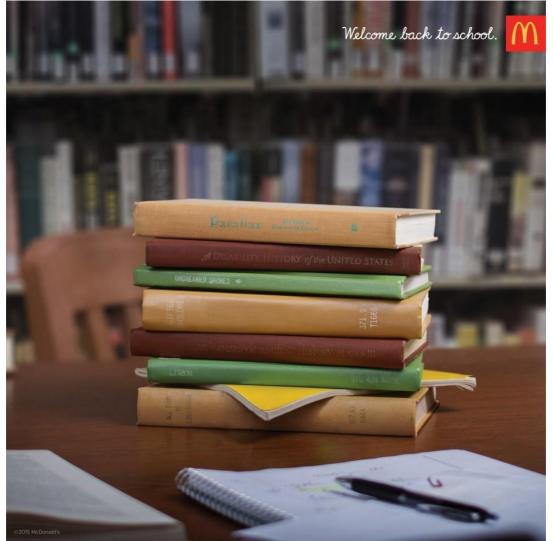# A reflective report on the leadership of staff development and organisational change using a mobile application as a strategic messiah

McDonald's of New Orleans, U.S.A. (2016)

This leadership activity bears no connection to the banked TMA02 assignment from a previous year of study at the OU. However, this leadership activity does relate to the engagement of E856 forum postings throughout this year of study. Considering this situation, and suggested by my tutor Maggie Gidney, the context and duration of this activity is explained as an exemption from the world count below:

Context

The owners of a ten (10) month old for-profit international school in Switzerland who also own a chain of five (5) for-profit International Baccalaureate (IB) schools in Italy, require their new school to become an IB school as soon as possible. The first step in the IB authorization process with the International Baccalaureate Organisation (IBO) is to become a candidate school. The candidate process to become an IB school in Switzerland has put pressure on the staff for it to be completed within one (1) academic year, in an attempt to increase the number of clients attending.

The first school year saw the entire staff move on to new jobs elsewhere. The Principal became hospitalised and was absent for most of the year. No replacement Principal was employed and all responsibility was on the Operations Manager.

In the school's second year, the absent Principal from the year before was not given their position back. The owner chose to structure the leadership team by giving dual-responsibility to the Principal and Coordinator of one of their other schools in Italy. This distributed leadership system provided their attendance at the new Swiss school only one (1) half-day each week, while an entire new staff uncertified in teaching the IB culture and curriculum were recruited. I am situated as the only qualified, experienced and highly passionate IB Teacher internally recruited from one of their schools in Italy. The school has forty-three (43) students in total and has one class for Kinder, Transition, Grade 1 and Grade 2. There are a total of six (6) staff at the school. 'Alice' is the Operations Manager and the critical friend in this activity.

The implementation of a one-month trial period using an educational app called Class Dojo (Class Twist Inc., 2016) in this leadership activity consisted of the following prescription:

Figure 1: Overview of the leadership activity: Class Dojo.

Class Dojo 1-month trial period (week)	Actions and methods for validity
Prior to week 1	Communication with leadership team to implement the app. Customising and set-up of app to align with IB culture. Sample test with critical friend. Inform parents and students, gain authorisation to start app trial period.
Week 1	Start trial period Share with staff through informal discussions about the app and what it is about. Collect feedback and develop communication with staff and parents. Collect data on views and likes on every posting during the week. Include weekly report of Class Dojo to parents and staff in the Grade 2 newsletter.
Week 2	Share with staff about the trial period of Class Dojo with staff in informal/unstructured discussions/interviews. Collect feedback and develop communication with staff and parents. Collect data on views and likes on every posting during the week. Include weekly report of Class Dojo to parents and staff in the Grade 2 newsletter. Parent information night – PYP reading and writing workshop Issue a mid-trial questionnaire to staff and parents.
Week 3	Collect feedback and develop communication with staff and parents. Collect data on views and likes on every posting during the week. Include weekly report of Class Dojo to parents and staff in the Grade 2 newsletter. Share with staff the trial period of Class Dojo in Grade 2 in staff meetings. Parent-Teacher individual conferences Discuss with staff on the implementation for Class Dojo into their classrooms.
Week 4	Collect feedback and develop communication with staff and parents. Collect data on views and likes on every posting during the week. Include weekly report of Class Dojo to parents and staff in the Grade 2 newsletter. Issue end-trial questionnaire to staff and parents.
Post week 4	Send report to the leadership team on data collected. Discuss results with critical friend. Meet with staff to support or implement Class Dojo into their classrooms.

Part 1 The Activit*y*

Purpose

Globalisation is infiltrating the vocation of education throughout the world. Selling an international product of education that aligns with an interconnected world reflects how a business of 'education is now seen as a crucial factor in ensuring economic productivity and competitiveness in the context of … the pressures and requirements of globalisation' (Preedy, et. al., 2012, p. 1). The competing challenges for education in a profitable environment forecast increased autonomy, greater accountability, marketisation, policy and practical incentives to develop collaborative partnerships, pressured budget constraints, student and parent needs and expectations, social development of the children and tensions between the demands of stakeholders and their priorities (Preedy, et. al., 2012). Considering these factors, this leadership activity will search for connections with these elements by leading staff and a community through change. This leadership activity will analyse the

one (1) month trial of a mobile application (app)[1] to develop cultural and pedagogical change in the form of the not-for-profit International Baccalaureate Organisation (IBO) in a new for-profit IB candidate school. The objective of this strategic leadership activity is to act as a messiah that will conduct change through innovation, collective collaboration and cultural transformation. This leadership approach should enable improved communication and trust, along with new knowledge and skills for the staff and community, in an unstable leadership environment. The design of this activity is outlined below in figure 2.

Figure 2. Strategic design of the leadership activity.

Organisational objectives	Personal objectives	Success criteria	Success criteria outcomes	Evidence
To develop and lead a culture within the staff, parents/community on the IB Primary Years Programme.	develop an ability to facilitate change in the staff and community.	Participation of parents, students and staff. Identification of leadership discourses and strategies used.	Acknowledgement from staff, students and parents that they are more knowledgeable and understanding of the IB PYP after the use of the app. Staff have acquired new skills through professional development.	Likes and views data from every Class Dojo post of information and/or image Mid-trial and end-trial questionnaires from staff and parents. Informal discussions with staff and parents.
Provide evidence to support the IB candidacy application process for the school to become an IB school.	To lead and give support and guidance in implementing the use of Class Dojo to staff and community.	Support from the leadership team. Integration of the IB culture in the app.	Support for the innovation to continue. Strategic use of the app to support and identify with the IB PYP culture.	Staff meetings that include information and updates on Class Dojo. Customisation of the app. Confirmation from the leadership team. Mid-trial and end-trial questionnaires from staff and parents.
Lead for improving communication, trust and engagement with the community and school.	Develop an ability of leadership discourses and strategy success in the leadership activity. Personal career growth towards new roles in my future.	Implementation of the app throughout the school. Participant confidence and trust of leadership during trial period.	To achieve integration of the app into other classes and eventually throughout the school. Provision of adequate support and knowledge to build trust and confidence in staff learning new skills and pedagogy.	Mid-trial and end-trial questionnaires from staff and parents. Likes and views data from every post of information and/or image. Informal and formal discussions and feedback from staff, students and parents in: staff meetings, student discussions, Parent-Teacher individual meetings, Teacher-led parent information seminar.

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[1] 1 Mobile application 'app' is a software application designed to run on mobile devices such as smartphones and tablet computers.

The success criteria are based on an empirical constructivist approach, providing qualitative evidence to support the validity, reliability and generalisability of the activity. The educational app is called Class Dojo (Class Twist Inc., 2016) and it would be trialled for one (1) month in a Grade 2 class, consisting of ten (10), 5-7 year-old students. This app can be used on any mobile device or computer. Ideally, all twenty (20) parents of Grade 2 would engage with the app. Students would be informed about the app and they would choose to use it or not. Parents would be required to sign an authorisation form for their child to participate. Parent and staff meetings during the trial period would be necessary for authenticity and staff professional development. Support from the leadership team would help the implementation of the app. Mid-trial and end-trial questionnaires from staff and parents, including student reflections and unstructured interviews, would be attained. The app would be customised to facilitate the IB Learner Profile and would demonstrate a culture of inquiry-based IB learning. Pseudonyms are used in this reflective research.

Part 2
Evaluation of the Activity

a. Contributing to organisational/sub-unit improvement or effectiveness.

From a mid-trial questionnaire with the parents of Grade 2 using Class Dojo, one survey per family was returned. 100% felt that the app was an improvement in communications with the school. 50% of the parents said that Class Dojo has helped them understand the IB, while the other 50% said that they have understood a little more after half way through the trial. The impact at home about the culture and communication saw an increase, as 80% of the families reflected on Class Dojo points relating to the IB Learner Profile, generating a type of new communication. 100% of the parents confirmed that there has at least been some help improving their connection with the school culture of teaching and learning because of the app. 80% of parents believed that it is better to use the app than to not use it, and 90% agreed that it would be useful for other classes at school also.

At the end of the trial period, 100% of the parents agreed that the app should be customised and used in every class at school. 100% of the parents agreed that the app helped them understand the IB better. The parents all felt more connected to their child's learning, with none feeling lost. All parents expressed total interest in continuing to use the app for the rest of the school year in Grade 2. 80% of the parents gave extending confidence in the leadership of the Teacher implementing Class Dojo in Grade 2, with 20% acknowledging a consolidating and developing ability in the leadership provided. 90% of the parents desired that Teachers should be trained with the best up-to-

date technology that can be used in the classroom. However, parents were provided the same question as the staff regarding an idea of a free educational app that also provided economic incentives such as Bitcoin[2] to educate children in the future. Their response was that only 20% said yes, it would be possible, with 80% suggesting that children have to attend a school to get an education, whereas 100% of the staff agreed that it could be possible (see appendix 5).

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