonable as the highest of the three indicators with a mean of 3.70 and 70.00% of participants who strongly agreed with its importance. This combined with participants who agreed for a total of 100.00%. They chose to score teachers' consistency with school division policies lowest of the competency at a mean of 3.58 with 60.00% who strongly agreed. None of the students in Grade 12 and 12+ chose to disagree with the importance of any of the legalities and policy indicators.

Table 31

Comparison of Participant Response by Mean: Adhering to Legal Frameworks and Policies

Field	Gr 9/10	Gr 11	Gr 12/12+
Adheres to legal requirements authorized under the School Act and other relevant legislation.	3.34	3.41	3.60
Practices are consistent with policies and procedures of the school division.	3.24	3.18	3.58
Recognizes that their professional practice is bound by standards expected of a caring, knowledgeable, and reasonable adult entrusted with my custody, care, or education.	3.39	3.44	3.70

Table 31 illustrates that Grade 12 and 12+ participants scored the indicators in this competency highest of the three grade groups. There was a spread in the highest rated indicator overall of 0.31 from Grade 9/10 to Grade 12/12+. There was also a 0.40 spread between Grade 11 and 12/12+ participants when scoring the important of teacher practices being consistent with school division policies.

Conclusion

The tables contained in this chapter illustrate that the indicator scored highest by all participants, even when disaggregated by grade level, was encouraging teachers to act consistently with respect. Both Grades 11 and 12 or 12+ students scored the provision of leadership opportunities as of least importance to their intellectual engagement. Grades 9 and 10 students scored the use of appropriate resources when exploring First Nations, Métis, and Inuit learning to be of least importance to their intellectual engagement of all the indicators in any competency.

This chapter has presented the data gathered from 115 participants in the *Evans Student Survey on the Teaching Quality Standard*. Data from each indicator has been detailed as to how participants responded as a complete unit and how they responded when disaggregated into grade levels. Chapter Five will provide an exploration of the implications of the data as it relates to the literature as well as questions that have arisen from the results.

Chapter 5: Discussion of the Findings

The purpose of this quantitative study was to identify the perceptions of Alberta high school students regarding the *Teaching Quality Standard (TQS)* (Alberta Education, 2018c) and its importance to their intellectual engagement. The primary research question was: What indicators of quality teaching, as defined by the *TQS*, are perceived by Alberta high school students to be of greatest importance to their intellectual engagement? The secondary research question was: Do Alberta high school students of varying grade levels place different value on indicators of quality teaching? This chapter includes a discussion of findings as related to the literature on quality teaching, student engagement, student voice, and specific indicators of importance to participants. This chapter concludes with a discussion of the limitations of the study, avenues for future research, and a concise summary.

Interpretation of the Findings

Participant responses to the indicators of teaching quality in the *Teaching Quality Standard (TQS)* (Alberta Education, 2018c) and its impact on their intellectual engagement were overall positive. The lowest score any single indicator received was 2.97 out of 4.00 with all other indicators rated with overall scores higher than 3.00, indicating that students agreed or strongly agreed that the indicators were of importance to their intellectual engagement. The highest rated indicator received a score overall of 3.76, demonstrating that respect was perceived as the most impactful indicator on intellectual engagement. As for the broad competencies (the larger cluster of teaching quality), there was a small variation in the degree to which students agreed from 3.20 – 3.47. Overall, the competency scores demonstrated that students were in general agreement about teaching competencies that support their intellectual engagement. The *TQS* declared that it is important for students to have confidence that teachers are demonstrating

the competencies of a standard and the results of the survey elucidated that the participants in this study would tend to agree. The *Professional Standards for BC Educators* (British Columbia Teachers' Council, 2019) asserted that through defining and applying a professional standard and applying it, teachers can advocate for students with autonomy, accountability, and in the interest of the whole of society. With student voice having implied support of the *TQS* as a whole and when considered by competencies, the following sections will interpret more specific findings.

Findings about the Indicators

The primary research question was: What indicators of quality teaching, as defined by the *TQS*, are perceived by Alberta high school students to be of greatest importance to their intellectual engagement? When analyzing the mean of the indicator as scored by the group of 115 participants, the top ten indicators, and those with a mean score at 3.50 or above were: Acts with respect (3.76); Provides accurate, constructive, timely feedback (3.63); Fosters equality (3.57); Responds to student strengths, challenges, and areas for growth (3.56); Establishes a welcoming and safe environment (3.54); Responds to student emotional and mental health needs (3.53); Seeks feedback from others to improve teaching (3.52); Meets standards expected of a trusted, caring and safe professional (3.51); Acts fairly (3.50); and Designs varied, engaging, and relevant activities (3.50). The highest scoring indicators when the participants were considered as a whole, seemed to reflect that intellectually engaging teachers know their students well and that students should have evidence of this, that positive student-teacher relationships are critical for intellectual engagement, and that teachers demonstrate an inclusive approach. When reduced to a few key words, the highest scoring indicators of quality teaching for intellectual engagement as perceived by participants could be summarized as: respectful, possessing a growth mindset, and a belonging mindset.

Respect. Not only did respect get the highest score of any indicator on its own, but the indicator referring to respect was also the highest scoring within competency five, by Grades 11, 12, and 12+ students. Overall, the scores noted for the indicators in competency five tended to be lower than those for the other competencies. Noteworthy, was that students indicated that developing a respect for Indigenous peoples, history, culture, language, and ways of knowing was the most important indicator within this competency to their intellectual engagement. Respect was chosen as the top indicator for intellectual engagement when disaggregated by grade as well and Grade 11 students scored it at a mean of 3.91, the highest mean score of any indicator, with 91.18% choosing to strongly agree with its importance. Gretencord (2014) described the experience of both teaching and learning in respectful and disrespectful teacher-student dynamics and concluded "if there is anyone who can be oppressed easily and without consequence to the oppressor, it is a student" (p. 493). Respect will be explored further when implications for practice are discussed.

Mindsets of Importance to Student Perceptions. Two mindsets seemed to emerge thematically in the findings and have been shown to increase student motivation and academic achievement as well as reducing SES gaps: the growth mindset and the belonging mindset (Rattan, Savani, Chugh, & Dweck, 2015). Educators demonstrate a growth mindset when they communicate to students that intelligence is not fixed but fluid state. A belonging mindset is demonstrated when teachers facilitate a student's sense that they belong in the school, classroom, or even a subject area.

The highest scored indicators in the survey that relate to the notion of a growth mindset included the provision of impactful feedback, response to student strengths and challenges, addressing student emotional and mental health needs, the teacher's search for professional

feedback and improvement, the fostering of equality, and the design of relevant classroom tasks and activities. The highest scored indicators that relate to the presence of a belonging mindset included the importance of teachers acting with respect, equity, fairness, a welcoming approach, safety, trustworthiness, and care. This belonging mindset, or a perception of belonging in and connection to the school, has been shown to help young people "internalize academic goals" (Özdemir, S. & Özdemir, M., 2019, p. 930); conversely, unfair teacher actions may cause students to be less engaged in tasks over time.

Disaggregation by Grade Level

The secondary research question was: Do Alberta high school students of varying grade levels place different value on indicators of quality teaching? Participants in Grade 12 and 12+ scored all competencies higher overall than did their peers in Grade 9, 10, or 11. This correlated with Canadian national engagement statistics (Dunleavy & Willms, 2011) which demonstrated a higher degree in student perception of their own intellectual engagement in school in the Grade 12 year. Özdemir and Özdemir (2020) concluded that, "student-teacher relationship is not static during adolescence…" (p. 931) which seems to correlate with some of the variations in participant responses in this study.

In most instances, when examining the indicators, there was agreement as to the highest scored indicator in each competency, such as the respect indicator previously examined. One competency that demonstrated differences in highest scored indicator was teacher demonstration of career-long learning, where Grade 9 and 10 participants indicated that teacher support in a welcoming and safe classroom was of greatest importance to them, while Grade 11, 12, and 12+ participants agreed that a teacher's seeking of feedback to enhance their own practice was of greatest importance. This raised the argument as to whether the welcoming and safe classroom

indicator belongs in the career-long learning competency, as it seems to be more strongly associated to student-student and teacher-student relationships than it does to teachers' professional learning. Similarly, it could be argued that the indicator suggesting teachers provide cultural learning opportunities for their students is out of place in competency one regarding relationships. The resulting means for the competencies would be different, had welcoming and safe classrooms been included in the relationship competency and cultural learning opportunities been listed in the inclusive environment competency. In that case, fostering effective relationships would have been the highest scored competency in the study.

Within the inclusive learning environment competency, there was diversity in the highest scored indicators by grade level. Grade 9 and 10 participants scored the importance of teachers responding to their emotional and mental health needs highest, while Grade 11 participants scored the importance of teachers addressing their strengths, learning challenges, and areas for growth highest. Grade 12 and 12+ participants scored the importance of teachers fostering equality as outlined in the Human Rights Act and the Charter highest among the indicators related to inclusive environments. Within the competency of inclusivity, teachers who grant students opportunities for leadership received the lowest score of any indicator in the survey. Grade 11 participants scored leadership with a mean of 2.88 and leadership also received the lowest mean from Grade 9 and 10 participants at 2.93. This raised the question of the wording of this indicator as there are no indicators in the standard that refer to student voice. Without explicitly stating that leadership could refer to student voice in pedagogy, it warrants further study to try to understand what examples students had in mind when they thought of teachers providing opportunities for leadership and whether students consider this word to have connotations around planning dances and pep rallies (Mitra, 2018). When leadership

opportunities are tokenistic, there is a risk of damaging the teacher-student relationship (Mitra, 2018). Therefore, further exploration into the definitions of leadership and student voice is warranted to clarify these perceptions.

It has been previously mentioned that Grades 11, 12, and 12+ participants chose to score teachers fostering the development of respect for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit knowledge as the highest indicator in competency five. Grades 9 and 10 participants, on the other hand, chose two different indicators as most important to their intellectual engagement, those being the invitation of community members into the classroom, and that teachers should enhance their own understanding of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit worldviews, cultures, languages, and values. Interestingly, the Grade 11 participants chose these to be among the lowest of importance within this competency. Further qualitative interviews or focus groups would clarify why these differences in perception existed.

Implications for Theory and Research

The positive impact of student voice in pedagogy has been philosophically debated and researched in the contemporary western world for over a century (Dewey, 1916; Foucault, 1983; 1995; Freire, 2000; Fullan, 2001; Giroux, 2011; Mitra, 2009; 2014; 2018; Mitra & Gross, 2009; Toth, 2021). The conceptual framework for this study, the *Teaching Quality Standard* (2018c), does not specifically address student voice although it does refer to student leadership. The standard also does not explicitly address growth or belonging mindset (Rattan, Savani, Chugh, & Dweck, 2015; Yeager et. al, 2019) although an indicator that suggests teachers should communicate that students can learn and be successful is included in the inclusivity competency and several indicators refer to classroom conditions. The *TQS* does not address collective teacher efficacy, which Hattie determined to be the most important of 252 influences over student

achievement with an effect size of 1.57, more than three times that which Hattie proposed to be the hinge point for impacting it (Hattie & Corwin, 2021). Therefore, it was not within the parameters of this study to determine whether participants perceived it to be important as well. However, several other effects, which have been ranked by Hattie (2009) as teaching effects on student achievement, do correlate with the *TQS*, and were also shown to be important to participants in this study, including the provision of formative evaluation, learning interventions, feedback, and teaching strategies. While Hattie has proposed the effects of teacher estimates of achievement (as cited by Waack, 2015), participants in this study rated the indicator that teachers should communicate high expectations to be the lowest of all *TQS* indicators they believe to be important to intellectual engagement. It would be beneficial to come to an increased understanding of how students define many of the terms included in the *TQS* indicators. The *TQS* also makes general statements that participants upheld, such as using teaching strategies, but it does not specifically name which teaching strategies are most effective for Alberta teachers, whereas researchers have more explicit results, such as Hattie's reported impact of the use of the Jigsaw (Hance, 2016) method (as cited by Waack, 2015). As participants overall upheld the value of the competencies and indicators included in the Standard, it may be worthwhile to continue the exploration of student voice in Alberta as it pertains to pedagogy, now more than ever as researchers begin to explore teacher practices that can impact student engagement and success in the current context of the impact of COVID-19 on student achievement (Toth, 2021).

Implications for Teaching Practice

Aspiring educator and high school student Sara Miller proposed that "good teachers don't just teach students, but [they] get to know them and understand them. Teaching is more than just

lessons; it's the art of creating the future generations" (Phi Delta Kappa International, 2020, p. 14). The initial curiosity that sparked this study was born out of a need to understand in which aspects of the *Teaching Quality Standard* (Alberta Education, 2018c) students see the most value for their intellectual engagement. Top areas of focus that emerged from the study could be considered as mandatory for a teacher who would wish to find success engaging the participants intellectually, though caution should be taken when generalizing due to the method and size of sampling.

Respect. As the word respect scored so high in the survey, it would behoove teachers to take into consideration the importance of perceived reciprocal respect in classrooms. The Australian *Kids Helpline* (Kids Helpline, 2021) for adolescents aged 13-17 has a web page dedicated to defining and giving examples of respect. It notably instructs youth that respect is earned, learned, and promotes safety and wellbeing, two other key words that scored high in this study. Seeking to increase respect in the classroom, Gretencord (2014) advocated for inquiry-based learning as a preferred method of communicating respect to students. The need for students to feel respected by their teacher has been shown to increase their motivation to learn (Lin-Siegler, Dweck, & Cohen, 2016) and reciprocal respect may be essential for establishing positive and effective learning climates (Fraser, 2007; Freire, 2000; Marzano, 2007; Mitra, 2018) and should be modelled by educators in their interchanges with all school community members (Bryk & Schneider, 2002).

Relationships and Classroom Environment. For educators wishing to establish a classroom that is conducive to student engagement, a supportive "culture can be indicated by the keywords of open, accepting, and caring" (Saggers, Hwang, & Mercer, 2011, p. 185). When arguing as to the effectiveness of growth mindset and belonging mindset, Rattan, Savani, Chugh,

and Dweck (2015) concluded that "the psychology of the student is key to academic achievement" (p. 724) and recommended that educators influence student mindset through direct intervention, teaching expressly that intelligence is not fixed, providing opportunities for students to be trained and reminded that, for example, the more they solve different types of problems, the more their ability to solve problems grows. They also demonstrated the effectiveness of students receiving explicit messaging that they belong in the classroom and in the subject area they are studying. Eliminating stereotypical objects and messaging was another effective way they helped students develop a sense of their own and others' belonging.

Lewthwaite and McMillan (2010) worked with Inuit students on Baffin Island and recommended that effective teachers should respond to what the student values and defines as a positive learning environment, which in that case was cooperative, co-generated, caring, consistent, interested, and connected teaching. Quality teachers communicate caring about student success and do not focus on deficits. They know students well enough to know what supports are needed and provide supports that are based on individual needs as much as possible. A study of the perceptions of online high school students (Borup & Stevens, 2017) concluded that students valued caring relationships with teachers and that appropriately close student-teacher relationships established the foundation for students to be able to engage with the teacher to openly receive help, feedback, and interventions.

Feedback. Accurate, constructive, and timely feedback on learning implies that teachers know what needs to be learned and effectively teach it, then check for student understanding and adjust instruction accordingly so that students can continue to progress. Hattie ranked providing formative evaluation first and providing feedback fourth on the ranking of teaching effects on student achievement (Hattie, 2009). Guskey and Bailey (2001) proposed that due to an emphasis

by many secondary teachers on summative assessment over formative assessment, student focus shifts from assessment being a helpful source of feedback on their learning, to viewing grades as a commodity, thus shifting the student focus away from intellectual engagement and toward the attainment of the sought grade. Sackstein (2019) concluded through action research that a feedback was a more impactful factor in improving writing skills than grades. Schimmer (2016) proposed that standards-based reporting has fueled a "resurgence of formative assessment" (p. 10) due to the need for a "relationship between formative assessment and descriptive feedback…that constantly fuels learning" (p. 11). Sackstein (2021) proposed that secondary teachers can meet student needs by assessing with respect, accuracy, fairness, and equitability, or with the mindset that the purpose of assessment should not be to categorize and report, but to promote positive social, emotional, and intellectual growth. A national study in the United States (Yeager, et al., 2019) recently concluded that growth mindset interventions had a direct impact on lower achieving high school students by raising their grades and increasing their enrollment in advanced mathematics courses. The frequency of formative assessment is related to student achievement and reinforcing student effort so that students experience the success when they try at a particular task are fundamental sources of feedback that teachers can attend to that will positively impact student engagement (Marzano, 2007). Recently, Toth (2021) proposed "student-initiated formative assessment" (p. 1) as a method of providing engaging feedback for learning, to, with, and for students whether they are learning in-person, or in a remote or hybrid model. However, this proposal included the insistence that teachers need to be supported in this work by school leaders and by policymakers.

Implications for Professional Learning

Some teacher preparation programs in Alberta, such as the one at University of Lethbridge, have commenced to incorporate the *Teaching Quality Standard* (Alberta Education, 2018c). Student teachers are encouraged to consider their pre-service teaching according to the competencies and indicators so that they are prepared to speak to their own competence as well as for the purpose of evaluation of their practice. It may be of value to teacher preparation programs to consider student perception and student voice as to the standard as well in order to ask pre-service teachers to consider that student voice may be useful data to their own improvement while pre-service and early years of teaching commence (Mitra, 2018).

Teachers may become interested in pursuing avenues of inquiry that relate to student perception of their effectiveness to engage them intellectually more effectively. In my personal context as a teacher, this study led me to incorporate student voice regarding pedagogy more profoundly in my own classroom. This year I taught a five-week rotating fine arts wheel to middle school students for whom all complementary courses are mandatory, due to constraints caused by pandemic interventions. After considering what I have learned from this study, I created a quantitative instrument to measure my students' perceptions of their engagement in my specific classes, with intentional practice of mine, and with learner outcomes. When I analyzed the data from that instrument, I was able to immediately adjust my own classroom procedures and planning to incorporate student feedback on my teaching and have continued to do so all school year to maximize student perception of their own engagement with the content and process. Teachers might consider polling students as part of a holistic formative assessment process, to gain an understanding of how students perceive their engagement in the class or course. They might eventually incorporate student voice data into all aspects of pedagogy, including teaching strategies, task design, and assessment.

Implications for Educational Leaders

The *Leadership Quality Standard (LQS)* (Alberta Education, 2018c) is a companion document to the *Teaching Quality Standard* (Alberta Education, 2018b) that outlines nine competencies of quality leaders and provides 57 detailed indicators of effective school leadership (Appendix F). "Quality leadership occurs when the leader's ongoing analysis of the context and decisions about what leadership knowledge and abilities to apply, result in quality teaching, and optimum learning for all school students" (Alberta Education, 2018c, p. 2). Most of the leadership competencies reflect the same values as the teaching competencies, but with a focus on facilitating, modelling, and supporting teachers. Instructional leadership, embodying visionary leadership, leading a learning community, and modeling a commitment to professional learning all require school leaders to have a direct impact on teaching and learning. With a substantive focus on student learning and engagement, the *LQS* aligns with the notion that "school leadership is second only to classroom teaching as an influence on pupil learning" (Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2008, p. 28). Glickman (2002) suggested that leaders can have the most impact by encouraging a focused, data-driven, reflective culture of improving teaching. Hattie (as cited by Waack, 2015) prioritized teacher collective efficacy as having the primary effect on student achievement of all 252 effects studied, which supported the need for effective leaders who empower teachers with the belief that they can and do have impact on student engagement and learning and that effective leaders "are engaged in activities with a direct link to student learning" (Townsend & Adams, 2009, p. 63). It may seem counter-intuitive to dictate to teachers that they must attend to student voice in pedagogy to increase student intellectual engagement, therefore a leadership model that also honours teacher voice in their own

professional learning and improvement may be the most effective, such as generative leadership (Adams, Mombourquette, & Townsend, 2019).

Implications for Policy

Standards-based policies that guide professional practice are in place in various jurisdictions in Canada, the United States, and other countries for the various purposes of improving student learning, guiding professional practice, teacher certification, or accreditation, though they differ structurally and in content from Alberta's standards (Adams & Allan, 2019). When policymakers are exploring the notion of effective pedagogy, if they are doing so with a limited understanding of what students perceive and how they feel, they may want to consider student voice. Individual teachers may see the value in this practice and already engage students in this way but "…it is entirely up to school leadership to decide if engaging students as equals is seen as insubordination or talent" (Breakspear, 2015, p. 17). While Breakspear encouraged system leaders to encourage individual teacher innovation, Toth (2021) encouraged policymakers such as school boards to consider system-wide supports for student voice initiatives such as student driven assessment because when approached at the system level, structures are in place that improve "instructional equity" (p. 1) where no student is denied access to such initiatives.

Limitations of the Research

Caution was exercised when interpreting the results of this study. Due to the necessity of the convenience sampling approach, uneven numbers of participants at each grade level, and a lower number of participants than was initially expected, the statistics should be considered descriptive in nature. The study was conducted during the worldwide pandemic caused by COVID-19 and this context should not be ignored when considering responses. This study

focused on high school students and did not attempt to survey younger students, such as middle years or primary-aged students. The survey assumed that students who completed it understood the statements they rated. The study did not explore variables such as urban vs rural districts, school size, or any demographics of students, other than grade level. The study was limited to a perception-based Likert-like scale and was not cross-referenced with student achievement or measurable student improvement. It was solely concerned with what students believed to be of value to their intellectual engagement.

Recommendations for Future Research

Findings from this study offer a variety of avenues for potential future research. First, the study could be replicated with one school division or within one school to target their site-specific context. If one school were to engage in the study, the challenges associated with convenience sampling would be diminished as students would have time and space in the school day to go through the survey and would not be asked to complete it in their personal time. This would also allow that school to engage with the data on a site basis and target specific areas to address with students in that context. This could be part of a larger collaborative inquiry involving a variety of community stakeholder as participants. Further study could also include a comparative case study of a variety of attributes, such as metro, urban, and rural, or other socio-economic factors.

Focus groups engaged in a qualitative interview that asks probing questions about specific indicators may help clarify several aspects of the results. How did students define the terminology found in the study? Are there certain questions with multiple components that could be unpacked further in a focus group? Several of the indicators contain multiple terms and components encapsulated into one indicator. These could be separated into individual questions.

For example, the final indicator on the survey asked students to rate the statement that a teacher should recognize their professional practice is bound by standards expected of a caring, knowledgeable, and reasonable adult entrusted with students' custody, care, or education. That one statement contains six key words that could each be considered separately: caring, knowledgeable, reasonable, custody, care, and education. Another quantitative avenue could include ranking questions of indicators within each competency or the competencies themselves.

Qualitative interviews could assist with further exploration of the questions concerning lower scoring statements, such as the subjects of collaboration, teacher communication of high expectations for students, provision of leadership opportunities, the use of resources that increase understanding of foundational knowledge of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit, and the provision of cultural learning opportunities. Further understanding could be enhanced as to whether the statements elicited misunderstanding as to their meaning, whether student experiences have resulted in less positive connotations with these indicators, and if students do not value these indicators as highly as others, why? Engaging with a focus group or groups of students may result in further understanding as to student perceptions.

This study could be replicated with students in other provinces. If students from other regions of Canada value the standard as a whole or in part, it might be valuable information for school divisions and policymakers, as well as certification authorities in other provinces and territories to elicit from students. The questions could also be adapted and posed to middle school aged students as a whole or in a specific school. As students in grades 5-8 also experience a reduction in reported intellectual engagement in school, it may be informative to teacher pedagogy to have an increased understanding of which of the indicators of quality teaching are of highest importance to middle school students as well.

Conclusion

> What interests me is what children go through while growing up.
>
> -Beverly Cleary

The primary research question of this study was: What indicators of quality teaching, as defined by the *TQS*, are perceived by Alberta high school students to be of greatest importance to their intellectual engagement? The secondary research question was: Do Alberta high school students of varying grade levels place different value on indicators of quality teaching? Actions taken and beliefs held by a teacher in the classroom have been linked to student success (Daniels, Bizar, & Zemelman, 2001; & Gerritsen, Plug, & Webbink, 2016; Hattie, 2009; Haynes, 2011). Whether good teaching is mostly related to attributes and personality (Hull, 2013; Palmer, 1998; Palmer, 2007), a teacher's actions (Alton-Lee, 2003; Darling-Hammond, 2011; Goldhaber & Anthony, 2017; Ontario College of Teachers, 2020), or a combination of these factors (Hattie, 2007; British Columbia Teachers Council, 2019), teaching standards (Adams & Allan, 2019) may give a point of reference to further the study of improving teaching and learning and help all stakeholders in education to define quality teaching in their context.

As teachers, school leaders, and parents continue to be concerned about students' intellectual engagement (Dunleavy & Willms, 2011), it has become increasingly clear that seeing school through the eyes of the students may be the missing factor in reengagement and reform plans (Fullan, 2001; Flutter & Ruddick, 2004; Gerwetz, 2016). Attending to the reality of students' voices being heard in school governance, pedagogy, curriculum, and policy, has had positive results, and has led to reengagement of high school learners in some cases (Cook-Sather, 2013; Fielding, 2001; Fletcher, 2013; Flutter & Ruddick, 2004; Fraser, 2007; Geraci, Palmerini, Cirillo, & McDougald, 2017; Gerwetz, 2016; Mehta & Fine, 2019; Mitra, 2014; Mitra, 2018;

Mitra & Gross, 2009). There is therefore an urgent need to uncover the perceptions of Alberta high school students about competencies and indicators of competence they believe their teachers demonstrate that influence their engagement in learning to rethink decades of power structures, banking-model schooling, and systems of domination that have left many students alienated from school and teachers (Freire, 2000; Foucault, 1983; Giroux, 2011; Macedo, 2000; Mehta & Fine, 2019; Shaull, 2000).

As a conceptual basis for this study, indicators, and competencies from the *Teaching Quality Standard (TQS)* (Alberta Education, 2018c) were presented as statements in a quantitative survey for Alberta high school students to rate on a Likert-type scale as to their importance to their intellectual engagement. Overall, 115 participants agreed or highly agreed with the importance of the components of the *TQS* to their intellectual engagement. The participants in this study rated their teachers' demonstration of respect the highest of any of the 51 indicators presented according to a mean and when considered as a whole cohort as well as by grade levels. They scored teacher engagement in career-long learning the highest of the competencies, and items that related to teachers' growth mindset and belonging mindset (Rattan, Savani, Chugh, & Dweck, 2015; Yeager et. al, 2019) were of highest importance to participants, including the provision of feedback, equality, teachers who respond to student strengths, challenges, and areas for growth, and the provision of a safe and welcoming learning environment.

Further study in context or site-specific survey, qualitative interviews to further understand these student perceptions, and the continued inclusion of student voice in pedagogy and other aspects of teaching, learning, and student engagement may prove valuable to teachers, school leaders, and policymakers. Student voice may prove to be the missing ingredient in

designing not only teaching standards, but also more engaging high schools. Granting young people meaningful input may result in increased reciprocal understanding between teacher and student, guidance for school leaders and policymakers in the best supports for teachers and students, and perhaps more optimal intellectual experiences.

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Appendix A

Teaching Quality Standard Competencies and Indicators

Fostering Effective Relationships

1. A teacher builds positive and productive relationships with students, parents/guardians, peers and others in the school and local community to support student learning. Achievement of this competency is demonstrated by indicators such as: (a) acting consistently with fairness, respect and integrity; (b) demonstrating empathy and a genuine caring for others; (c) providing culturally appropriate and meaningful opportunities for students and for parents/guardians, as partners in education, to support student learning; (d) inviting First Nations, Métis and Inuit parents/ guardians, Elders/knowledge keepers, cultural advisors and local community members into the school and classroom; (e) collaborating with community service professionals, including mental health, social services, justice, health and law enforcement; and (f) honouring cultural diversity and promoting intercultural understanding.

Engaging in Career-Long Learning

2. A teacher engages in career-long professional learning and ongoing critical reflection to improve teaching and learning. Achievement of this competency is demonstrated by indicators such as: (a) collaborating with other teachers to build personal and collective professional capacities and expertise; (b) actively seeking out feedback to enhance teaching practice; (c) building capacity to support student success in inclusive, welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environments; (d) seeking, critically reviewing and applying educational research to improve practice; (e) enhancing understanding of First Nations, Métis and Inuit worldviews, cultural beliefs, languages and values; and (f) maintaining an awareness of emerging technologies to enhance knowledge and inform practice.

Demonstrating a Professional Body of Knowledge

3. A teacher applies a current and comprehensive repertoire of effective planning, instruction, and assessment practices to meet the learning needs of every student. Achievement of this competency is demonstrated by indicators such as: (a) planning and designing learning activities that: • address the learning outcomes outlined in programs of study; • reflect short, medium and long range planning; • incorporate a range of instructional strategies, including the appropriate use(s) of digital technology, according to the context, content, desired outcomes and the learning needs of students; • ensure that all students continuously develop skills in literacy and numeracy; • communicate high expectations for all students; • foster student understanding of the link between the activity and the intended learning outcomes; • consider relevant local, provincial, national and international contexts and issues; • are varied, engaging and relevant to students; • build student capacity for

collaboration; • incorporate digital technology and resources, as appropriate, to build student capacity for: - acquiring, applying and creating new knowledge; - communicating and collaborating with others, - critical-thinking; and - accessing, interpreting and evaluating information from diverse sources; • consider student variables, including: - demographics, e.g. age, gender, ethnicity, religion; - social and economic factors; - maturity; - relationships amongst students; - prior knowledge and learning; - cultural and linguistic background; - second language learning; - health and well-being; - emotional and mental health; and - physical, social and cognitive ability; (b) using instructional strategies to engage students in meaningful learning activities, based on: • specialized knowledge of the subject areas they teach; • an understanding of students' backgrounds, prior knowledge and experiences; • a knowledge of how students develop as learners; (c) applying student assessment and evaluation practices that: • accurately reflect the learner outcomes within the programs of study; • generate evidence of student learning to inform teaching practice through a balance of formative and summative assessment experiences; • provide a variety of methods through which students can demonstrate their achievement of the learning outcomes; • provide accurate, constructive and timely feedback on student learning; and • support the use of reasoned judgment about the evidence used to determine and report the level of student learning

Establishing Inclusive Learning Environments

4. A teacher establishes, promotes and sustains inclusive learning environments where diversity is embraced and every student is welcomed, cared for, respected and safe. Achievement of this competency is demonstrated by indicators such as: (a) fostering in the school community equality and respect with regard to rights as provided for in the Alberta Human Rights Act and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms; (b) using appropriate universal and targeted strategies and supports to address students' strengths, learning challenges and areas for growth; (c) communicating a philosophy of education affirming that every student can learn and be successful; (d) being aware of and facilitating responses to the emotional and mental health needs of students; (e) recognizing and responding to specific learning needs of individual or small groups of students and, when needed, collaborating with service providers and other specialists to design and provide targeted and specialized supports to enable achievement of the learning outcomes; (f) employing classroom management strategies that promote positive, engaging learning environments; (g) incorporating students' personal and cultural strengths into teaching and learning; and (h) providing opportunities for student leadership.

Applying Foundational Knowledge about First Nations, Métis and Inuit

5. A teacher develops and applies foundational knowledge about First Nations, Métis and Inuit for the benefit of all students. Achievement of this competency is demonstrated by indicators such as: (a) understanding the historical, social, economic, and political implications of: • treaties and agreements with First Nations; • legislation and agreements negotiated with Métis; and • residential schools and their

legacy; (b) supporting student achievement by engaging in collaborative, whole school approaches to capacity building in First Nations, Métis and Inuit education; (c) using the programs of study to provide opportunities for all students to develop a knowledge and understanding of, and respect for, the histories, cultures, languages, contributions, perspectives, experiences and contemporary contexts of First Nations, Métis and Inuit; and (d) supporting the learning experiences of all students by using resources that accurately reflect and demonstrate the strength and diversity of First Nations, Métis and Inuit.

Adhering to Legal Frameworks and Policies

6. A teacher demonstrates an understanding of and adherence to the legal frameworks and policies that provide the foundations for the Alberta education system. Achievement of this competency is demonstrated by indicators such as: (a) maintaining an awareness of, and responding in accordance with, requirements authorized under the School Act and other relevant legislation; (b) engaging in practices consistent with policies and procedures established by the school authority; and (c) recognizing that the professional practice of a teacher is bound by standards of conduct expected of a caring, knowledgeable and reasonable adult entrusted with the custody, care or education of students.

Appendix B

Evans Student Survey on the Teaching Quality Standard

This survey is designed to better understand Alberta high school students' perception of the *Teaching Quality Standard* and its impact on students' intellectual engagement. Submission of your responses will be accepted as implied assent or consent to participate in the study. Thank you in advance for your participation. If you wish to withdraw your assent or consent, close your browser. Incomplete surveys will not be included in the study.

What is your grade level in high school: 9, 10, 11, 12, Returning 12?

This survey is designed to determine which knowledge, skills, and attitudes of a quality Alberta teacher you think are important to your intellectual engagement. Intellectual engagement means your involvement in the tasks and outcomes of your classes that result in your learning. Please indicate to what degree you disagree or agree that it is important for a teacher to demonstrate each statement to facilitate your intellectual engagement: (1) Strongly Disagree that this is Important (2) Disagree that this is Important (3) Agree that this is Important (4) Strongly Agree that this is Important

Fostering Effective Relationships

To support my intellectual engagement, it is important for a teacher to:
(a) act consistently with fairness
(b) act consistently with respect;
(c) demonstrate a genuine caring for me;
(d) provide cultural learning opportunities for me;
(e) work with organizations such as mental health supports, social services, justice, health and law enforcement;
(f) promote cultural diversity in my classroom.

Engaging in Career-Long Learning

To support my intellectual engagement, it is important for a teacher to:
(a) collaborate with other teachers to build expertise;
(b) actively seek out feedback to enhance their practice;
(c) build their own capacity to support me in a welcoming and safe classroom;
(d) seek, critically review, and apply educational research to improve their teaching;
(e) maintain an awareness of emerging technologies related to the classroom.

Demonstrating a Professional Body of Knowledge

To support my intellectual engagement, it is important for a teacher to plan and design learning activities that:
(a) address the learning outcomes outlined in the curriculum;
(b) reflect short, medium and long range planning;
(c) incorporate a range of instructional strategies;
(d) ensure that I continuously develop skills in literacy and numeracy;
(e) communicate high expectations for me;
(f) foster my understanding of the link between the activity and the intended learning outcomes;
(g) consider relevant local, provincial, national and international contexts and issues;

(h) are varied, engaging and relevant to me;
(i) build my capacity for collaboration;
(j) incorporate digital technology and resources, as appropriate;
(k) encourage me to think critically when accessing, interpreting and evaluating information from diverse sources;
(l) consider my personal, cultural, and school background and history;
(m) reflect the specialized knowledge of the subject areas they teach.
To support my intellectual engagement, it is important for a teacher to apply assessment and evaluation practices that:
(n) accurately reflect the learner outcomes within the curriculum;
(o) offer me a balance of formative and summative assessment experiences;
(p) provide a variety of methods through which I can demonstrate my achievement of the learning outcomes;
(q) provide accurate, constructive and timely feedback on my learning;
(r) use reasoned judgment about the evidence used to determine and report the level of my learning.

Establishing Inclusive Learning Environments
To support my intellectual engagement, it is important for a teacher to:
(a) foster equality as outlined in the Alberta Human Rights Act and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms;
(b) address my strengths, learning challenges and areas for growth;
(c) communicate a philosophy of education affirming that I can learn and be successful;
(d) be aware of and respond to my emotional and mental health needs;
(e) collaborate with specialists to provide specialized supports that allow me to demonstrate my learning;
(f) employ classroom management strategies that promote positive, engaging learning environments;
(g) incorporate my personal and cultural strengths;
(h) provide opportunities for me to practice leadership.

Applying Foundational Knowledge about First Nations, Métis and Inuit
To support my intellectual engagement, it is important for a teacher to
(a) understand treaties and agreements with First Nations; legislation and agreements negotiated with Métis; and residential schools and their legacy;
(b) engage in school wide approaches to capacity building in First Nations, Métis and Inuit education;
(c) provide opportunities for me to develop respect for, the histories, cultures, languages, contributions, perspectives, experiences and contemporary contexts of First Nations, Métis and Inuit;
(d) support my learning by using resources that accurately demonstrate the strength and diversity of First Nations, Métis and Inuit;
(e) invite First Nations, Métis and Inuit community members into my classroom;
(e) enhance their own understanding of First Nations, Métis and Inuit worldviews, cultural beliefs, languages, and values.

Adhering to Legal Frameworks and Policies

To support my intellectual engagement, it is important for a teacher to:

(a) be aware of, and respond in accordance with, legal requirements authorized under the School Act and other relevant legislation;

(b) engage in practices consistent with policies and procedures established by the school division;

(c) recognize that the professional practice of a teacher is bound by standards of conduct expected of a caring, knowledgeable, and reasonable adult entrusted with my custody, care or education.

Appendix C

Invitation to Participants

Principal Email Recruitment Script

Email Subject Line: Univ. of Lethbridge Study – High School Student Perception of the Teaching Quality Standard

Dear Principal,

My name is Karie J. Evans. I am a graduate student in the Faculty of Education at the University of Lethbridge studying the voice of high school students in Alberta as to their perceptions of the competencies in the Teaching Quality Standard as it impacts their intellectual engagement. I am inviting students at Alberta high schools to participate in a survey that would take about 15 minutes to complete. The survey may be done on smartphones or tablets, so it is not necessary for students to use class time to complete the survey.

Participation is anonymous and confidential. The survey will be conducted through Qualtrics and every precaution will be taken to ensure that participant responses cannot be linked to individuals. Students will be asked to share their grade level but no other personal or identifying information will be requested. None of the questions refer to specific teachers, schools, or school divisions. Rather, they ask students to rate each of the indicators of competency as to its importance to intellectual engagement. There are no anticipated risks to taking part in this survey and students can stop at any time. If students do not complete the survey, their submitted responses will not be included, and the data will be destroyed.

If you have questions about the study or are interested in the findings, you may contact me at karie.evans@uleth.ca or 403-465-0899. You may also contact the Office of Research Ethics at the University of Lethbridge at research.services@uleth.ca or 403-329-2747 if you have questions about students' rights as a participant. This research has been reviewed for ethical acceptability and approved by the University of Lethbridge Human Participant Research Committee. This research has also been reviewed for acceptability and approved by your school division.

If you would be interested in allowing students to be part of the survey, I would ask you to please reply to this letter, confirming that you will allow the survey to be conducted and have your administrative assistant send the URL by email to the student contact list for your school, along with the accompanying invitation to participants. I would also ask you to notify your parent community about the survey by also sharing the student letter with parents. The survey is mobile phone, tablet, and computer compatible and may be accessed at: https://uleth.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_eJRD5Iov4TmlQ33.

Thank you in advance for your participation and support.

Karie J. Evans, Graduate Student
#2 3200 60th Street NE
Calgary, Alberta T1Y 4K8
t | 403-465-0899 e | karie.evans@uleth.ca

Survey Consent/Assent Information

(Place on Letterhead with University logo)

Please read the following letter of information carefully before beginning the survey:

Principal Investigator: Karie J. Evans, Graduate Student, Faculty of Education, University of Lethbridge

What is this study about?

You are invited to participate in an anonymous survey of high school students at public schools in Alberta. This is a research study of the perceptions that high school students have about what important things teachers do on a regular basis to help students engage intellectually. Through your participation, I hope to better understand students' voices on the topic of how good teaching helps you to stay interested in coming to school to learn. This invitation to participate is being extended to high school students in several high schools in Alberta.

What is expected of you?

The survey contains 46 total questions (1 demographic, and 45 survey questions) and will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. You will be asked to respond to statements asking you how important they are to you and your intellectual engagement. You may choose to skip any question you prefer not to answer.

What are the anticipated uses of the data collected?

The responses to the survey will be compiled together and presented in a graduate thesis at the University of Lethbridge. The aggregated findings may also be published in scholarly presentations and publications.

What are the risks and benefits of participating?

There are no anticipated risks from participating in this study. Your principal and teachers will not know whether you participated or what your individual responses were to the survey. There are no direct benefits from participating although you may gain some insight into what teachers do that helps you to be engaged in school if you reflect on the survey.

How will your confidentiality and anonymity be protected?

Participation is voluntary and your responses will not be identified with you personally as the survey collects no identifying information; however, as with any online survey, neither anonymity nor confidentiality can be completely guaranteed. The survey is being hosted on Qualtrics and their privacy policy can be accessed at https://www.qualtrics.com/privacy-statement/.

The responses to this survey will be kept on a password-protected computer with restricted access and will be deleted three years after data collection has been completed.

How can a participant withdraw?

Your participation is completely voluntary. You may withdraw your participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled by simply refusing to complete the survey or by closing your browser before completing the survey. If you choose to discontinue participation after you have submitted your completed survey, it will not be possible to withdraw your responses because they will not have identifying information linked to them. The data will be destroyed if you withdraw your responses.

Who is conducting this research?

For more information on this study or for a summary of the findings (available after September 2021), you may contact me at karie.evans@uleth.ca or 403-465-0899. Questions regarding your rights as a participant in this research may be addressed to the Office of Research Ethics, University of Lethbridge (Phone: 403-329-2747 or Email: research.services@uleth.ca).

This research study has been reviewed for ethical acceptability and approved by the University of Lethbridge Human Participant Research Committee.

By following the link to the survey, you are giving consent (if you are 18 or over) or assent (if you are under 18) to participate in this study. If you change your mind about participating in this study, you can stop completing it and close your browser. If you do not complete the survey, your answers will not be included in the results and the data you submitted will be destroyed. If you wish to participate in the survey, please proceed to the questions now at https://uleth.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_eJRD5Iov4TmlQ33. Thank you in advance for your participation.

Appendix D

Human Participant Research

UNIVERSITY OF LETHBRIDGE

APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL REVIEW OF HUMAN PARTICIPANT RESEARCH

The Human Participant Research Committee is mandated by University policy to examine and approve research proposals to ensure that ethical principles and standards respecting the personal welfare and rights of participants have been recognized and accommodated. The Committee follows the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans. This Policy Statement is available at: http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/eng/resources-ressources/news-nouvelles/nr-cp/2010-12-07/. Other guidelines may be used when appropriate to the research in question.

You are encouraged to speak with the Office of Research Ethics about any outstanding issues and seek the advice of the Committee when appropriate.

You are asked to respond to the following items and **to submit your application and all supporting documents electronically to Susan Entz, Office of Research Ethics (susan.entz@uleth.ca).** If possible, please use a different font for your responses, and submit your application as one document including the supporting documentation (e.g., letters of introduction, interview questions, questionnaires, telephone survey scripts, letters of consent, etc.). Please note that this form is meant to accommodate many different types of research and thus some questions may not be applicable in your case. If a question clearly does not apply to your research, please simply mark it with a N/A or explain why it is not relevant/appropriate. If you are not sure if it applies, please feel free to ask.

The Committee deals with applications as expeditiously as possible. **Please allow up to one month from the date of receipt for Committee review**.

Following approval of your protocol, any changes in procedures relevant to the ethical issues involved in the treatment of human participants are to be reported immediately to the Office of Research Ethics.

If the research involves invasive procedures, a Hazard Assessment Report (available from Risk and Safety Services or on-line at: http://www.uleth.ca/risk-and-safety-services/hazard-management) must be completed and submitted to Risk and Safety Services for review. Review and approval by the Biosafety Committee may also be required.

SECTION A: GENERAL - *This information is collected under the authority of the Alberta Post-secondary Learning Act and will be used for administrative purposes associated with the ethical review of your human participant research protocol. It will be treated in accordance with the privacy protection provisions of Part 2 of the Alberta Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (*http://foip.alberta.ca/legislation/act/index.cfm*). Questions about the collection, use or disclosure of your personal information collected on this form can be directed to Susan Entz, Ethics Officer, Office of Research Ethics, University of Lethbridge, Lethbridge, Alberta T1K 3M4, Phone: (403) 329-2747 and Email: susan.entz@uleth.ca.*

A1. Researcher/Applicant Information

Name: Karie Evans
Department: Graduate Studies in Education
Telephone Number: 403-465-0899
Email address: karie.evans@uleth.ca or kariejean35@gmail.com

Are you: ☐ Faculty ☐ Staff ☐ Doctoral Student

☒ Graduate Student ☐ Undergraduate Student

☐ Other:

A2. Co-Investigator's Information

Name:
Department:
Telephone Number
Email address:

Are you: ☐ Faculty ☐ Staff ☐ Graduate Student

☐ Graduate Student ☐ Undergraduate Student

☐ Other:

The protection of human participants will be assured in accordance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement or with other guidelines if these have been agreed upon as more appropriate.

_____ _____
Signature of Researcher/Applicant Date

When the Researcher/Applicant is a student, the supervisor must sign the following statement:

"I have reviewed this application and I deem it ready to submit to the Human Participant Research Committee for review."

_____ _____

Signature of Supervisor Date

A3. Student Thesis/Project Committee

a) Is this research for an undergraduate or graduate thesis/project or applied/independent study?

☒ Yes ☐ No

b) If applicable, please provide the names, departments and phone numbers of your Committee members.

Name:	Department:	Email or telephone:
1. Dr. Pamela Adams	Education	adams@uleth.ca
2. Dr. Carmen Mombourquette	Education	carmen.mombourquette@uleth.ca

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A4. Title of Project:

Indicate the title of your project. If this project is funded, the title should be the same as the title of your funded research.

THE TEACHING QUALITY STANDARD AND LEARNER ENGAGEMENT:

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS

A5. Location of Research

a) Indicate where the research will be conducted.

The research will be conducted online from my home in Calgary, Alberta through various participating school divisions. Data collection will be via an anonymous Qualtrics survey.

b) Does this project involve other centers, jurisdictions or countries? If so, please provide a list of the other groups who will be reviewing this protocol. (For example, the Lethbridge College Research Ethics Board must approve all posters to be posted on their campus.)

The research will involve public and separate school authorities in Alberta including but not limited to: Calgary Board of Education, Lethbridge Public School Division, West Winds School Division, Grande Prairie Public School Division, Medicine Hat Public School Division, Calgary Catholic School Division, and Fort McMurray Catholic School Division.

c) Will this study involve schools located in Zone 6? ☒ Yes ☐ No
Note: If this study will involve schools within Zone 6, once HPRC approval has been granted, district/school approval will be coordinated through Research and Placement Services in the Faculty of Education prior to the start of the study. You will be notified upon receipt of district/school approval. If the study involves schools outside of Zone 6, it is the responsibility of the researcher to ensure that the appropriate district/school approval is obtained prior to the start of the research; a copy of the approval must be submitted to the Office of Research Ethics.

d) Is this a class project (i.e., not an applied or independent study)? ☐ Yes ☒ No
If so, specify the course number and title:
Note: A class project application is normally submitted by an instructor who is teaching a research course and whose students will be conducting a mini-research project for the course.

A6. Start/End Dates of Research Involving Human Participants

Please state the proposed start and end dates of the research involving human participants.
NOTE: Research involving human participants cannot begin until Human Participant Research Committee approval has been received.

Start date: November 2020

End date: November 2021

A7. Scholarly Review

Some research projects may require scholarly review. What type of scholarly review has this research undergone?

☐ None
☐ External Peer Review (e.g., granting agency)
☒ Supervisory Committee (e.g., student research projects)
☐ Special Review (please provide details)

A8. Funding

a) Is the project funded? ☐ Yes ☒ No

Funding approved – please specify source(s):

1.
2.
3.

Funding pending – please specify source(s):

1.
2.
3.

A9. Conflict of Interest

a) Are any of the investigators or their immediate family receiving any personal remuneration (including investigator payments and recruitment incentives but excluding trainee remuneration or graduate student stipends from the funding of this study that is not accounted for in the study budget?
☐ Yes ☒ No

b) Do any of the investigators or their immediate family have any proprietary interests in the product under study or the outcome of the research including patents, trademarks, copyrights, and licensing agreements?
☐ Yes ☒ No

c) Is there any compensation for this study that is affected by the study outcome?
☐ Yes ☒ No

d) Do any of the investigators or their immediate family receive payments of other sorts from the funder for this study (i.e., grants, compensation in the form of equipment or supplies, retainers for ongoing consultation and honoraria)?
☐ Yes ☒ No

e) Are any of the investigators or their immediate family, members of the funder's Board of Directors, Scientific Advisory Panel or comparable body?
☐ Yes ☒ No

f) Do you have any other relationship, financial or non-financial, that, if not disclosed, could be construed as a conflict of interest?
☐ Yes ☒ No

Please explain if the answer to any of the above questions is Yes.

SECTION B: DETAILS ABOUT THE PROJECT

B1. Purpose of Project

Provide a brief and clear statement of the context and objectives of the project, including the key questions and/or hypotheses of the project (in two pages or less).

The purpose of this study is to explore Alberta high school students' perceptions of quality teaching by examining in what ways the standard of professional practice, including the teacher competencies and indicators, reflect what high school students believe enhances their intellectual engagement in school. The primary research question shall be: What indicators of quality teaching, as defined by the *Teaching Quality Standard (TQS)* (Alberta Education, 2018b), do Alberta high school students perceive to be of greatest importance in supporting their intellectual engagement? Secondary research questions will include: Which competencies do students perceive to be those that support student engagement in school? What can be learned from Alberta high school students' voice as to their perceptions of the indicators and competencies outline by the province as essential for quality teaching? Do students deem different competencies and indicators to be of differing importance at varying grade levels in high school?

An online quantitative instrument will be administered to high school students in the pursuit of non-experimental research to understand what they perceive to be the teaching competencies most relevant to them. The purpose of this study is to learn whether and to what degree students perceive aspects of the *TQS* to be important to their learning.

B2. Description of Participants

a) Indicate who you will recruit as potential participants in this study (e.g., undergraduates, school children, seniors) including any inclusion or exclusion criteria (e.g., over 65 years of age, self-identified as gay, speaks Blackfoot, speaks English), and the number of participants required.

Alberta high school students in grade 9-12 public and Catholic divisions are the target participants. Private schools, charter schools, Federal, Federal First Nations schools, and Francophone schools will be excluded as the scope of this study will include those schools which have been defined as public schools in Alberta. These are the only criteria for inclusion and, within that criteria, there will be no differentiation of demographic consideration other than grade level. I hope to have at least 100 participants in the study.

b) If the participants or facilities will be offered compensation or incentive for participating in the research, provide details. Specify the amount, what the compensation/incentive is for, and how payment will be determined for participants who do not complete the study.

No compensation or incentive will be provided for participation.

B3. Recruitment of Participants

a) Briefly describe how participants will be recruited (e.g., letter, phone, poster, third party) and who will do the recruiting. Describe any existing position of authority or power between the recruiter and the participant. Researchers should avoid recruiting their own students. If this is unavoidable, researchers should provide the name of a research assistant, not associated with the course, who will do the recruiting and obtain consent when the researcher is not present.

If posters, newspaper advertisements, radio announcements or letters of invitation are being used, append these to this application. If recruiting through a third party, attach confirmation of permission from the organization if available.

Participants in this study will be Alberta high school students from a range of public and Catholic school divisions in different communities across Alberta. After receiving ethics approval and then school division approval, a letter will be sent to the principals of high schools in the approved divisions asking them to have their assistant forward a letter of invitation to the potential participants, along with a link to the survey. The letter will inform participants about the purpose of the study and invite them to complete an anonymous online scale about the qualities they perceive to be important in a teacher as they relate to students' intellectual engagement.

b) When and how will people be informed of the right to withdraw from the study? What procedures will be followed for people who wish to withdraw at any point during the study? What happens to the information contributed to the point of withdrawal?

Participants will be informed in the letter of that they may withdraw their consent/assent to the study at any time by closing their browser. Surveys that are stopped part-way through will be considered as having had consent/assent withdrawn and will be deleted from the results. Once responses have been submitted, the anonymous nature of the responses would make it impossible for the researcher to trace and retract them.

c) Indicate how participants can obtain feedback on the research findings.

The findings will be published in a Master of Education Thesis and may be published in peer and non-peer reviewed articles after the Thesis defense has been completed. Participating principals will be provided with a lay summary of the findings should they wish to see it. They will be able to pass this on to any students or parents who request it. My contact information will be provided to both principals and participants should they wish to receive this or any further information about the results of the research findings.

Does the research specifically involve Aboriginal groups or communities? ☐ Yes ☒ No
If the answer was Yes, please complete section B3d to B3j.

d) If you will be obtaining consent from Elders, leaders, or other community representatives, provide details:

e) If leaders of the community will be involved in the identification of potential participants, provide details:

f) Provide details if:
- Property or private information belonging to the community as a whole is studied or used;
- The research is designed to analyze or describe characteristics of the community; or
- Individuals are selected to speak on behalf of, or otherwise represent the community

g) Provide information regarding consent agreements, including access, ownership and sharing of research data with communities.

h) Provide information on how final results of the study will be shared with the participating community (e.g., via band office, special presentation, deposit in community school, etc.).

i) Describe how you have engaged the community. For additional information on research involving the First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples of Canada, please refer to Chapter 9 of the TCPS2.

j) Is there a formal research agreement with the community? ☐ Yes ☐ No
Provide details about the agreement or why an agreement is not in place, not required, etc.

B4. Description of Research Procedures

Provide a summary of the design and procedures of the research. Provide details of data collection (instrument, location, use of recording, etc.), and time commitment for the participants, etc. If applicable, identify any special training or qualifications that may be required for data gatherers. *NOTE: all study measures (e.g., questionnaires, interview guides, surveys, rating scales, etc.) must be appended to this application. If the procedures include a blind, indicate under what conditions the code will be broken, what provisions have been made for this occurrence, and who will have the code.*

This study will involve nonexperimental quantitative research in the form of a descriptive study. The researcher developed a form of social survey, the *Evans Student Scale on the Teaching Quality Standard (ESS)* (Appendix A), to describe students' beliefs about and perceptions of the indicators outlined in the *TQS*. The survey is estimated to take up to 15 minutes to complete.

The ESS was developed using guidelines outlined in social sciences research texts for Likert-type scales, surveys, and questionnaires, and after reviewing other student perception survey projects. The scale was based on the original *TQS* document (2018), with minor changes in vocabulary in consideration of the student reader. The resulting scale contained one demographic question pertaining to the participant's grade level and 45 indicator statements where students were to rate whether they agreed with the item's importance on a Likert-type

scale: (1) Strongly Disagree that this is Important (2) Disagree that this is Important (3) Agree that this is Important (4) Strongly Agree that this is Important.

Depending upon the number of responses received, the researcher may need to take a random sampling of the student responses if one subgroup (high school grade level) is over or under-represented. The researcher will only receive one point of demographic information about each student; their grade in high school, which is linked to a literature discussion as to student intellectual engagement in school. This demographic question will be asked to determine whether there is any difference in responses based on grade level. Each participant will be assigned a random number in Qualtrics to explore findings. The *TQS* was not differentiated for grade levels, therefore if the student response numbers are low, the demographic variable may be removed from the study and Alberta high school students will be treated as a homogenous group.

According to the Government of Alberta (2020) there were in the 2019-2020 school year, 51 072 Grade 9 students, 51 508 Grade 10 students, 51 298 Grade 11 students, and 67 847 Grade 12 students. The total number of students in Grades 9-12 amounted to 221 725 and the total number of students in Grades 10-12 totalled 170 653. The scale provides for participants in Grade 9 as certain school divisions in Alberta commence high school at Grade 9 while others begin at Grade 10. It will need to be determined after all responses are received whether Grade 9 participants will be included in the results of the study. The sampling ratio will be expressed as:

n/N

where n is the sample size and N is the population size.

The only source of data in this study will come from *the Evans Student Scale on the Teaching Quality Standard (ESS)* which was developed by the researcher based on similar, recent student perception surveys and the *TQS*. The scale will be accessed through Qualtrics; therefore, students will have to access the survey online themselves and it will not be read to them by the researcher. Students using most computers, tablets, or other personal devices, would in most cases be able to access assistive technology to have the questions read to them if audio support were needed.

The researcher will use the internal consistency method to measure the reliability of the scale data, using the Kuder-Richardson formula 21 (KR-21) which is calculated using the formula below:

$$KR \sim 21 = \frac{(K)\,(SD^2) - \widetilde{X}\,(K - \widetilde{X})}{(SD^2)\,(K - 1)}$$

where

K = the number of items on the test or other instrument

SD = the standard deviation of the total scores

$\widetilde{X}$ = the mean of the total scores

In addition, the scale includes not just each teacher competency, but also the indicators to prove internal reliability of the scale. Participants will have multiple opportunities to express the importance of each of the six competencies, as each one is broken down into multiple indicators.

Data gathered from a scale is interval/ratio data. The mean score will be calculated for all 45 statements on the scale and the standard deviation will also be calculated. An analysis of variance, the ANOVA will be used to compare interval/ratio scores across the groups based on which grade level they were in when they completed the scale if Qualtrics is not able to assist with this analysis.

B5. Privacy Protection

The next set of questions deals with anonymity and confidentiality. Refer to the brief descriptions below to assist you in answering these questions.

a) Anonymity *refers to the protection of the identity of participants.* ***Anonymity protection can be provided along a continuum, from "complete" to "no" protection, where complete protection means that no identifying information will be collected and there is no direct interaction between the researcher and the participant.*** *We remind applicants that university researchers should treat any personal information in accordance with the privacy protection provisions of Part 2 of the Alberta Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (http://foip.alberta.ca/legislation/act/index.cfm). If you have any questions about the collection, use, or disclosure of personal information under the Act, please contact the FOIP Coordinator, The University of Lethbridge, 4401 University Drive, Lethbridge, Alberta T1K 3M4, Email: foip@uleth.ca.*

1. Will the anonymity of the participants be protected?

☐ Yes (completely) ☒ Yes (partially) ☐ No

2. If "yes", explain how anonymity will be protected, and describe how this will be explained in the consent process.

Participation is voluntary and participant responses will not be identified with them as the survey collects no identifying information other than grade; however, as with any online survey, neither anonymity nor confidentiality can be completely guaranteed. The survey is being hosted on Qualtrics and their privacy policy can be accessed at https://www.qualtrics.com/privacy-statement/.

It will be explained in the letter to students and in the survey that response submissions are completely anonymous and do not contain any personal data, other than the grade level of the high school student. Qualtrics will be used to distribute the scale which should guarantee this level of anonymity.

3. If "no", justify why loss of anonymity is appropriate, and describe how this will be explained in the consent process.

b) Confidentiality *refers to the protection, access, control and security of the data and personal information. Confidentiality or non-disclosure agreements are recommended for all the individuals involved with the project (e.g., transcriptionists, research assistants, co-investigators, etc.). Append a copy of the confidentiality template if available.*

1. How will confidentiality be protected and how will this be explained in the consent process? Specify which personnel will have access to the listing of names and study ID numbers as well as other study information collected (use job titles rather than individual names.) Provide details on the location, manner of storage, and the proposed retention period of the information collected.

Only the single researcher, thesis supervisors, and Qualtrics will have access to the information, which is opinion or perception, and grade levels of anonymous Alberta high school students. All email information to principals will be sent through the University of Lethbridge email account of the researcher. The information will be stored and accessed for three years on the researcher's password protected hard drive and one password protected backup USB device. Information will be deleted from Qualtrics after the thesis defense.

B6. Potential Risks and Benefits

To facilitate Human Participant Research Committee review and to determine whether the study involves more than minimal risk, please respond to the following questions. Does this project involve…	**Check those that apply**
1. Collection of data through invasive clinical procedures that are not required for normal patient care.	
2. Collection of data through noninvasive clinical procedures involving imaging or microwaves that are not required for normal patient care.	
3. Any other non-therapeutic risks that arise from procedures not directly related to patient care.	
4. Collection, use, or disclosure of health information or biological samples where the researcher is requesting that the requirement for informed consent be waived.	
5. Any procedures involving deception or incomplete disclosure of the nature of the research for purposes of informed consent.	
6. Any possibility that a breach of confidentiality could place participants at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to participants' financial standing, employability or reputation.	
7. Research questions or procedures that might be expected to cause participant psychological distress, discomfort or anxiety beyond what a reasonable person might expect in day to day social interactions (e.g., questions that raise painful memories or unresolved emotional issues).	
8. Investigations in which there is a previous or existing relationship between the investigator and participants (e.g., manager/employee, therapist/client, teacher/student).	X

a) Outline any risks of potential physical or emotional harm or discomfort to the participants and describe the measures that will be put in place to mitigate these risks. Explain why the research is important and the benefits of participating (compensation paid to participants is not considered a benefit).

No current students of the researcher will be invited to participate in this study. The researcher *will not be asking for participants from the pool of her own current students*. The researcher currently works in a middle school therefore those students will not take the survey as middle school students are not the participants in this study. No electronic communication between researcher and participant will be conducted, unless parents or students contact the researcher with a question about the scale or the study. Ongoing communications will not be

conducted with students involved in this study and it is anticipated that the rate of contact or questions will be extremely low.

Potential benefits to the participants may include the opportunity to have their collective voice heard regarding their own education and the influence it might have on Alberta provincial policy.

b) Describe the anticipated dissemination of the study findings.

The findings will be published in a Master of Education Thesis and may be published in peer and non-peer reviewed articles after the Thesis defense has been completed.

c) Indicate the steps taken to inform participants of the possible consequences of releasing information in the public domain and describe how participants will be given an opportunity to review material where appropriate.

There are no known risks involved in releasing information to the public domain due to the anonymity of survey responses. Participants will be given the researcher's contact information to obtain the results of the study later.

d) Outline the exit strategy for termination of the study. Some types of research involve intense or lengthy contact between a researcher and the study participant(s), which may result in a close personal relationship, especially if the research itself involves matters close to the heart of participants. For this section, applicants should consider the possibility that a strategy may be required for participants who have difficulty in disengaging from the project after their role is completed or the project has terminated. If this does not apply to your research, please indicate N/A. If the research involves vulnerable populations, carefully clarify the boundaries between the researcher and participants.

N/A

B7. Obtaining Consent

Advise the Committee how informed consent will be obtained. The Tri-Council Policy Statement ensures that informed consent is obtained in writing from all participants or, when appropriate from parents or legal guardians, unless there is a good reason for not doing so. If a consent form will be used, attach copies for the Committee. The Human Participant Research - Sample Letter of Consent is available at: http://www.uleth.ca/research/human-participant-research-guidelines-forms. Please ensure that the reading level of the consent form is appropriate to the population involved.

a) Clearly detail who will be obtaining consent and the procedures for doing so. If appropriate, specify whether participants will be randomly assigned to groups before or after consent has been attained.

The principal will give consent for the school to participate in the study. If the principal declines, then no students from the school will participate. If the principal consents, then the principal will provide notification to the parent community about the nature of the study. The potential participants are all high school students, the study does not entail gathering any personal data, and the questions only pertain to their thoughts about what it is that teachers do to keep them intellectually engaged. The students themselves are being invited to provide their own assent or consent as below, through choosing to participate in the study in their own time. The letter to principals reflects that the researcher does not expect students and teachers to use class time to respond to the survey. The survey is mobile-friendly so that students may complete it in their free time. The principal will be asked to have the administrative assistant forward the survey to the student population through student emails after parents have been notified of the study.

Consent and assent from students will be given through their participation in the study and after they have been informed about the nature of the study through a letter (Appendix C). Principals in participating school divisions will receive a cover letter addressed to them (Appendix B) and another addressed to students (Appendix C) and assent/consent (depending on age) will be provided by the participants themselves through the submission of a completed survey. Incomplete surveys will not be included in the results of the study. Students are not required to complete this survey as part of a class.

b) If the participants are not able/competent to give fully informed consent (cognitive impairment, age, etc.), or if there are significant power differences in operation (professor/student, employer/employee, political or economic minorities, etc.), please specify, and describe steps you will take to obtain free and informed consent. If participants are not competent to consent, specify who will consent on their behalf.

Principals will consent on behalf of students to participate in the study. Students will assent to participate in the study and students over the age of 18 can give their own consent. Students who have exceptional needs in reading or who are English Language Learners are free to use assistive technologies they already use to complete reading activities in school to assist them with the reading of the scale.

c) Do any of the procedures include the use of deception or partial disclosure of information to participants? If yes, provide a rationale for the deception or partial disclosure. Describe the procedures for debriefing the participants.

Procedures will not include the use of deception or partial disclosure of information to participants.

d) **For the letter of consent/consent form:**

1. Extend an invitation to participate in the research project.

2. Provide a brief description of the project, including the purpose of the research, and a description of what is expected of the participant (e.g, the time commitment, and the frequency of contact).

3. Describe the risks and discomforts (e.g., distress, inconvenience, psychological or social discomforts, fatigue, or physical safety issues). If the research project has the potential to identify upset, distressed, or disturbed individuals, describe what arrangements will be made to assist these individuals, if need be.

4. Describe the benefits, including an explicit statement if there are no potential benefits to the participants (e.g., "You will not benefit directly from participation in this research").

5. Provide assurance of anonymity and confidentiality – this statement should describe the steps taken to ensure anonymity and confidentiality and should include information regarding who will have access to the data collected. **NOTE: Participants should be advised that their privacy cannot be guaranteed when electronic surveys are used.**

6. Outline compensation for participation in the research project, if applicable.

7. Provide a non-coercive disclaimer – this statement should indicate that participation is voluntary, and that refusal to participate will not initiate prejudice, penalty or loss of benefits to which the participant is otherwise entitled.

8. Provide an option to withdraw – this statement should indicate that participants may discontinue participation at any time without prejudice, penalty or loss of benefits. The process for withdrawal, in addition to information on the participant's right to request the withdrawal of data, should be clearly explained along with an explanation of the conditions under which researchers would not be able to remove a participant's data from the study. Where appropriate, participants who choose to withdraw should be consulted on the fate of their data.

9. Indicate the instances when the researcher may be obligated by law to report, to law enforcement or another agency, information revealed as a result of the research. **NOTE: Questions likely to result in reportable activities must be flagged for the respondent, and the respondent must be given the option to skip these questions.**

10. Provide a brief description of the anticipated use of the data.

11. Provide information on how participants will be informed of the results of the research.

12. Provide the name of the researcher, along with their institutional affiliation, and contact information for questions/clarification about the research project. Also include the following statement: "Questions regarding your rights as a participant in this research may be addressed to the Office of Research Ethics, University of Lethbridge (Phone: 403-329-2747 or Email: research.services@uleth.ca)."

e) **For telephone surveys**, informed consent should take place in the form of a verbal explanation of the above points. Append the script for this explanation to this application.

f) **For anonymous questionnaires**, include a cover letter that includes all the information normally provided in a consent form. Append a copy of this cover letter to this application.

B8. Reporting Requirements

Research is subject to continuing research ethics review from the date of initial ethics approval, throughout the life of the project by submission of the required report. Continuing research ethics review shall consist of an annual progress report (multi-year research projects), and an end-of-study report (projects lasting less than one year). Select the appropriate reporting requirement for the study:

☐ Annual renewal report (due on or before annual term date)
☒ End-of-study report (for projects shorter than one year in duration)

Appendix E

Human Participant Research Committee Approval

Office of Research Ethics
4401 University Drive
Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada T1K 3M4
Phone: (403) 329-2747
Email: research.services@uleth.ca
FWA 00018802 IORG 0006429

Tuesday, 29 September 2020

Student Investigator: Karie Evans, Faculty of Education
Faculty Co-Supervisors: Pamela Adams, Faculty of Education
Carmen Mombourquette, Faculty of Education
Study Title: The Teaching Quality Standard and Learner Engagement: High School Students' Perceptions

Action: Approved HPRC Protocol Number: 2020-088
Approval Date: September 29, 2020
Annual Renewal Report Due: September 28, 2021

Dear Karie,

Your human research ethics application titled "The Teaching Quality Standard and Learner Engagement: High School Students' Perceptions" has been reviewed and approved on behalf of the University of Lethbridge Human Participant Research Committee (HPRC) for the approval period September 29, 2020 to September 28, 2021, and assigned Protocol #2020-088. The HPRC conducts its reviews in accord with University policy and the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (2018).

Please be advised that any changes to the protocol or the informed consent must be submitted for review and approval by the HPRC before they are implemented. An annual renewal report for continuing ethics certification will be required and is due to the Office of Research Ethics on or before September 28, 2021.

We wish you the best with your graduate research.

Sincerely,
Susan Entz, M.Sc., Ethics Officer
Office of Research Ethics University of Lethbridge
4401 University Drive
Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada T1K 3M4

Appendix F

Leadership Quality Standard Competencies

Fostering Effective Relationships: A leader builds positive working relationships with members of the school community and local community.

Modelling Commitment to Professional Learning: A leader engages in career-long professional learning and ongoing critical reflection to identify opportunities for improving leadership, teaching and learning.

Embodying Visionary Leadership: A leader collaborates with the school community to create and implement a shared vision for student success, engagement, learning and well-being.

Leading a Learning Community: A leader nurtures and sustains a culture that supports evidence-informed teaching and learning.

Supporting the Application of Foundational Knowledge about First Nations, Métis and Inuit: A leader supports the school community in acquiring and applying foundational knowledge about First Nations, Métis and Inuit for the benefit of all students.

Providing Instructional Leadership: A leader ensures that every student has access to quality teaching and optimum learning experiences.

Developing Leadership Capacity: A leader provides opportunities for members of the school community to develop leadership capacity and to support others in fulfilling their educational roles.

Managing School Operations and Resources: A leader effectively directs operations and manages resources.

Understanding and Responding to the Larger Societal Context: A leader understands and appropriately responds to the political, social, economic, legal and cultural contexts impacting schools and the school authority.