

Teacher Mentorship and Educational Leadership: Research to Practice

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Over the next two years, the LCEEQ is spearheading a new Ministry-funded pilot project that focuses on teacher mentorship and educational leadership. Specifically, the project aims to 1) assess the current state of teacher mentoring and educational leadership practices in the English Educational Network in Quebec, 2) provide access to relevant research, 3) propose models of professional development and 4) evaluate initial implementation of initiatives. It is an honour to lead this project; I am excited to learn with and from colleagues across the English educational community as well as build on my doctoral research on teacher induction, professional learning and development, mentoring and coaching.

While the pilot project is still in its early stages, this article outlines its key objectives and current design. The project uses a developmental evaluation approach (Patton, 2018), which is best described as an iterative, collaborative, interactive and systems-oriented process: “Developmental evaluation provides evaluative information and feedback to social innovators, and their funders and supporters, to inform adaptive development of change initiatives in complex dynamic environments” (p.499). For Patton, there are eight key principles that guide effective developmental evaluation: developmental purpose, evaluation rigour, utilization focus, innovation niche, complexity perspective, systems thinking, co-creation, and timely feedback. Ultimately, evaluative judgments don’t come at the end of the project but are ongoing and timely and patterns in the data are interpreted collaboratively with the social innovators and key stakeholders. Through this empirically focused interaction, the developmental evaluation becomes an integral part of the innovative process.

In order to help guide the developmental evaluation of this pilot project, a committee of eight representatives from three English universities in Quebec (Bishop’s, Concordia and McGill) have joined the developmental evaluation LCEEQ team (DELTA): Drs. Dawn Wiseman, Avril Aitken, Roma Medwid, Julie Corrigan, Teresa Hernandez Gonzalez, Nathalie Rothschild, Alain Breuleux and Caroline Riches. Working alongside and together with the DELTA, is another team comprised of key representatives from all school boards, LCEEQ committees and professional associations. The design team is still recruiting members and will have its first meeting in mid-February. Members should have a solid picture of mentorship and educational leadership practices in their jurisdiction, be open to sharing and developing evidence-informed professional development practices and be interested in examining current research. Figure 1 captures the collaborative and iterative process of both the DELTA and Design team in the developmental evaluation.

Research to Practice

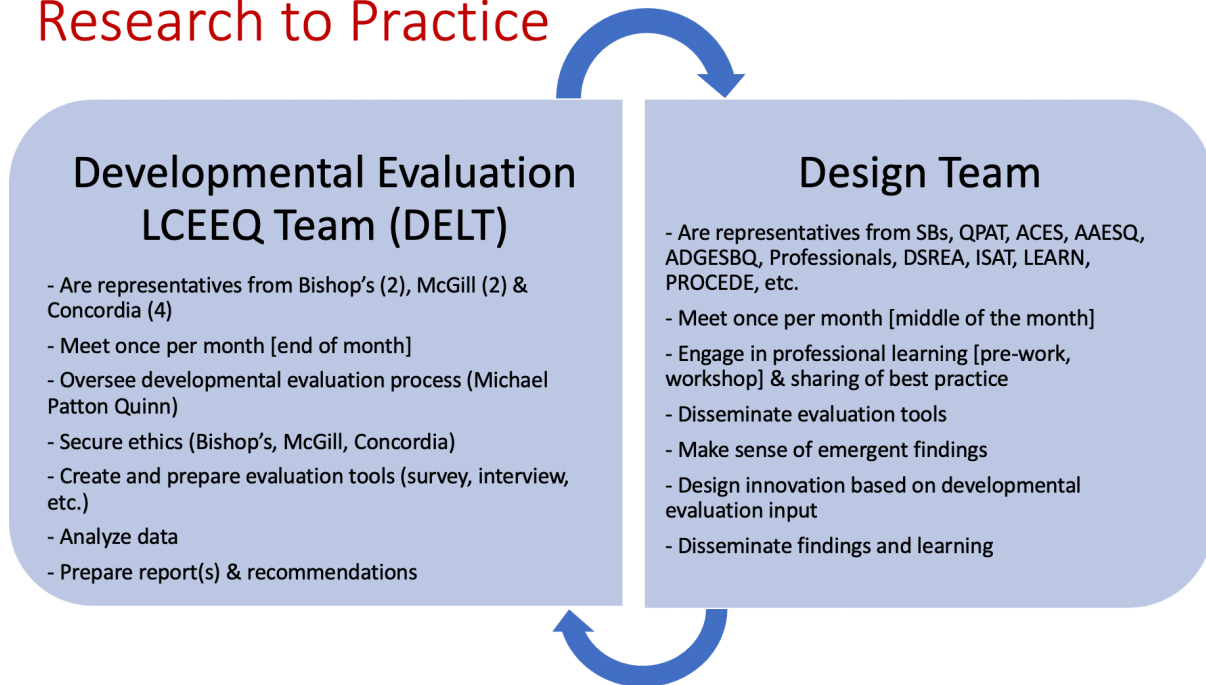


Figure 1. The pilot project developmental evaluation

Whereas the DELTA oversees the evaluation process, designs the evaluation tools, analyzes data and prepares reports and recommendations, the design team disseminates evaluation tools, makes sense of the emergent findings, designs professional development innovations based on needs analysis and disseminates key findings.

The next few months promise to be exciting for both DELTA and the design team. By the end of this academic year, it is our goal to capture a picture of teacher mentorship and educational leadership practices across the province. Teacher and school leader questionnaires will be in schools in early May and we will be recruiting participants for interviews and focus groups throughout the spring. Watch the LCEEQ website for updates on the 'Research to Practice' pilot project and research reviews.

Please do not hesitate to reach out for more information or to get involved with this project. I can be reached at trista@lcee.ca.