



Unleashing the Power of Transformative Educational Leadership

Dr Louise Stoll
Professor of Professional Learning
UCL Institute of Education, London

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Transformative Educational Leadership Program
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Introduction and background

Complex, interconnected global, national and provincial challenges require profound changes in education in order for all students in British Columbia (BC) to flourish at school and in their future lives.

In common with an increasing number of countries, jurisdictions and international organizations making changes to address these challenges, districts and schools in BC introduced a revised curriculum and are working to build more equitable and socially just learning environments to better support all learners. In addition, inequalities and opportunities highlighted by the recent global pandemic are causing many in BC and internationally to rethink education for a better post-pandemic world. All of this has profound implications for taken-for-granted pedagogies, culture, infrastructures and systems.

Powerfully impactful leadership is fundamental to addressing these complex and interconnected challenges and opportunities, and associated leadership development is absolutely essential. A scholar and advocate for social justice and equity, Dr. Blye Frank, recently retired Dean of the University of British Columbia's (UBC) Faculty of Education has been ahead of the field. In 2015 he seized the opportunity to create a post-graduate program at UBC on Transformative Educational Leadership to fill a void he saw in educational leadership development within the BC K-12 context.

Transformative leadership shares elements with early definitions of transformational leadership¹, a more widely used term. However:

“To be truly transformative, the processes of leadership must be linked to equity, inclusion, and social justice.”²

In essence, transformative leadership has to go beyond organizational effectiveness and school improvement. It must effect deep and equitable change (Shields, 2020)³. Drawing on earlier research,⁴ Winfrey Avant explains how:

Transformative leaders find ways to help individuals envision new possibilities that challenge institutionalized knowledge on improving society and transforming themselves . . . This enables transformative leaders to identify and collaborate with individuals who are influential in their communities to address fundamental inequalities.⁵

Dr. Judy Halbert and Dr. Linda Kaser led the program's design and implementation, and have been its co-facilitators since the start. Program design and development was guided by the TELP Advisory Committee, consisting of Faculty of Education faculty members, and BC K-12 Senior Leaders.



The program

UBC's Transformative Educational Leadership Program (TELP) BC is advertised on their website as:

Expand your worldview

The Transformative Educational Leadership Program BC is ideal for individuals in the K-12 system and other connected sectors, who are interested in system transformation. This cohort-based program is for highly-motivated individuals who already have a Master's degree and want to expand their world-view, gain new experiences and raise their academic credentials to new levels.

This 10-month program provides participants with relevant and in-depth interaction alongside innovative researchers, practitioners, and world-class scholars, at an internationally respected university. Participants will develop the capacity to transform themselves and their communities by exploring and engaging in dialogue and debate about major challenges and opportunities facing school districts.

TELP 1 started in 2015-16. The program is currently recruiting its 7th cohort and, for the first time, a small TELP International cohort will also participate in 2021-2022. Following an initial cohort of 17 participants, subsequent group sizes have been around 30, with 36 in the 2020-21 TELP 6 cohort. TELP is open to system leaders at all levels, school leaders, teachers and university educators. Including TELP 6, 173 people have completed or are going through TELP. On registering, these included: 70 district leaders, including four members of the First Nations Education Steering Committee; 93 school principals or vice-principals; 9 teachers or teacher leaders, including 2 district teachers;

9 superintendents; 9 assistant superintendents; 1 deputy minister; and one university instructor. Thirty-one of BC's 60 school districts have been involved in TELP, with further participation from the Yukon Territory and the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC).

Participants meet six times – five sessions are weekend retreats, from Friday late afternoon to Saturday afternoon, and the final session takes place over three days at the end of the school year. TELPs 1-4 took place entirely on UBC's Vancouver campus. Due to COVID-19, TELP 5 moved online part-way through, and TELP 6 has been entirely online. The 10-month program focuses on central and emerging key themes. During whole-cohort meeting times, participants engage in dialogue with a network of like-minded colleagues, and engage with 'living case studies' – stories and experiences of inspirational educational leaders and international scholars.

Between meetings, participants are involved in reading and producing written reflections, connecting their reading to their leadership and practice. Instead of working toward a final project during TELP, they develop an inquiry plan to bring to life after completing the program. During the final session, each participant presents their TELP experience and endeavours and their plans for system change. Participants have access to Canvas, UBC's online portal, containing program materials and providing a space for online dialogue.

Throughout the program, Drs. Halbert and Kaser facilitate with the support of TELP graduates. Participants are encouraged to find a critical friend from a previous cohort or from their peers. TELP 6 (2020-21) participants also meet online in smaller reading groups, each facilitated by a TELP graduate. Further support comes from Sarah Lockman, Manager of Professional Development & Community Engagement (PDCE), Lynne Tomlinson, Assistant Dean of PDCE in the Faculty of Education – both of whom have been with TELP since the start, Lynne as a TELP 1 participant in a former district role. Another TELP 1 graduate, Brooke Moore, edits the TEL Journal, an additional resource since 2017, and now helps to facilitate online dialogue through Canvas.

Graduates have opportunities to stay connected through learning events and by contributing to current programs or supporting new participants. Further opportunities to share experiences occur through the TEL Journal and provincial, national or international events and channels.



Evaluation aims and methods

The aims of this evaluation were:

- to explore the impact of TELP on individual participants, colleagues they lead, and on their schools and districts
- to explore and provide feedback on TELP's design and learning processes

Methods included:

- background reading
- interviews with TELP originators, leaders and facilitators, advisors and support team
- a survey of TELP 1-5 graduates (with a 51.5% completion rate)
- interviews with individual graduates, district team graduates, and colleagues impacted by TELP
- observation of a UBC alumni webinar focused on TELP.

Fuller details of methods are contained in [Appendix 1](#). Data collection took place between March and May 2021. It should be noted that survey respondents self-selected and may not reflect the views of all TELP graduates. All interviewed graduates and several members of interviewed district teams also agreed to a post-survey interview. Interviewed colleagues of graduates were nominated by these people, and agreed to be interviewed. One involved another colleague in the interview.

In what follows, I explore this evaluation's learnings about TELP's impact, key ingredients and sustainability issues. In concluding, I offer questions for reflection and dialogue. While the report doesn't include detailed stories of the many impressive endeavours of individual graduates and district teams, examples of their activities will hopefully give a flavour of the rich activity. It is a deliberate decision to include many quotes from surveys and interviews because I want readers to hear the voices of TELP graduates and colleagues they have collaborated with and influenced - it's their story. In this, I have sacrificed brevity for what I hope is authenticity.

“TELP was the single greatest professional learning experience I've ever had. Bar none. I wish I could do it again.”



TELP's impact

TELP's website states that:

"Participants will develop the capacity to transform themselves and their communities by exploring and engaging in dialogue and debate about major challenges and opportunities facing school districts."

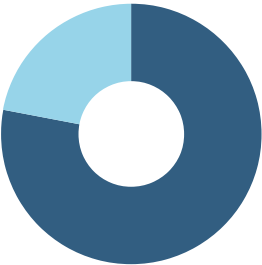
Here, I first explore TELP's influence on individual graduates - to what extent it has transformed them and how, their inquiry plans, some of the changes they have made, and TELP's influence on subsequent decisions to apply for different positions. Next, the focus turns to their influence on others. The light is then shone on the impact on and of districts, before finally looking at impact more broadly.

"TELP lit the spark. As for the future, I think the sky's the limit."

Impact on participants

All of the TELP graduates participating in the evaluation believe they have developed the capacity to transform themselves, at least to some extent. Survey responses indicate TELP's strong impact. Almost 80% selected 'transformative to my thinking and action,' the remainder choosing 'Reasonably transformative' (see Table 1).

Table 1 • How would you describe TELP's impact on you?



	%	No.
● Transformative to my thinking and action	78	50
● Reasonably transformative	22	14
● It had little impact on me	0	0
Totals	100	64

Former participants described TELP's transformative effects on them in a range of ways, as noted below.

How TELP is transformative for participants

Pushing them to probe, inquire and reflect deeply: "TELP took my inquiry a lot further . . . I tried a whole bunch of things and lots didn't work. Others I hadn't considered did work. I learnt a ton from what didn't work."

Provoking them to challenge their own assumptions: "I never analysed my racism. TELP forces you to look at that - what are my biases;" "It helped us to understand and question our own structures - you start carrying narratives forward that you think are truth. . . caused us to think differently about how we do learning [here] - not very different for students and teachers. We were treating adult learners in the way we traditionally treat children. It's not surprising they were disengaged."

Triggering paradigm shifts: "That book rewired my brain. It changed the way I approach my life. It's constant practice. I should have known this;" "it changed how I look at student voice. Before, I took the adults' perspective. Now I see it from the students' and their families'."

Forcing them to act: “There’s no going back;” “How are you going to change things?”

Leading them to take a much broader perspective: “really looking at a bigger picture”; “I was up on the balcony⁶ for the first time in terms of learning leadership⁷ and began to examine and critique.”

Helping them find opportunities: “to grasp and take forward,” even when facing enormous constraints such as in COVID.

Demanding and giving them courage: “Courage to step out and not be swayed with those who want to stay with status quo. Transformation requires courage;” “It made it clear how important it is to take risks for student learning.”

Building confidence: a belief in themselves and for some, getting over the ‘imposter syndrome’⁸, especially powerful in women’s leadership: “I fit the shoes I always wanted to fit in.”

Piquing greater interest in the potential of leadership: “I found myself more interested in leadership than I had ever been before.”

Stimulating even greater passion for learning: “TELP helped to build the real desire to keep learning.”

Preparing them for further study and providing useful evidence for job applications: “My published article is something I put on my resume. It helped me secure a sessional assignment teaching M.Ed. classes.”

Dialogue and debate about major challenges and opportunities feature heavily in TELP, but the program also pushes participants into deep exploration and action. Participants are guided toward an inquiry plan to take forward on completing the program. Individuals develop plans for action to influence culture, structures, professional learning and practice related to diverse passions and interests.

TELP 1-5 inquiry plan foci and the kinds of work they have taken forward broadly include:

- enhancing student engagement in relevant, meaningful and deep learning through greater voice and agency, inquiry and community involvement
- enhancing experiences and community connections of vulnerable students and those with special educational needs
- a range of school- and district-focused inquiries around re-designing Indigenous student learning and integrating Indigenous perspectives and worldviews
- leadership development opportunities
- developing learning organization frameworks and practices at whole system and school levels
- deepening collaboration
- and managing complex system change at school, district and provincial levels.

Some inquiry plans and much subsequent activity have involved using the Spirals of Inquiry cycle as a general frame for decision making and action. For those moving into a new role, creating the plan enabled them to use their inquiry to “lead with curiosity” and engage their new communities.

The final assignment enables participants to showcase their journey through a presentation, in video form since the program moved online in 2020. Here, fellow participants are able to experience the sense of collective impact. As one explained: “I loved the last assignment - the quality of presentations in that last week. . . were off the chart. It was like going to a conference. It was awesome.”

Subsequent role changes

Has TELP played a part in decisions around later role changes? Just over half (51% of 61) of former TELP participants responding to the survey have subsequently made switches. Most of these are to a different role, with almost all of these new positions offering the opportunity to extend their sphere of influence, such as moving from vice-principal to principal, principal to district principal, director or

assistant superintendent or to become superintendent. Generally, graduates stay in their districts, with a few moving to neighbouring districts. Several reflected on the confidence and impetus TELP gave them, two commenting: “I can do this and have an impact. . . It lit the spark,” and “It gave me the confidence that I could be in a more formal leadership role; not only that I could do it but that I should.” Others, including those choosing to remain in the same role, talked about broadening their influence. And it is to the impact TELP participants have had on others that we now turn.

Impact of TELP graduates

TELP’s website also states that TELP graduates will “be well prepared to lead system change” and “be an integral part of shaping the educational system and be ambassadors for future leaders.”

Uninvolved BC teachers and leaders offered an external view of TELP’s impact. On request, some interviewed graduates recommended colleagues who could speak about their impact. All of these colleagues shared examples of how TELP graduates were passionate champions of learning who had made a powerful difference. Actions included courageous changes to enhance pedagogy for deep learning including radically altering student assessment, infusing Indigenous perspectives and worldviews into curricula and pedagogy, family and community engagement in a new school, co-designing a framework for professional growth as a voluntary alternative to teacher evaluation, and widening access to transformative forms of leadership development. To them, these leaders clearly deserved to be called ‘transformative.’

Colleagues' reflections on TELP participants' transformative leadership

"She's on the leading edge. Everybody benefits from her magnanimousness in the field. She believes in the greater good."

"He's proven and modelled what he believes in – he supports us. He changes scheduling around because it's good pedagogical practice. He has given them the chance to dream big."

"She's creating a legacy, so when she leaves the legacy of curiosity still exists... Distributed leadership has become shining. EAs, students and families have become who we want to be."

"He's a superb critical friend. He's not the only one but he's the most important. He's an outside of the box thinker, but knows how to make systems change within the system. . . His impact will extend much further once COVID is over. He's 'doing the thing.'"

"She has changed the conversation in that district."

"He is motivated for change – absolutely. He pushes. I could give you multiple examples. His expectations are that we are moving forward. He is pushing against the status quo . . . He's a transformer. 'Let's go.'"

"It's her imagining mentorship – it's not really inside a box for her. It's 'let's . . . think widely and creatively on how we can make the biggest difference . . .'"

"He has made sure that the Truth and Reconciliation work has been emphasized and is a permanent agenda between the administrator group. He reminds the group learning doesn't stop here. He brings impact."

One teacher, also a former TELP participant, spoke about the impact of the new school principal – another TELP graduate:

"I've learned more professionally in this year than any other year – she's read everything. It's fantastic having conversations. Our school hasn't suspended a single person this year. I feel really supported. It's her first full year as a principal . . . I'm seeing the transformation she's doing . . . We are really pushing our individual school to Spirals and moving in specific directions to make school better. Everything has direction and purpose."

Some colleagues who knew the leader before they participated in TELP also commented on changes they noticed after the program:

“He was more bold. Also . . . in pedagogical meetings, he engages us more to have discussions either through an article or Ted Talk. It’s very informal. He doesn’t choose the topic. He asks us ‘If you have a topic you want to explore’. . . He’s engaged more thoughtfully about shared leadership. . . He’s thought it through, letting go. He’s built more capacity.”

“She was already making these little changes through connecting with staff. When she started with TELP, it became richer. She was really digging deep. . . Before TELP our school story was more stagnant. It became a more fluid learning journey and we’re really seeing teaching and learning as a journey which grows.”

“It was very much a positive change . . . It was a game changer. He also brought many ideas back to staff.”

Graduates from earlier cohorts also noted changes in colleagues participating in later ones: “You can see . . . a shift in systems thinking. It’s hugely impacted how she works with department heads.”

In choosing who to recommend to externally validate the impact of their leadership, former participants demonstrated another TELP aim for its graduates: “being an ambassador for future leaders.” As one graduate said of his recommended colleague: “When I look at him, I’m as proud of him as any work.” And it was clear why the TELP graduates selected these colleagues to comment. As they spoke and described the work they were doing as teacher leaders, new vice-principals, a district leader for Truth and Reconciliation, a principal and consultant opening a school in an uninvolved school district, and a teachers’ union president, what came through was their drive, passion about and for learning, taking action and for engaging in joint work to move the system forward as transformative educational leaders:

“There are other ways to look at more equitable practices - we may have to do things differently. People may be upset about change. . . Let’s dream big. . . What’s one thing we could do to make sure every student is going to be successful when they come in our doors?”

“He knows a lot of goals and things I’m trying to promote about learning align to his goals. He participates in everything; he brings up issues about equity.”

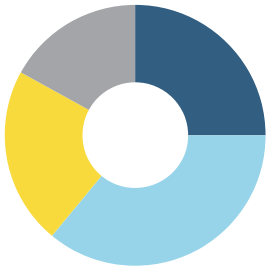
District impact

The focus here turns to the impact on and of districts participating in TELP.

Educators from 31 of BC's 60 school districts have been involved to some extent in TELP since its inception. Most commonly, 1 or 2 people per district/territory/organization have participated since the start of TELP, although a third - frequently smaller districts - have been represented by between 3 and 6 participants. In contrast, more than 20 educators have been involved from 3 mid to large districts (1 district with 30) and 15 colleagues from another district have engaged in TELP.

So, what has TELP's impact been on these districts? Table 2 shows survey respondents' assessments of the level of impact. TELP's influence is strongly experienced across many TELP graduates' districts. Over 60% believed its impact is major, with another 25% observing profound influence.

Table 2 • How would you describe the impact of TELP across your district or department?



	%	No.
● Profound - it has deeply influenced the way we do things	25	16
● Significant - I can see many examples of TELP's influence	36	23
● Some - I can see a number of examples of TELP's influence	22	14
● Little - other than my efforts/work of a few TELP graduates	17	11
Total	100	64

It wasn't only participants who noticed the impact of TELP on districts. In the words of someone recommended by a former TELP graduate: "Our district has transformed. Our teachers are light years ahead of some of their colleagues. I see it - the big picture." We now turn to some of the changes in TELP-involved districts, then look at some patterns of change that emerged through the evaluation.

“ TELP has been a catalyst for transformational change in our district.”

Changes in districts

Former participants described TELP's influence on district and school leadership. Districts are addressing longstanding issues such as anti-racist approaches to Truth and Reconciliation and integrating Indigenous perspectives, disengagement and graduation rates of struggling learners, or pushing for more innovative learning practices and environments, including challenging traditional student assessment practices. Talk and action changed, as one graduate explained: "when they went through TELP, I could hear the adaptive conversations and them having courage to take actions around Indigenizing equity."

In one district's revised strategic plan, many ideas that emerged have been influenced by concepts and understandings gained through TELP. For the first time, the district is engaging the entire community - parents, district leaders, students, and business leaders - in focus areas for the Board. Elsewhere, districtwide growth planning is now based on the Spirals of Inquiry. Another district's planning processes also look very different: "Five years ago it was all data driven and numeric and not lived experience." And shifts have occurred in how non-involved senior-level colleagues work. One graduate spoke of a finance director who loved the system's new TELP-inspired framework and turned around the management of system finances in a year. And some districts started sharing more leadership at district level with school leaders: "hard work, political, challenging work, but we've shifted direction."

"Our district has had so many educators who have participated in TELP that I am seeing a common mindset of inquiry."

In a mid-size district, every school has presented to trustees based on their school learning plans. The trustees were impressed with how student learning has improved: "Four years ago, it was more show and tell." In one family of schools, each school incorporated some words from the local Indigenous language into their presentation to show their commitment to place-based learning and language. And a superintendent in another district described how they are "seeing changes in graduation rates of Indigenous learners."

Further stories told of shifts in leadership development. TELP is now almost "a rite of passage" in one district, with an eagerness to develop leadership across the board, including a strong emphasis on mentoring and teacher leadership. In another district, a new leadership program only open to teachers was piloted on six Saturdays over 18 months, drawing 25 teachers who created their own inquiry plans to go deeper with an innovative practice in their schools. Elsewhere, district and school TELP graduates have collaborated to redesign the learning agenda for district and school senior staff, using "lots of scanning and checking," considerable negotiation and persistence. A fourth district designed a new two-year leadership curriculum. Individuals and district teams have also introduced TELP readings and processes into district senior leadership team meetings and meetings with school and teacher leaders. TELP, either directly or indirectly:

"...helps our leaders. They are thirsting for more. It widens the lens on school leadership, motivates you as a leader - what else might you do? We disseminate that thinking and help them engage with bigger ideas. We're seeing school leaders engage differently with Spirals of Inquiry and at a deeper level - people are getting it on a deeper level."

Several districts are now "committed to being an inquiry district", allocating associated time:

"Everything we do we talk about how does this fit? Is this about our students? Our scanning. Is there evidence for it? Is this supported? Have we done our checking? Not just jump to action."

The innovation grant process in one district was redesigned, making it invitational and orienting it toward stimulating inquiry: "It's about process rather than product. We are seeing risk taking in the district - it's building a culture of curiosity. It makes a difference to how people

feel and innovation has improved.” Other signs of TELP are seen in structures, committee and district role titles such as the Learning Organization Framework, Educational Transformation Committee, Director of Learning & Inquiry, and District Principal of Inquiry & Innovation. Such use of language, with associated action, is powerful⁹, with: “the culture of inquiry we are seeing take root, with learning plans, engaging teams . . . and teachers using the language of inquiry.”

Patterns of change

Greater numbers participating from the larger districts involved in TELP¹⁰ have helped build a network, and – in the views of numbers of graduates – variously generated “a critical mass” or provided “a common language and methodology based on research for decision making and system direction.” District leaders also noticed “a common mindset of inquiry.” One principal explained that, although many colleagues may be unaware of TELP, it “really pushed us to do things differently as we asked ‘can we reimagine what schools would look like?’” And where a smaller group of senior leaders from larger districts have engaged, they find they have a common understanding of issues which enables them to delve more quickly into deeper conversations.

A different pattern is seen in some smaller districts. Where a number of district leaders have engaged with the program, sometimes including one or two key school leaders, action can really take hold. Persistent dialogue and intense activity have led to changes in the nature of conversation across districts and with local communities – “people are so much more open,” increased emphasis on Indigenization, student voice, community partnership initiatives, design of new curricula or cross-curricular programs and refocusing assessment ahead of provincial legislation in 2022, and associated changes to pedagogical practice. A TELP 6 participant, recommended by a graduate from a previous cohort, noted that in one involved district:

“There’s always an urgency towards equity. I’m taking TELP now. A lot of what they speak about makes sense now. A lot of their focus is aligned with what we’re doing in TELP. There’s an urgency to be moving forward and move towards equity around Indigenous students and innovative practices.”

Colleagues who haven't taken part in TELP also noted the collective power of district leadership teams from small districts where most or all members have taken part: "It's been transformative for the whole team that went. It was a huge chunk of the [leadership] team and it's having an impact on students." For some team members of small teams, there seemed to be extra value in participating as a group: "It was way more meaningful because we had a team. We went back to the hotel, talking about the district solving problems and looking for solutions, and would fly together."

Eight superintendents joined TELP when already in this position. TELP has enabled these leaders to consider and redesign their own district vision, frameworks and leadership and learning opportunities. Working with principals and teachers in their cohort, they have looked at system change from school perspectives too. Two commented: "TELP laid the groundwork I had been preparing for years in my district leadership work"; and "In my role . . . I continue to leverage what I have learned in TELP and the community of TELP alumni to modernize learning . . . as well as respond to the global pandemic. TELP is a gift that just keeps giving." These senior system leaders have also used the TELP curiosity mindset with external partners when faced with difficult conversations: "Our stance is a learner. 'We're here to learn from you'. People want to hear that."

The pandemic has influenced but not halted districts' work. District teams and TELP 6 reading group facilitators spoke of the many issues requiring urgent attention. Sometimes "this detracted from our ability to engage in higher level conversations" as they have had to deal with what faces them in the moment. Nonetheless, districts - like many individual school leaders - have been able to "pivot" Spirals of Inquiry to explore what their students, parents and educators are telling them about their learning, wellbeing and issues around equity: "Going back to inquiry mindset - how do we know?"

“ Our stance is a learner. ‘We’re here to learn from you’. People want to hear that. ”

A few graduates also pointed out that while they are deeply committed to TELP and its ideals, other leadership development opportunities exist, and the senior leadership team in their own districts may be committed to different approaches to system change: “There are no other TELP graduates in my current district; however, there are still great things happening.”

As Table 2 highlighted, not all graduates have seen shifts in their districts, even when they experienced personal transformation. With only one or two participants, especially when based in schools, some at most observed surface level changes: “It seemed that my experience was experienced a bit in isolation. As much as I tried, I had a challenge trying to influence our district leadership to further support/show interest in the work a few of us TELP participants were trying to do.” Some lone participants wanted their district to be interested but: “Our district has never actively supported its employees to consider taking TELP or caring to learn much about it.” One self-funded lone representative from a district was also a little envious of those districts that funded multiple participants.

District issues are further explored in the Sustainability section.

Wider impact

The main focus of this evaluation has been on individual participants, their schools and districts. The evaluation, however, highlighted that TELP's impact is more widespread: "It was game changing for me and I've influenced others around the province;" "I look at things more through a system lens - as a teacher I wasn't looking through that. I always do that now. I have conversations about that all the time. Not just our system, in our district - influence in the province and internationally. Things that can be done to impact student learning." Interest is being shown around BC: "People say 'where did you come up with this?'" and "We get questions all the time on how we do that." Stories were shared of how graduates are feeding TELP themes and processes into Ministry initiatives and British Columbia School Superintendents Association (BCSSA) working groups, designing leadership development and sharing district experiences for the British Columbia Principals' & Vice Principals' Association (BCPVPA), and invitations to speak to or advise other districts and schools. In these experiences: "TELP helped frame the discussions - it's adaptive expertise;" "I can see impact and a ripple effect across the province." This point is picked up again in exploring sustainability. With the involvement of international participants who will be joining the program for the first time in 2021-2022, the opportunity to extend the reach and impact of TELP is even greater.

“ I can see impact and a ripple effect across the province. ”

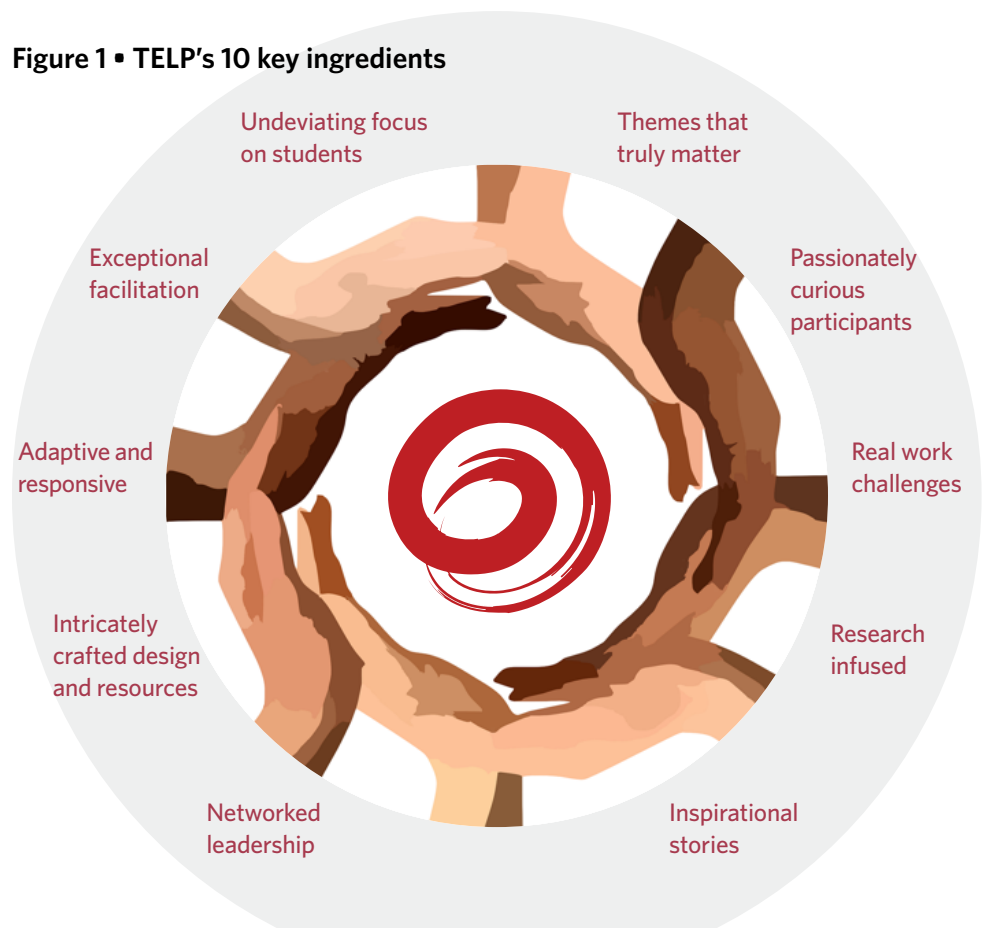
Unpacking learnings about TELP

TELP is a rich and profound leadership learning experience.

Former participants' expectations about expanding leadership and provincial networks, big-picture thinking, collaboration, professional conversations, challenge, engaging with research and inquiry, learning to apply to their situations and more were exceeded (84%), or at least met (16%). And the impact was transformative for graduates involved in the evaluation. This section aims to unpack possible reasons.

While the evaluation didn't investigate causal connections, in looking across the findings from surveys, interviews, reading and observation, 10 interconnected ingredients emerged. In combination, these appear to play important roles in TELP impact. Figure 1 displays these key ingredients. The use of hands reflects a comment from a district team member: "Multiple people are doing the work - there are many hands."

Figure 1 • TELP's 10 key ingredients



Each ingredient is now described. Challenges are included, along with efforts to address these, and suggestions to enhance participants' experience and impact.

Undeviating focus on students

First and foremost is TELP's incessant drive to make a difference for each and every student. Different ways of framing this were offered, but the core purpose was always there as TELP graduates described efforts and constant questioning about all of their activity.

It's about the students

"I have a moral imperative to do the hard work, being an advocate for Indigenous children."

"The learning I received at TELP . . . reminds me 'Why are you doing this and how can you be effective in helping make some change?'"

"I really wanted to be responsible to students for their learning."

"It changed how I look at student voice. Before I took an adult's perspective. Now I look at it from the perspective of students and their families."

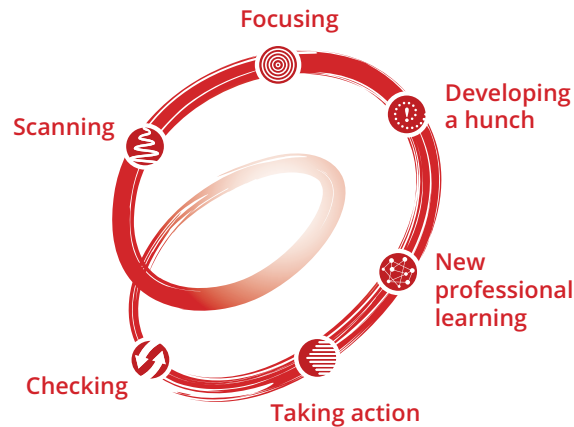
"We never had a discussion to look at each student in high school; each who is failing. 'Let's have a discussion about what we can do. If we believe in equity, that is equity. . . What do they need?'"

"It helped me to understand better what's most important. We only have so much time in the day."

"It's really focused on action and improving learning for students."

"Students are there to learn how to learn."

Figure 2 • The Spiral of Inquiry



Spirals of Inquiry¹¹ (Figure 2) is a key tool used in the program – it underpins TELP’s approach. In one graduate’s words: “TELP was a deep learning inquiry on how to transform and impact the systems I am part of.” Instead of completing an inquiry during the program, it becomes a consequence of TELP that participants will design an inquiry plan for impact, ready to bring to life after graduation. To support this, the Spirals methodology and language are introduced early on for those who don’t know it and reinforced and deepened for those with prior experience. Some participants found it easier if they or their district were already familiar with Spirals, and maintaining an inquiry focus and curiosity stance was challenging for a few, but it didn’t impact commitment. Almost all of the graduates (95%) found developing their inquiry plan valuable¹². Some suggestions for the design team to consider included: “Perhaps an opportunity to follow up with TELP graduates after the program to see how their inquiry plan played out? While I kept in touch with a couple of people, having their thoughts and expertise might have been very helpful and interesting;” “Post TELP check in with our cohort. Where are we after x number of years? Did we follow through on our action plans and what did we learn along the way? It creates the time and opportunity for shared dialogue, accountability, and feedback;” and “Establish a mini/micro-inquiry (reasonable and achievable) project right away to encourage the dirtying of hands early on to develop deeper level questions from participants.”

Themes that truly matter

The website explains that the program:

“will provide the opportunity to engage and explore new knowledge around central and emerging key themes.”

TELP deals with urgent problems and emerging complex global issues that powerfully influence education. Participants engage with current and seminal knowledge about enhancing learning and the environments in which this takes place, and care has been taken to ensure that Indigenous worldviews and pedagogies are at the heart of this narrative. Wrapped around these are essential features of a comprehensive and deep approach to profound change and learning – leading with a systems perspective, culture change and associated professional learning.

TELP aims to change participants’ perspectives on what it means to be a leader. And people described those changes in terms of different TELP themes: “How I now look at it – transformation, rather than change, deepen perspectives on equity – and the heart of everything – look at learning;” “The more I learn about what I do, how I lead others through change and transformation and adaptive work, the more I learn, the more it comes back to that. It’s the crux of the work; a critically important part of my job.” And with COVID, several colleagues spoke of how TELP had helped them stay focused: “The tyranny of the urgent is always there. In going through the pandemic, I would ask ‘what really is my role?’ To help lead change and transformation. It helped to ground me . . . I don’t feel lost.”

Encouragement of systems thinking was compelling for colleagues – again, this was always in the service of ensuring impact for students: “It completely changed my perspective from only school-based to systems level;” “We’re part of many systems. The work in TELP has taught me . . . the work should be complex. It brings about a need to have that comfort and consideration of taking care of a system so the complexity doesn’t swallow you up. . . I can be in that hopeful place for my system. I can find bigger patterns and ideas and simplify them.”

Passionately curious participants

TELP participants themselves play a major role in its success. TELP is advertised as being: “designed for individuals . . . interested in system transformation” and “for highly-motivated individuals who already have a Master’s degree and want to expand their world-view, gain new experiences and raise their academic credentials to new levels.” Participants are carefully selected through a recruitment process. They must show strong evidence of leadership practice through their application letter and resumé, complete a statement on transformative educational leadership and how they would use this. In addition to their Master’s degree, they must provide two references, both of whom confidentially rate them using a rubric with criteria based on the kind of person the TELP team is seeking – essentially, people with potential to be transformative and who can and will have wide influence. The high standard entry point has increased over time, and the advisory group doesn’t accept all applicants.

“ I found my people. ”

Reasons for choosing TELP are varied. Almost three quarters of survey respondents saw TELP as a development opportunity, over a third knew the program leaders or of their reputation, and colleagues recommended it to just over a quarter (see [Appendix 2/Expectations](#)). Some had several reasons, including others such as the opportunity to network. Districts or organizations funded just under half of the participants, over a third were partially funded, and the remainder (11) self-funded (see [Appendix 2/Funding](#)). If financially able to do so, all the funded interviewees were clear that they would still have applied if funding hadn’t been offered. Cost of hotel accommodation was, however, a challenge for 10 survey respondents, and time away from family, distance to travel and time away from school/district/regular work commitments were challenges for slightly more. In short, along with significant amounts of reading, plus writing and other program expectations, job changes mid-program and a switch to online learning part way through for the TELP 5 cohort, this was a significant commitment. Yet, not a single survey respondent reported maintaining commitment as a challenge (see [Appendix 2/Challenges](#)).

In commenting, graduates often put a positive spin on their challenges, for example: “Probably just the time/work/home balance...this is pretty normal I think,” and “Though these were challenges they were also opportunities.” This should not downplay their challenges which were real and – at times – profound for individuals. It demonstrates their passion for and dedication to TELP’s aims, and their respect for colleagues and the design and facilitation team. Completion rates further highlight this. Non-completion of two participants in TELP 1 and two others over the next four years was due to exceptional personal or professional circumstances unrelated to TELP.

Graduates recognize the qualities and habits of mind of fellow TELP participants, and some described their own. Connecting with such people is energizing and helps them in maintaining momentum. For some TELP participants in more isolated locations, or in districts or regions where “it’s a three-hour drive to the nearest neighbour to have a conversation and they’re not interested”, the personal and professional connections with like minds is especially significant.

How graduates describe ‘like-minded’ TELP participants

“TELP attracts people who want to learn, risk takers – they admit they don’t know, and what they think they know . . . For some people, it’s not their thing. . . Show me a principal who’s not learning and I’ll show you a school that’s not learning. The more I learn, the more I realize I don’t know anything.”

“Being in vicinity of people who are making that much impact on education around the province is energizing. They gave me ideas and inspired me.”

“I loved the camaraderie – people who wanted to be challenged beyond their job, learn about research around the world and from each other.”

“progressive thinkers.”

“high calibre professionals.”

“professional study connecting with others’ passion.”

“participating in disciplined inquiry as a transformational leader.”

“learning about what is possible that I hadn’t even considered before.”

“the energy that comes from being challenged and growing as a person!”

“People who do TELP are lifelong learning people. In my district, I felt alone. I found my people.”

Real work challenges

Traditionally, leadership learning – or leadership development – was frequently isolated from what is going on in participants’ lives and fundamental problems they face. A strong connection between TELP themes and processes and their daily work makes TELP unique for many former participants in comparison to other leadership development programs:

“It was rooted in the work I was doing. Let’s not start with the content of PD and stand and listen, stand and dialogue, ‘By the way, how does it link with what you’re doing?’ It’s the flip of that. ‘Where are you?’ It’s rooted in our school, staff, learners, families, communities. What are our needs? . . . All the new learning, you reflect on it. . . It starts with you. They put in important and vital research and mirror in your experience. It’s always spiralled back.”

The relevance and challenge of research and readings “allowed for a quality interlacing of learning with the work I was engaged in at the system level” and “TELP content was so timely and relevant for where I was at – it was immediately applicable. My work was TELP and TELP was my work.” Even when the amount of reading felt overwhelming, “everything was absolutely pertinent. The marriage of knowledge helped me to put everything together and as a teacher it transformed how I teach.” So, the TELP “package” isn’t just about academic theorising but fundamentally ‘how can we make this work in practice?’ In this way, everything leads toward specific follow up work focusing on an important challenge in their own context, as well as supporting graduates in addressing ongoing challenges as they exert their transformative leadership. And those real-world challenges are hard.

Former participants greatly valued that the TELP approach was “not a repeat traditional ‘here’s how you do it.’ It was giving us permission to think outside the box. ‘How are you going to transform learning?’. We still talk here about one of the articles about leapfrogging¹³. . . radical transformation and courageous conversations. We have to do it, and most people will be uncomfortable.”

Research-infused

The UBC’s TELP is deeply informed and enriched by research. Effort and attention in sourcing and curating high quality, relevant, current, international readings is hugely valued: “The depth, breadth, and relevance of the research and readings shared and positioned in the local, provincial, national and global contexts – very 3 dimensional.” The vast majority (91%) found the readings valuable, with two thirds considering them extremely valuable (see [Appendix 3](#)). Readings and research were the 4th most frequently cited highlight of TELP (see [Table 3](#)), by just under 40% of survey respondents. During this learning experience, they were stimulated and challenged by readings which “opened my eyes”, and greatly appreciated the opportunity to dig deeper through the reading guides and dialogue with their TELP peers: “sparking deep, interesting conversations.” Graduates appreciated the diversity in the types of reading, academic journals, policy documents and more ‘story-like’ readings. It gives “a well-rounded view of the system.” Several graduates noted that there’s “quite a bit to do – it’s taxing”, and sometimes it was difficult to keep up, especially during semester time, but “nothing felt irrelevant; it all felt so well chosen.” Some also particularly appreciated being able to make the connections between their reading and written reflections or the final presentation. For example, a highlight for one was “Writing the final paper and choosing which of the readings to select and focus on when writing the paper.” The academic link, further explored under sustainability, was particularly important for some: “. . . enjoyed the assignments and readings. More than show up and have a conversation. I like the rigour better.” Graduates referred to a range of “lead thinkers” whose research has been introduced in TELP and has influenced their thinking and action. This research continues to guide colleagues from earlier cohorts: “I still reference articles, and have them swimming in my head. . . They’re transformational – action, but thinking that leads to action.”

Some are still following the researchers as they produce new work. Studying at the UBC campus also added to the research experience: “Absolutely unique – the setting with a special gathering at UBC University grounds . . . shifted my mindset from day-to-day operations. It was a huge piece for me.” And the programme design itself is also based on world class research. For example, Spirals of Inquiry is based on research about professional learning with the most powerful impact¹⁴.

Table 3 • Key highlights of TELP¹⁵

Name up to three	Number (N=64)	% citing
● Networking/connecting/learning with leaders from other districts/variety/ different roles or perspectives, new friendships	50	78
● Living case studies – provincial and international, inspirational/ powerful/ impactful stories	45	70
● Facilitators, their approach and the learning culture created	29	45
● Readings/research – relevance, curated resources	25	39
● Dialogue/conversations/group work	18	28
● Challenge/reflection/deep learning/ thinking/deepened thinking	15	23
● Like-minded educators – passionate, progressive thinkers	6	9
● Inquiry orientation, focus, opportunity	6	9
● UBC/university/campus-based – away from district	6	9

The TEL Journal comes out twice a year. It isn't intended to be a regular academic journal, but one that offers a space where "transformative educational leaders share how using research in practice impacts learners." It has a particular emphasis on connecting the thinking of people working to transform the system. To this end, the website explains that contributions need to focus "explicitly or implicitly" on sharing stories of transformative educational practice within BC and the Yukon, positively influence discourse both among practitioners and scholars, and support and provoke educational transformation in the service of every student in BC and the Yukon walking the stage with dignity, purpose, options and curiosity. The journal is discussed further later in this report.

Inspirational stories

Living case studies appear to have a special place in the hearts of TELP participants. All survey respondents found them valuable (see [Appendix 3](#)) and 70 per cent described them as a highlight: indeed, the 2nd most frequently cited. Stories shared by Indigenous leaders and provincial and international educational leaders are resonant, deeply touching, brave, courageous and memorable. These "guest provocateurs" certainly push and challenge assumptions. In short, TELP's living case studies are inspirational and motivational.

Reflections on living case studies

"I found living leadership case studies most fascinating, real. I could take away pieces from them and bring them back. Hearing leaders in education, their journey, what they had done to get there. It was inspiring and transformational for sure."

"They brought in brilliant speakers that had lived certain truths, context and curriculum. [Name of speaker] - hearing about the racism experience. As a white male, I'm not that exposed to it. It is also here in Canada. You don't know what you don't know."

"I've never seen or heard anyone speak with so much passion, intensity and courage before. Every one of his opinions were based on research and he had done his homework. He was a perfect role model. This was persistent practice."

"International speakers who envisioned a different way of doing things, whose vision of education helped transform rather than confirm."

"The case studies and visiting speakers were incredibly inspiring and forward thinking."

"I still think about the messages of [Name] and [Name] and their messages have profoundly impacted my direction."

"The amazing guests that shared global perspectives."

Networked leadership

While its networked and collaborative history is viewed as "a strength of BC", educators in school districts can be isolated from wider perspectives if the district is inward-facing. Of all highlights, networking with fellow TELP participants, personally and professionally, proved the greatest. All graduates valued professional networking with other BC educators, with over three quarters considering it very valuable (see [Appendix 3](#)). It was "eye opening" for some, to move beyond being insular within their district. As one former participant explained: "We were very connected internally. We needed to connect out. There's a lot to learn from other places. TELP is very beneficial in developing system capacity." Some particularly enjoyed connecting with colleagues sharing similar issues and portfolios, while two thirds found great value in the diversity of participants' roles: "People leading from where they were - teachers, principals, district principals and others - it was a diverse way to look at leadership." Teachers especially appreciated how their contributions were encouraged: "At first I was a little intimidated, but it almost all went away;" "I expected I would be a listener, but we were learning from different perspectives and senior people were interested."

Learning with and from leaders and teachers from around the province and the Yukon Territory was enjoyable and powerful. Everyone found professional dialogue in cohort groups during sessions valuable, 80% reporting it very valuable (see [Appendix 3](#)). Colleagues appreciated “the deep listening,” “small ongoing groups to build on ideas with” and “professional discussions provided great insight into how other districts tackled issues on Indigenous curriculum implementation.” The opportunities for colleagues to learn from each other – about designing of innovative learning environments and system frameworks, new forms of assessment, different ways of connecting with local communities, anti-racist curricula, opening new schools, teacher mentoring, and leadership development – are plentiful. Weekend retreats – with meals together and an overnight stay for some participants – also create enjoyable informal social opportunities and help cement the professional relationships and friendships

Trusting relationships come through strongly. Several graduates shared how vulnerabilities are often exposed early on in TELP and that the TELP network, and smaller communities within it, become safe spaces, especially when dealing with challenging and deeply embedded district issues:

“We’re in an interesting period around Indigenous truth and reconciliation building. We have conversations in our offices, but when you network with others outside your district, it creates a space and place for having those conversations. You’re not alone in having those conversations. It’s made conversations easier in the district. . . It’s built a larger momentum with transformative conversations: ‘What are we doing about the Indigenous piece?’”

Networked leadership - some highlights

“The diverse perspectives of the participants.”

“Meeting educators in different roles & parts of the province.”

“The exposure to leadership/systems thinking in other jurisdictions.”

“Learning what other districts do.”

“The relationships, friendships developed.”

“Professional collaboration with leaders and innovators from around the province.”

“Making friends with colleagues all across the province – so helpful in this time.”

“Lasting relationships and networking.”

“Establishing a new network of trusted colleagues.”

“A network of safety and trust. And we can have a beer at the pub.”

Deepening professional relations within and across their districts added value for over four fifths of the survey respondents (see [Appendix 3](#)). Networking and learning with a group of district colleagues helped some with the sense of vulnerability: “They understood my context and me as person. I could lean in to those individuals. We’re seated in the same experiences, with contextual understanding of a system. It pushed us to go deeper and to look for a network within your community.”

As we will return to when looking at sustainability, colleagues are committed to being “part of a community of educational leaders that continues to stay connected;” “It was the networking – masterful. I can tap into colleagues across the province I met through TELP.” And for some who participated in TELP several years ago: “It’s remained deep and impactful over the years. I can pick up the phone and ask ‘What are you doing?’ with an issue. Without TELP, we wouldn’t have had the same depth.”

Intricately crafted design and resources

TELP's unique design has been created and shaped by the TELP team, guided by the TELP Advisory, consisting of Faculty of Education faculty members from the Educational Studies (EDST) department, and BC K-12 Senior Leaders, and increasingly supported by TELP graduates – part of the capacity-building design. Design and development benefit from engaging with a wealth of international research, projects and networks. Among other sources, for example, strategies have been gleaned from connecting with Professor Dr Stephan Huber, an international leadership development researcher, and leader and initiator of the World Education Leadership Symposium and International School Leadership Symposium¹⁶. Over the last 15+ years, experts from different fields of research and practice have joined together in Zug, Switzerland to discuss, reflect, present papers, explore complex contexts, pursue and exchange ideas with national and international experts, extend networks and maintain relationships. Along with this goes significant attention to keeping the learning going and extending it. In TELP, each contact, each book or article read, each network experience is mined for what it can offer to the design and, as will be seen in the next section, the sustainability of TELP's ideals and its network. A special feature is TELP's commitment to education in BC. The research curated by the TELP team and many of the living case studies are both relevant to the diversity of the participants and "customised and tailored for the BC context." This is extremely powerful. Reading group facilitators (see [Adaptive and responsive](#)) spoke of how thoughtfully everything is constructed and "the flow of learning over the course of a year is very intentional," timed to:

“. . . support people's schemes as they all enter with diverse perspectives and different views of the world. It helps me explore other perspectives I have never thought of before. I'm constantly looking through my own lens and perspective – my current scheme and way of the world. The other critical component is the discussion which allows people to put thoughts out there and allow perspectives to come together as group. . . . Sharing of experiences that come as they tell their stories enhances and builds understanding. They raise each other up together.”

As the survey results on graduates' three highlights demonstrates, something especially meaningful for one former participant may not be particularly significant for another. Overall however, the program mix works and meets participants' differing needs, with the majority of program elements highly valued or valued by over 90% of the graduates (see [Appendix 3](#)). In addition to reading, colleagues have access to the website, Canvas - UBC's online forum where program resources are housed and information is found - and to the TEL Journal. The journal offers a flexible format: for example, pieces accepted include may be in narrative style or even poetry, as well as academic pieces and literature reviews. Photo essays have been published and videos are welcomed. A key aim is that they make for reflective, accessible reading for leaders in all roles. With an aim to develop capacity, TELP graduates can now join the editorial board for one to two issues, ensuring rotation. As former participants engage in related projects and develop other products, these are also included as resources on Canvas.

The Program Manager, with TELP since its inception and described by one graduate as "awesome!" is greatly appreciated, with "a commitment to serving learner needs, she does all the coordination, acts as a personal liaison, answers questions, and deals with concerns and support. Service to participants is built into the program. It's very obvious." This was seen as somewhat unique for a program of this nature, and greatly helps "to maximize and optimize the experience." Support is also available from a critical friend, selected by participants themselves: "We were asked to have one to share our reflections and our inquiry journey with. I found this to be super helpful. It provided me with support in clarifying my thinking and helped me with hurdles and bumps along the inquiry pathway."

Adaptive and responsive

Since TELP 1, the design and management team have flexed program elements, responding to participant feedback and changing times, and introducing 'office hours' for participants to have scheduled times with the facilitators. As one graduate noted: "I loved the program and since I was in the first cohort I know that things have evolved to accommodate needs because Linda and Judy are adaptive experts." While inquiry, innovative learning, equity, systems thinking, powerful professional learning and creating capacity have remained consistent themes, emerging provincial or global issues have found their way into the evolving program through readings, living case studies or presentations as the program leads read more: "there's always new reading and connections internationally; new and current articles they're bringing in, tapping into what's emerging and the newest thinking." An Indigenous worldview, a theme since the start, is now woven right throughout the program.

The TEL Journal exemplifies how TEL evolves. Resulting from a conversation between some TELP 1 students on how to continue their learning, they decided they needed a journal. Early on, articles did not come from TELP, whereas now guest authors are only approached as needed. In a further evolution, articles based on presentations to the International Congress for School Effectiveness and Improvement (ICSEI) conference are now published in the Spring edition, with the end of course papers appearing in the November issue. The TEL editor is currently seeking to re-vision the journal. Survey responses suggest that over two thirds of graduates find the journal valuable (see [Appendix 3](#)). In supporting their work moving forward, some graduates liked the journal as it is: "I already enjoy, engage and share it." Others admitted that getting around to reading it is their main challenge and wondered if reminders or other ways might be found to get it "out there." Other suggestions around accessibility included reading guide type questions, an abstract at the start, digest summaries or key takeaways highlighted. Addressing actual access, ideas included regularly updating mail lists and paper copies being delivered to each school district. Graduates being invited to present at the annual Networks of Inquiry and Indigenous Education (NOIIE) symposium is another example of the evolution of the program.

Part way through TELP 5 (2019-20), the team faced a totally unexpected challenge – a pandemic. Switching the program online was achieved almost seamlessly: “TELP did a great job of navigating the cohort through the COVID reality.” Just under a third (30%) of the TELP 5 survey respondents found the switch online challenging and less satisfying, losing “invaluable in person learning,” and interrupting the deepening of relationships: “I found the online forum difficult to participate. I am not sure I ever felt the comfort to express my perspective, as a result I did disengage from this mode.” As one commented: “COVID took the wind out of my sails. I LOVED the sessions that I did in person at UBC but was not as connected and inspired with ZOOM,” while another reflected: “I felt that I lost that sense of accomplishment from presenting the final projects then celebrating with colleagues.” And another TELP 5 colleague faced particular disappointment at not driving to UBC: “I hate that we lost going to the university because of COVID – I even enjoyed finding parking.” One, however, spoke of using the opportunity to think about students’ experience of switching learning online: “It gave me a good sense of what it felt like for students at high school.” The TELP 6 online program hasn’t been a major focus of this evaluation, but some graduates spoke of TELP 6 colleagues and how participating entirely virtually was frequently down to personal preference. While graduates may have spoken about their experience, TELP 6 participants will only truly understand what the online format feels like.

To provide extra support for the fully online TELP 6 cohort, 7 TELP graduates were taken on as reading group facilitators. One described the development of this role as: “a natural progression – a wonderful and important addition.” With a small group of around 5-6 participants, each facilitator connected with their group before the whole cohort weekend and provide “a safe space to talk” and “trying to provide a voice and space,” especially given the pressure of the pandemic: “Most people are principals or district principals and they’re run ragged. . . the safety net is important and welcomed.” With participants frequently struggling to read everything, the facilitators are sensitive about expectations while retaining inquiry questions at the core as they interrogate readings: “How has it made a difference? And how is this impacting your practice as a leader? And students? How do you know and why does it matter?” As the facilitators have got to know their groups, “I’m getting a sense of where I can push a bit.” All the

while, they are also “paying attention to the fact they are human beings – one member will be a new dad in a few days. He does the readings but his head is in a different place.” As participants are becoming clearer through the year about what they want to do for their inquiry plan, facilitators find themselves providing support in making choices around readings which will be essential for deep reading and others which, while interesting, are less relevant if colleagues are under a lot of pressure.

Exceptional facilitation

Finally, there are TELP’s program leaders, Dr. Judy Halbert and Dr. Linda Kaser, acknowledged by all to be extraordinary facilitators. Their imprint is seen in the other ingredients. With over 95% of survey respondents rating their contribution as very valuable (see [Appendix 3](#)), they also came 2nd in graduates’ list of highlights (see [Table 3](#)). Rather than pulling together a list of personal qualities and professional practice of remarkable facilitators, the box below includes some – but not all – expressions from graduates about highlights of TELP and what these two women achieve and mean to them.

Reflections on TELP’s program leaders, including highlights

“Leadership and learning with Judy and Linda.”

“Build extremely deep trust and relationships.”

“Create a personalised, safe environment.”

“Learning in a safe place.”

“They always make a point of including everyone, show respect, then you share and it builds confidence.”

“They structure it to keep you on an equal footing. I felt safe to think. As I started to share, more colleagues became interested to understand my thinking.”

"They understand what's it's like to be a woman in leadership and know the challenges, the things that are hard to articulate and voice. They do the same thing for challenges Indigenous people are having - the subtle racism. Because they understand those things, they don't question it. Others say 'Are you sure?' They validate your experience."

"How they wove Indigenous perspectives into the foundation of the work you're doing."

"The whole atmosphere and approach envelops all participants. LOVE how inclusive the whole process is."

"I truly appreciated that everyone was an equal in the room and on a personal professional learning journey."

"The way Judy and Linda bring people together and set conditions. It allows people to be super metacognitive about learning and sense of family."

"Judy and Linda really - way of teaching and presenting knowledge comes off as curious, kind and powerful and uplifting."

"Judy/Linda - their knowledge and conversations. Their feedback in the journals."

"Advice and input from Judy and Linda."

"Judy and Linda's stories."

"Judy and Linda's enthusiasm and passion for what they do."

"Their energy."

"They hold us accountable."

"Judy and Linda. All day long."

"The relationships I developed with them that have deepened professionally and personally over the last five years."

"So skilled in creating community - and keep you connected."

The program leaders are increasingly supported by TELP graduates in facilitating learning (see, also, Sustainability for TELP). In addition to the reading group facilitators, the TEL Journal editor now facilitates rich and honest discussion among TELP 6 participants through the Canvas online platform, with probing questions and supportive feedback.

TELP comprises the unique blend of these ingredients, although each TELP graduate has their own highlights. Critically, the ingredients, individually and in combination, are also oriented toward sustainability. This is a particular strength. The TELP program clearly aims to be transformative not just for individuals and others within their particular sphere of influence, but in unleashing the power of transformative leadership across the province of BC and the Yukon Territory. Some suggestions for possible amendments or additions have already been shared; others are included in the next section. However, when asked for advice for the program team moving forward, several commented that they had none to give, one noting: "I'm usually good at giving constructive criticism, but in this case, I don't have much to offer." Graduates were fulsome in their praise: "Please continue what you are doing! It is AMAZING!" "The program as it is was outstanding!!" "I am so proud of my involvement."



Sustainability

TELP's impact is impressive. It has deeply influenced beliefs and actions of many educators and across a range of BC districts as well as the Yukon Territory. Is this impact sustainable? Are the learning and transformation deeply embedded? Is the impact continuing to reach those in TELP graduates' spheres of influence? Is it spreading more widely? And is it durable over time? Thinking about these questions, the focus now turns to sustainability of impact for individual graduates and across districts. Finally, the lens is turned toward the program itself. Is TELP sustainable and what might help ensure its sustainability? As highlighted earlier, TELP participants are dedicated transformative change agents. What follows includes examples of proactive ways in which they and districts are aiming for sustainability, ideas from them for their own sustainable learning and sustainability of TELP, and the program team's efforts. Many of these are interconnected.

Sustaining impact for alumni and the network

Findings suggest that the emotional fire kindled by TELP hasn't been extinguished for those engaging with the evaluation¹⁷. Starting with TELP 1, it's clear that many individuals have been deeply touched by TELP and continue to think and act in ways they learned through their experience. Other than continuing to influence others by using their TELP learning, four areas particularly stand out as helping to sustain impact for former participants: maintaining connections with the TELP network; opportunities for extension, including a related doctorate; contributing to TELP; and maintaining TELP connections within their district. Not every graduate seeks all of these.

Connecting with TELP network colleagues

The network of TELP graduates is a fundamental feature for sustainability: “networks of networks – the power that lies in those connections.” Many former graduates continue to reach out and connect with colleagues from their cohort who remain a source of support, ideas, and even friendship. District leaders also meet up with TELP peers through varied provincial arenas such as BCSSA chapters, the C21 Canada’s CEO Academy or through Ministry working groups, further deepening relationships. For a considerable number, NOIE also helps sustain them: “After TELP I couldn’t move on by saying goodbye. I need new connections, continuation and permanency.” And a range of TELP-initiated opportunities also give them the chance to reconnect. Alumni events exist, including online events since the start of the pandemic: “a gathering of friends – lovely events and a chance to refresh learning and networks – reignite that relationship; there’s huge value in keeping the alumni connected.” People are also seeking further ways to connect and share what they’re currently up to. One wrote: “I am interested in how to sustain the community and excited about how that focus can continue. I love how all the cohorts have braided together!” and a member of a district team explained: “I appreciate the opportunity to get together and re-engage in high level thinking, networking and sharing. Having those opportunities keeps TELP alive and keeps you connected rather than a program you have gone through and completed and is now over.” Former TELP participants shared a range of ideas about sustaining their learning.

Ideas for sustaining alumni's learning - "unlimited radiating possibilities"

An alumni session on alumni - bringing them together and posing the question of what they can come up with and set in motion themselves - keeping the learning alive and spreading the learning.

Check ins - "An online check in - Saturday two-hour reflection sessions for alumni in general;" "Formalize a check in for alumni to celebrate their learning (along with the wonderful social events and new learning for alumni)."

Reunions - "Once the pandemic has subsided, I would really look forward to TELP events which connect us in person again. Or online!" "Continue to have them!"

Learning from current participants - "It would be interesting for alumni to see current TELP participants present their inquiry work. Could they be webcast so that we could watch and learn remotely?"

More retreats - "It would be nice to be able to return to 1-2 day professional learning for alumni around a learning theme at UBC. I'm all Zoomed out."

Mixing presentations and networking - "Speaker and mingle, hear from international network."

Updates - "How graduates have transformed their practice/teams or partners sharing work they're doing, update on inquiry"; "We should all get together at the end of the year and discuss how each of us has transformed learning in our districts (or classrooms, or with professional colleagues, etc)."

Emphasize connection - "Once we can meet face to face, I really think that focusing on CONNECTION is key. We need to continue to have opportunities to build relationship and trust and to build capacity through connection."

Create new opportunities - "we . . . begin some kind of system or intentionality trying to connect with each other: engage with each other in each other's sites. Go to Yukon and see what they're doing. Engage in new projects;" "It might be interesting for some professional travel opportunities (when we are able) specifically aimed at TELP graduates to go to different international locations in order to network/engage in professional dialogue with colleagues in other countries. Similar to LEAP¹⁸ but without the exchange part."

Further academic extension

Curiosity and wishes focused on the potential for “extension development opportunities”, including the possibility of a TELP 2 or TELP +. Requests included access to readings, although in some cases TELP 6 participants or alumni supporting the program were sharing these. Nine former participants specifically hoped that a related doctorate would become available through the University, with accreditation of TELP. As one commented: “The idea of laddering to a PhD or EdD is interesting. Formalizing and amplifying the impact our educators are having on our learners may give us a way to influence other . . . perhaps less innovative, jurisdictions.” This topic is explored further under sustainability of TELP.

Contributing to TELP

Some former participants are contributing to TELP, maintaining their own and others’ connections while deepening their presentation, facilitation, mentoring, writing or editorial skills. For example, several have contributed to alumni events, sharing stories or responding, or spoken at university courses. Seven graduates are currently TELP 6 reading group facilitators, while others have contributed in this way at some time or hope to do so, and some are learning partners or critical friends for TELP 6 participants. Others have presented at local events, a UBC alumni event, NOIIE symposia, and at the ICSEI annual conferences – with subsequent opportunities to publish their papers through the TEL Journal. One also described hosting TELP participants and international visitors at school. In all of this and more, the program leaders have continued to play a major role in keeping graduates connected, providing further networking opportunities and extending their learning: They promote sustainability. They keep me looped in and invite me to sit in on another session – they keep me networking.”

A small number of leaders have created materials for TELP and wider audiences, such as the Learning Tour Study Guide and Decision Playbook¹⁹. Some have also played a role in editing or reviewing the TEL Journal, just under a third of survey respondents (31%) have been published in the journal, and a few others hoped to do so. Several spoke of benefits of this experience, such as refining their thinking. In one person’s words:

“The journey of writing, editing and publishing the journal article was a significant learning experience. I continue to reflect on the key concepts of the journal and how they still inform my professional and personal learning journey. I love to hear readers’ insights and interpretations of the article, which contributes to my own growth.”

In a few cases, colleagues from around BC have been in contact following the publication, seeking further details, sharing experiences and challenges and engaging in wider conversation. For one, “The process of writing and editing had the biggest impact on me as a school leader.”

Connecting with TELP district colleagues

While most TELP alumni come across each other at district meetings and development opportunities, and some – particularly in district offices – are located nearby each other, there are those who would appreciate continuing opportunities for within district networking, as this graduate expressed: “A culture of continuing conversations . . . and moving forward. Once you finish, you finish, then you’re done. There aren’t collaborative conversations.” This aspect of sustainability is picked up in moving to look at sustainability of district impact.

Sustaining district impact

Sustainability of district impact is critical, both to support sustainability of impact for individual graduates and for depth, spread and longevity of districtwide impact. Here, the themes that emerged are the approach to TELP participation, facilitating connections for TELP participants and graduates, diffusing TELP’s ‘essence’ and methodologies throughout the district, and persisting – not giving up.

Approach to TELP participation

A feature of district sustainability is how it approaches TELP participation. Shoulder tapping of some participants occurs, with district leaders recognizing the kinds of individual who have potential for wider influence. While the drop-out rate since TELP 1

has been almost non-existent, excepting extreme personal or professional circumstances, the program team note that when a district occasionally sponsors a participant to address issues in their leadership, neither gains as much from the learning experience.

Some mid-size districts support several colleagues to go through TELP each year – either fully or part-funded – “building mass.” For a few of these larger districts, one route to sustainability is through encouraging numbers of leaders to engage with TELP. One graduate from an earlier TELP cohort is watching TELP’s influence spread: “I see it at middle level leadership – principals, vice principals and coordinators. What’s it going to be like in five to ten years’ time when those people have moved up? I have hopes in how it can transform the system.”

Financing attendance is one way to demonstrate support if the funding is available, although some districts prefer attendees to demonstrate their own commitment by part-funding their participation. In small districts, where funding is harder to procure, with travel and accommodation adding an extra financial challenge – “We don’t have leverage around funds to support teams”, the strategic choice is sometimes made to have participants represent a diversity of roles: “It spreads it across.” And some districts – both larger and smaller – specifically think through the benefits of having a group of several district leaders attend together. Eighty-three per cent of alumni responding to the survey found the deepening of professional relations within or across their district during TELP very valuable or valuable (see [Appendix 3](#)).

Superintendents face choices around their own attendance, and encouragement and support for others to attend. Superintendents’ orientation to TELP comes through as significant – where they are completely committed, TELP and its underpinning frameworks have a considerably greater chance of taking hold and spreading across the system. One graduate, now a superintendent, spoke of how important it was to model the deep learning TELP demands: “It sends a strong message. I saw [Name] there. The message it sends is ‘I value this.’ If you’re going to lead the learning, lead by participating.” Other stories emerged of non-participant superintendents supporting colleagues to attend: “The superintendent said this is important to you and to our district.” In contrast, a suggestion for enhancing participants’ experience and impact from one graduate was: “If School District superintendents have not taken the program, it would be helpful to

find a way for them to gain a deeper understanding of how to support others taking it and how it could positively affect their district.”

Connecting TELP participants and alumni

Maintaining connections between TELP participants and former participants, and between graduates, came through as important. Former participants appreciated having had a critical friend or mentor who was a graduate or a district peer. The power of district connections was highlighted by one person, a lone attendee from a district, reflecting: “I would have liked to have had more connective tissue to the district -- opportunities to discuss, to work through an initiative in direct relation to TELP.” Furthermore, during TELP, ‘Limited opportunities to share TELP learning and experiences with colleagues back in district’ was the most frequently cited challenge, faced by over a third (37%) of the graduates (see [Appendix 2/Challenges](#)), although clearly there were regularly scheduled opportunities in some districts: “As with any professional learning, we need to have an expectation that individuals will come back and share, opportunities in district meetings, and amplify out.”

Some graduates really appreciated attending TELP with other district colleagues, but connecting outside of TELP meetings mattered especially. Smaller districts seemed to find it easier to bring former participants together and to stay connected. Some larger districts have plans to connect TELP graduates, although these have been interrupted by COVID.

Diffusing TELP’s messages and approaches

Another challenge for districts in ensuring sustainability is widening the lens, a term used in TELP. They are trying to communicate and embed language and understanding to help school leaders shift the mindset that they are not just one school but part of “one district with separate campuses working towards a common vision.” To this end, district activity is essential to maintain TELP’s spirit and purpose and extend its reach. Some teams are finding creative ways to do this. One has created an online space where learning leaders can “access a repository of resources, partner with each other as coaches, and mentor teams of teachers new to the Spirals of Inquiry.” Trained

colleagues regularly check in with teachers and principals interested in being supported through an inquiry. And, at district level, they ensure they have the resources they need to support colleagues at all stages of the journey.

Graduates are also modelling TELP processes and drawing on the research and conversations in district sessions and work with schools, giving TELP participants and former participants opportunities to share their stories. Two school principals have been running an after-school learning series in one district and have started to build a network to connect schools with common interests. Their twice monthly open forum coffee chats have kept leaders connected throughout the pandemic. And the TELP readings aren't kept exclusively for participants or graduates: "It's not a special club of people. If you're not sponsored to get in, we will share articles if they're important."

Graduates also recognize the importance of hearing other perspectives. For some, this means accepting that not every member of the senior team might want to engage with TELP or its underpinning philosophies: "We are team players. There are other perspectives. . . Things won't always look the way we want." And they recognize that not everyone could, or would want to become a TELP graduate; that there are other ways to develop these habits of mind and leadership skills. However, "If we can have enough so that it embeds itself across the district as a way of thinking and as a way of being in terms of how we engage in learning in the district, it helps people get through, and in a challenging way it will be really healthy for people." In this sense, a member of one district team made a connection with a metaphor used by a TELP alumni event speaker of a murmuration of swallows:

"There's an immense number of birds and an immense number of people in our school district. We're generally moving in a direction, but there's enough room for people to have own way through, to show their own innovation and creativity."

There may not be a particular lead for TELP in a district – indeed in several districts where TELP appears to have taken a particularly strong cultural hold, TELP graduates in different roles throughout the system have stepped up, frequently in collaboration, to move things forward. Fundamentally it is a team approach.

“While we all have individual strengths, it is as a collective – a network – that we are strongest, and most able to draw upon the insights of many voices and different forms of expertise. It is important to distribute the leadership of this important work. One person is not a network.”

Persevering

Unquestionably, for very involved districts the journey isn’t over. Plenty of work and further challenges lie ahead:

“If we are going to help improve system, we must have a learning stance to do our work and use the evidence in our system. It’s a continuous learning journey with groups voluntarily and openly engaged in their own learning – learning leadership. Some folks may not be on with that. They may feel there is catching up to do.”

Some districts are also involved in Networks of Inquiry and Indigenous Education (NOIIE), working separately with Judy Halbert and Linda Kaser, or both. This provides further support for sustainability. Some are planning to extend their reach in further ways. With a principal from one TELP district moving to become a director in another TELP district, the two districts are now intending to work in partnership. And so, the network of networks grows.

What’s clear from these examples is that ensuring sustainability of district impact can’t be left to chance.

Sustainability for TELP

What about the program itself? TELP is about to start its seventh year. It’s going strong, despite the pandemic’s challenges, including moving online. Word of mouth and advertising through organizations like the BCSSA and the BCPVPA generates continued interest. Several alumni also noted that the NOIIE network “brings people to it . . . It’s grounded in the same principles of learning and informed by the same thinkers.” District leaders are also thinking creatively about their budgets: “VPs are asking about TELP. With money saved [from elsewhere], I would like them to go as a team of at least 4.” From a small initial cohort of 17,

TELP 6 has 36 participants – a slightly larger group due to being online. At the time of writing, there were also almost double the number of applicants for TELP 7 than the program has taken in the past. TELP is currently thriving. So what are the key issues for sustainability and how is sustainability being addressed?

Sustainability around the program format

Fully online learning generated mixed opinions: “Those deeper conversations, questioning, sharing are more impactful when we are face to face;” “This year has been fantastic for remote learning. I was never a fan of it before. Now I see the absolute value.” A necessity during the pandemic offers potential for the future, especially for those inhibited through long-distance travel and accommodation costs:

“We’ve learned through the pandemic how to keep connected, how TELP could grow, especially for us. The online world does have something to offer. It’s not the be all and end all; there’s a balance. We could get a lot more involved if there was a more blended platform and opportunities to engage.”

Former participants from a range of districts, reading group facilitators and feedback from the fully online TELP 6 cohort, however, highlight that some value of the program may be lost if the majority is online. The answer may lie in finding what one person described as ‘the sweet spot.’ Clearly, opportunities to enable face-to-face connections between participants and with leaders and other facilitators will enhance the experience, including for international participants when possible.

Extending reach

Many former participants are clearly champions of TELP, describing its impact and offering to support others in using the learning from it. Some are actively proactive: “I always think, who can I connect with?” While a number of districts invest heavily in TELP, some districts haven’t heard about it and it’s “not yet rippling” in parts of the province. TELP graduates recognize that some districts choose their own ‘inhouse’ leadership development and others have connections with different universities – some emphasized that there is not only

one way of developing the kinds of mindsets TELP seeks to develop. Nonetheless, they had ideas for extending reach.

Former participants' ideas for extending reach

Publicizing its impact more widely – “I believe the TELP program has had a significant influence on education throughout our province as so many leaders have been involved in it. . . I believe this could be publicized more to encourage others to be part of TELP.”

Persuading a senior leader from a new district to register – “They would understand it, then there’d be no need for discussion.” Or “One person – an elementary school principal from a remote area. There has to be a spark within the district. It needs ignition. Ignite something.”

Including more opportunities for teachers – “We have people who are classroom teachers in our program and they benefitted as much as superintendents and HR directors in the program. It’s a very valuable learning experience for anyone and any district. There’s enough interest;” “Let have more ‘just’ teachers in as well as administrators because teachers are the front line. Have them as part of the conversation;” “It would be interesting to have ways of bringing the networking and big ideas of TELP to more teachers doing the on the ground work. Not sure how this might look, but it is something I am thinking about.”

Building beyond one cohort – with one program leader co-facilitating with a TELP graduate, while remembering that group size matters: “It would diminish the experience if there were 180. You need a small group that goes deep.”

Regional opportunities – “Bring TELP a little closer” through satellite groups or connections with universities further away from the Metro area, including in previously less engaged locations.

Extending the program in Canada – with potential for others learning within their own provincial context, although, there was a plea that: “As it grows please consider maintaining BC as the strength, core, and foundation.”

Sustainability through academic extension

In promoting UBC's TELP, the website states that: "Graduates will earn further academic experience to enhance application into post-graduate degree programs" and suggests that: "Upon completion of the program, participants may wish to consider applying their TELP experiences in a doctoral program." The original intention that TELP would lead to associated doctoral study has never been realised, to the considerable disappointment of many, including alumni.

TELP participants have different motivations related to academic study. All signed up aware of considerable amounts of reading. As noted previously, locating the program on UBC's campus was a draw for some. Many found great value in considering their practice through a research lens, and the vast majority (92%) found the written reflections very valuable or valuable in supporting this (see [Appendix 3](#)). Although not all survey respondents were interested in further related doctoral study through UBC if it had been available, 80% either were or might have been. One commented that the: "Biggest challenge was that the program did not ladder into a doctorate at UBC. I had registered with this goal, did the program for credit, loved writing the final paper and then for a range of reasons outside TELP's control, it did not manifest." Six participants in the evaluation have subsequently registered for doctoral programs, mostly through other universities, including in other provinces, and a quarter are considering this. Some from earlier cohorts signed up to receive credit while it was available, but this is no longer available: "I am actually very disappointed that they stopped being able to give credit to people. . . That's quite attractive to a lot of people. . . That's a missed opportunity, honestly." One graduate, no longer seriously considering a doctorate, reflected: "It seemed that you can do TELP, get no credit, then you have to shift to another university. I would have liked a PhD through UBC. It's the logical context with specialists there." And someone now involved in doctoral study elsewhere saw a doctorate as a compelling piece for sustainability: "TELP's not the end point; it's the starting point. A lot are pursuing it. . . it's advantageous to have that ladder and ensure a clear way to sustainability."

There is also the question of UBC's ongoing wider commitment to TELP. TELP addresses several key priorities of the UBC's Faculty of Education Strategic Plan²⁰. As outlined, it uses a research-based

approach to providing educational leadership to advance education in British Columbia and beyond. A key theme is to create socially responsive, and adaptive cultures of deep learning and innovative practice, while promoting quality and equity for all learners. Taking direction from the UBC Indigenous Strategic Plan²¹, this includes a strong focus on expanding participants' knowledge and experiences in exploring an Indigenous worldview, and broadening their skills to engage their schools and systems in meaningful reconciliation. In addition to everything else that makes TELP unique, in the words of one graduate, "the connection to UBC is great because of the quality of learning."

Future beyond current TELP leadership

Although the two program leaders show little sign of slowing down: "They realise they won't be around forever." Some graduates highlighted the importance of attending to: "how to grow, nurture and foster seeds for rebirth and growth." It's clear from this evaluation that the entire TELP team are seriously considering sustainability and succession. Former participants also recognize that the program leaders "don't rely on themselves - they bring in others." In addition to inspirational living case studies, opportunities enable graduates to support current cohorts and share TELP learning more widely, provincially, nationally and internationally. Becoming involved is a mix of proactive suggestions or requests and targeted taps on the shoulder which aren't resisted: "I say yes to anything Judy and Linda are doing;" "When they ask you to do something, good things always come out of it." Program leaders' own curiosity and personal engagement with participants enable understanding of TELP graduates' unique strengths. By keeping abreast of emerging challenges and needs through their local, national and international relationships and networks plus extensive current reading, program leaders notice opportunities, matching former participants to these. And TELP graduates bring their own leadership to support roles; for example, the TELP 6 reading groups are facilitated differently, even though facilitators share ideas and processes through Canvas: "I love looking at what other facilitators do, their agenda and plan - and I steal them all!" The TEL Journal is an example of graduates' initiative - the idea came up as a result of TELP 1. TELP's Program Manager also has an increasingly expanding and strategic role. Mentoring, encouraging and enthusiastically supporting initiatives are fundamental features of the current approach.

Concern remains that much is invested in the power and name recognition of “those two amazing leaders.” For some, they are the program’s “biggest strengths.” They bring to mind high quality, trusting relationships, extensive experience and wide networks, as well as deep connections to practice. Whatever mentoring, involvement and opportunities are promoted for others, concerns exist that potential participants may think that “the person is the program.” Some graduates emphasized that the construct of TELP and the learning that happens cannot only be associated with two people. Furthermore, some thought it important that TELP retain a distinctively separate identity from NOIE, even though the close relationship helps extend its fundamental messages and approaches. Ultimately, succession matters both in relation to people and purpose: “Whoever they pass the wand to is really important.” Not only does whoever takes over need to have a similar mindset in bringing people together, looking to the future, and being knowledgeable about cutting edge research and thinking, but these are difficult shoes to fill and just replacing them “with any other university professor” is not seen as an option: “They have set the bar pretty darn high.” Fundamentally, however, beyond the specific people, it’s also about remembering that: “There’s always a greater purpose to everything we’re doing. If it just becomes another program, it will hurt it. Changing lives – that’s where we’re going. It unites and brings people forward.”

The TELP network

In many senses, unleashing the power of transformative educational leadership is down to the TELP network. It is essential in keeping TELP’s purpose front and centre. For this, it needs to be “an intentionally engaged community.” Consensus exists that it must be strong enough to continue if and when the program leaders retire. Encouragingly, there is already considerable confidence around its sustainability – its depth, spread and endurance.

Networked power for sustainability

“Two people don’t have as much power as creating a network. They have exponentially grown their message”

“Networks spider their way out.”

“If you try to replicate, it probably has the legs now. There are enough leaders. So many people have taken TELP it’s grounded. It’s going to continue. They will help and move you forward”

“The power in those connections should never be underestimated”

“For us to keep the word out and by keeping us connected to each other will help keep us excited, keep us growing and keep us influencing aspiring leaders of future. It will keep the ball rolling”

In one graduate’s words: “There’s real underlying commitment to building capacity across the cohort - lifting up each other and building collective efficacy. Over time it’s created the foundation to improve system leadership across the province. We see the result of that - people moving to system leadership roles and changing the system.” During or since participating in TELP, 8 graduates have taken up roles as superintendents. This isn’t counting the number who have moved into district positions. Thirty-one BC school districts have already engaged with TELP and graduates are on the move. TELP graduates have connections with many other networks throughout BC and beyond. Realizing sustainable transformative educational leadership is in their hands (see [Figure 3](#)).

Figure 3 • Sustainable Transformative Educational Leadership





Conclusion

UBC's Transformative Educational Leadership Program is a highly stimulating, demanding, collaborative, supportive, ongoing transformative learning²² journey. In a safe, mutually respectful space, it expects and receives deep commitment to private reading, reflection and contribution to the learning of others. Its leaders and facilitators skilfully and compassionately ensure participants' access to a wealth of top quality national and international research and practice. And it connects participants and graduates to a networked community of dedicated, passionate leaders who are committed to do whatever it takes to enhance and enrich the learning and life chances of every child and young person, and to influence others to do the same. The next few years of UBC's TELP and its network of participants and graduates promise to be fascinating ones to watch.



Questions for reflection and dialogue

For individuals

- What resonated with you?
- What challenged your thinking?
- What visual images and metaphors do you use to convey the ideas from TELP that you share within your sphere of influence?
- How else might you widen your sphere of influence?
- How are you leveraging your TELP network contacts to support your endeavours?
- What offers can you make to support TELP's sustainability?

For districts

- What resonated with you?
- What challenged your thinking?
- In what ways are you being strategic to strengthen the impact of TELP across your district?
- What resonated with you around sustainability? What does sustainability of TELP mean for you in your district? How sustainable is it? What else needs to be done?
- What is the potential of TELP to address system-wide issues and opportunities? How might TELP graduates support you?
- Who are potential new TELP participants you might sponsor/part sponsor or encourage to explore and develop district practices?

For TELP designers and leads

- What resonated with you?
- What challenged your thinking?
- How will you achieve the 'sweet spot' in a blended version of TELP?
- What new or emerging issues may need to be included within your themes?
- What messages does this evaluation have for when TELP broadens its scope to include international participants?
- What are the possibilities and implications for extending TELP through regional opportunities and teacher leadership?
- In what further ways might TELP graduates take the lead on ensuring sustainability?

For UBC Faculty of Education

- What resonated with you?
- What challenged your thinking?
- What is the potential for revisiting the development of an EdD as a follow-up for TELP?

For all

- How might you co-create ways forward to ensure that the power of transformative educational leadership is sustainable?



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About the author

Dr. Louise Stoll is Professor of Professional Learning at UCL Centre for Educational Leadership, UCL Institute of Education, London and an international consultant. Her R&D activity focuses on how schools, local and national systems create capacity for learning, with an emphasis on learning organisations and systems, professional learning communities and learning networks, creative leadership, leadership development and connecting research and practice. She is a critical friend to school districts in BC and internationally, and to the BCSSA in development of its leadership competencies. Dr. Stoll is a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences, an OECD expert and a former President of the International Congress for School Effectiveness and Improvement.



Endnotes

- 1 Shields, C.M. (2011) Transformative leadership: an introduction, *Counterpoints*, 409, 1-17. Special issue: Transformative leadership: a reader; Burns, J.M. (1978) *Leadership*. New York: Harper & Row.
- 2 Shields, C. M, (2011) op cit. p.5
- 3 Shields, C.M. (2020) Transformative Leadership, Oxford Research Encyclopedias. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/970190264093.013.632>]
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- 9 Stoll, L. (2020) Language for learning leadership, Occasional Paper 167. Jolimont, Victoria, Centre for Strategic Education.
- 10 Most of these would be described as mid-size districts.
- 11 See www.noie.ca/spiral-of-inquiry
- 12 Appendix 3 provides ratings of specific program elements.
- 13 Winthrop, R. with Barton, A. and McGiveney, E. (2018) *Leapfrogging Inequality: Remaking Education to Help Young People Thrive*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press.
- 14 Timperley, H., Wilson, A., Barr, H. and Fung, I. (2007) *Teacher Professional Learning and Development: BestEvidence Synthesis Iteration*, Wellington, NZ, Ministry of Education and University of Auckland.

- 15 Other highlights mentioned by smaller numbers included learning with colleagues from their district team, writing, the final presentation and celebration, ongoing learning and opportunities, the overarching learning design, and management support.
- 16 <https://wels.edulead.net/en/>
- 17 It is always a choice whether or not to complete a survey. Educators are extremely busy, and this evaluation took place during the COVID pandemic which has placed many extra pressures on colleagues. While it isn't possible to determine from this evaluation whether TELP had a powerful impact on all alumni, 50%+ is generally considered to be an excellent response rate. It is also fair to assume that some other alumni intended to complete the survey – certainly 15 more started the survey but did not get far so their responses have not been included. Given that survey respondents are free to express their displeasure, it is extremely positive for all respondents to agree that the program at least met their expectations (84% thought it exceeded these), and all to rate it as at least reasonably transformative (78% rated it transformative to thinking and action).
- 18 Leading Educators Around the Planet - <https://www.aLeap4principals.com.au/>
- 19 See <https://noiie.ca/resources/>.
- 20 See https://educ.sites.olt.ubc.ca/files/2019/11/Learning-Transformed_Text-Only.pdf
- 21 See <https://indigenous.ubc.ca/indigenous-engagement/indigenous-strategic-plan/>
- 22 Mezirov, J. (1997) Transformative learning: theory to practice, *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, 74: 5-12.



Appendix 1

Evaluation methodology

Methods

Deepening of understanding of BC context, the program's situation within this, and familiarization with program background and intentions

- Reading documents and data, exploring Canvas online platform, and conversation with an independent advisor from K-12 sector
- Interviews with:
 - Dean of UBC Faculty of Education
 - 2 TELP program leaders
 - 2 PDCE supporting leaders - TELP program manager and Assistant Dean of PDCE
 - 3 members of Advisory Group - Associate Dean, UBC Faculty of Education and 2 former Superintendents of school districts
 - 7 TELP 6 reading group facilitators (alumni of TELP)
 - TEL Journal editor (alum of TELP)

Notes and numbers

6 interviews, 15 interviewees

Observation of UBC Faculty of Education Alumni webinar: How can/do you make a difference through leadership?

Notes and numbers

- 3 Ignite talks by 2 TELP alumni and 1 TELP 6 participant
- Responses from 3 alumni panel members

Survey of TELP 1-5 participants

Notes and numbers

- 137 surveys distributed to TELPs 1-5 alumni
- 5 bounce backs
- 68 completed fully, substantially or significant parts =
- 51.5% of 132 received surveys
- Just over half of these (51%) participated in TELP 1, 2 or 3, remainder participating in TELP 4 or 5
- Largest group from TELP 5 (29%), followed by TELP 2 (22%)
- In reporting, % are of responses to each question, and are rounded to nearest %

Interviews

- 14 individual TELP alumni (2+ from each of TELP 1-5)
- 8 people their TELP participation has impacted (recommended by interviewees)

Notes and numbers

- 14 interviewees from 12 districts of varied sizes, locations and demographics
- 2 Superintendents, 1 Assistant Superintendent, 1 Director of Instruction, 7 Principals/Vice Principals, 2 District teachers, 1 teacher
- 7 alumni recommended colleagues to approach (1 interview involved 2 colleagues)
- These included: 2 teacher leaders, 3 Principals/Vice Principals (1 from TELP 6 and 1 from a different district), 1 District Principal, 1 consultant, 1 union president
- 21 interviews

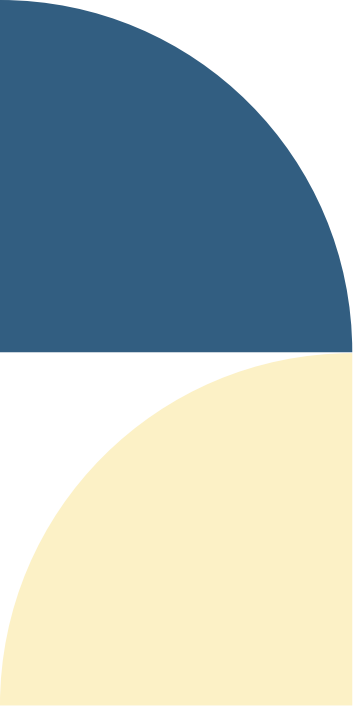
Group interviews

- Members of 3 district teams who have supported several participants in TELP

Notes and numbers

- 3 members in each team = 3 interviews, 9 interviewees

Analysis and writing



Appendix 2

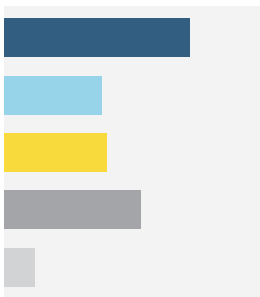
Expectations, funding and challenges

Expectations

Why did you participate in TELP? (please check all that apply)

	%	No.
● It was a development opportunity	72	49
● I was invited or asked to join by a senior colleague	38	26
● Current or former TELP participants recommended it	40	27
● Facilitators' reputation	53	36
● Other	12	8

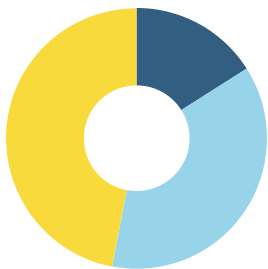
68 respondents



Funding

Who funded your participation? (please check one)

	%	No.
● Self-funded	16	11
● Partially self-funded, partially district/other funded	37	25
● Funded by district, government, university	47	32
Total	100	68



Challenges

What challenges, if any, did you experience during your participation in TELP? Please check any that applied.

	No.
Staying committed	0
● Maintaining an inquiry focus/curiosity stance	3
● Completing written reflections	9
● Distance to travel	12
● Cost of hotel accommodation	10
● Time away from family	13
● Time away from school/district/regular work commitments	12
● Limited opportunities to share TELP learning and experiences with colleagues back in district	29

Appendix 3

Ratings of program elements

	Very valuable %**	Valuable %	Somewhat valuable %	Not very valuable %	Total*
Instructors/Facilitators	95	5	0	0	65
Professional dialogue in cohort groups during sessions	82	18	0	0	65
Professional networking with other BC leaders	78	22	0	0	65
Living case studies	73	27	0	0	64
International expertise	66	34	0	0	65
Readings	66	25	8	1	65
Management support	66	28	7	0	58
Diversity of roles of fellow participants	65	28	8	0	65
Deepening professional relations within/across your district	63	20	15	2	60
Developing your inquiry plan for impact	58	37	3	2	65
Structure of weekend sessions	55	45	0	0	65
Written reflections	54	38	8	0	65
Annual symposium	53	27	19	1.7	59
Geographical diversity of fellow participants	52	32	15	0	65
TEL journal	36	33	29	2	61
Online discussion forums	19	40	35	6	52
Website	14	40	37	9	57

* Respondents were requested to leave blank elements if they had not experienced them

** Due to rounding, percentages don't always add to 100