

Strategies for Christian Educators and Administrators to move from pre-pandemic VUCA reaction to post-pandemic VUCA 2.0 response.

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Abstract

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Pre-pandemic Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous (VUCA) realities added specific complexity to education and administrative practice at Christian schools, influencing Christian school educators and administrator reactions to the challenges experienced in their social and professional contexts (Ungerer, Ungerer and Herholdt, 2016). Post-pandemic realities however, will require greater diligence for Christian educators and administrators. The transition from pre-pandemic reactive responses to VUCA influence on Christian school environments to applying visionary, understandable, courageous and adaptive (VUCA 2.0) strategic principles for those same environments, is a necessary strategic challenge to accept. Christian school educators and administrators wanting to support a healthy and effective whole school practice and affirm identity, mission, purpose and strategic practice in a post pandemic environment must push through the fog of reaction and commit themselves to VUCA 2.0 success (George, 2017).

Keywords

administrators, Christian school, educators, healthy, mission, purpose, identity, strategic, VUCA, VUCA 2.0

Strategies for Christian Educators and Administrators to move from Pre-pandemic VUCA Reactions to Post-Pandemic VUCA 2.0 Responses

Doug Atha, Trinity Western University

December 2019 saw the outbreak of the SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) virus in Wuhan, China (Centers for Disease Control, 2021, p. 1). By March 2020, the outbreak was declared a worldwide pandemic (Cucinotta & Vanelli, 2020). Prior to that, Christian school educators and administrators were facing a plethora of *volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous* (VUCA) challenges impacting all levels of their leadership (Atha, 2019; Ungerer et al., 2016). These challenges required them to make important and focused shifts on the people, processes, technologies, and structures for creating more adaptive environments.

Already operating on the edge of these VUCA challenges, Christian school educators and administrators navigated contexts of expectant conformity to secular educational models, religious identity, diversity, and tradition (Arino & Teinturier, 2019). This added to the existing VUCA challenges experienced in Christian school practice, budgets, health-related issues, general leadership challenges, community covenants, and missional concerns (Atha, 2019).

Moving from a pre-pandemic VUCA environment, through the unpredictable VUCA influences in a worldwide pandemic, Christian school educators and administrators face the challenge of applying a post-pandemic commitment to a more empowered, focused and predictable visionary, understandable, courageous and adaptive (VUCA 2.0) practice (George, 2017). Practicing VUCA 2.0 can renew an educational focus toward clear and understandable missional values to help Christian

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Pre-pandemic Challenges to Christian Education and Administrative Leadership

VUCA accurately described the pre-pandemic world. Christian schools experienced unpredictable changes leading to increased uncertainty as Christian school educators and administrators found it difficult to make decisions and forecast possible future realities from a past issues-and-events perspective. The accompanying ambiguous processes led to a lack in clarity for educators and administrators who were trying to understand what was happening around them and making the environments they work in difficult to understand (Ungerer et al., 2016).

Pre-pandemic practices introduced cultural pressure from increasingly secular influences and pressure on Christian school educators and administrators to conform. Christian freedoms need a courageous strategic focus to maintain clarity in missional practice, through a clear commitment to faith in Jesus Christ and a commitment to active disciple-making through teaching about Him and His mission (Matthew 28: 19, 20).

Christian schools require support for scriptural and faith-based decisions in the classroom and administrative and board oversight while affecting the lives, vocations, and purpose of school stakeholders (Swaner et al., 2021). Pre-pandemic cultural challenges and pressure questioned established Judeo-Christian values and practices. Expressing values related to providing an awareness of God and His Word to help students understand important principles around Biblical doctrine and faith (Horton, 2017), prayer for/with students, providing gifts of Bibles (Eberstadt, 2016), and using the term “Christmas” (Worthen, 2012) became reactive flash points.

Accepted faith practices, principles, and ethical approaches were suspect when compared to modern and evolving cultural practice, expectations, beliefs, and interpretation (Horton, 2017). Judeo-Christian influences in Christian schools had trouble adjusting to the demands, where reaction to espoused Biblical principles often overtook focused strategy.

Seljak (2012) described this disconnect between popular culture and Judeo-Christian biblically based tradition:

In broad terms, to be a (proper) Canadian, one had to be a (proper) Christian – in the same way that one had to be white or male. Indeed, throughout Canadian history, religious chauvinism and prejudice has most often intersected with racism and sexism (along with hetero-sexism, and class prejudice). (p. 9)

In the United States, Supreme Court rulings opposed prayer in public schools and engaged in ongoing debates over using the term Christmas during the December holiday season (Worthen, 2012). In two stories demonstrating the practice of Christian faith in the public realm, a “teacher in New Jersey was suspended for giving a student a Bible [and] a football coach in Washington was placed on leave for saying a prayer on the field at the end of a game” (Eberstadt, 2016, p. 4).

The Supreme Court of Canada (SCOC) ruled against a Christian university’s Law School application. The decision was considered “reasonable because they [SCOC] appropriately balanced the interference to freedom of religion with the public-interest objectives of the law societies” (Bronskill, 2018). Other regulating bodies questioned accreditations held by the university amid public concerns on requiring students attending the university to sign a community covenant outlining acceptable conduct prior to enrolment and whether the covenant compromised affiliation and/or accreditation standards. No punitive action resulted, but the university removed the community covenant requirement from the enrolment process (Robinson et al., 2018). This increased pressure on Christian schools to reconsider conformity “to secularist ideology—or else” (Eberstadt, 2016, p. 4).

The BC Ministry of Education also introduced guidelines requiring all BC schools to include references to sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) in policies on anti-bullying (Province of British Columbia, 2017). This requirement created division among Christian parents, educators, administrators, and leaders.

One side saw the SOGI 123 legislation as “an active agenda within BC schools ... to undermine your relationship with your children, undermine societal values and to sexualize your children” (Alphonso, 2019). The other side of the debate supported the BC Ministry of Education policy as a way to give teachers the resources to help foster SOGI-inclusive classroom environments (Takeuchi, 2018).

Some determined an intention to fight back against the agenda of the SOGI. Still others wanted to build walls versus bridges of respectful and loving dialogue (Ritchie, 2018). Positions from both sides added to the confusing pre-pandemic VUCA interpretations and responses oppositional to historical and biblically based Judeo-Christian views on man’s purpose to reflect God in intellectual, emotional, and moral capacities (Horton, 2017).

Some Christian schools sought exemption from enacted guidelines, arguing that discriminatory action could arise for both sides of teacher-exemption scenarios. The difficulty of exemptions “based on sexual orientation or gender identity, or any other protected category such as sex, race, disability, or religion” (Lau, 2018, p.43) underscores how reactive the controversy became. The thought of eroding traditionally-held Judeo-Christian ethics and historical practice also underscored the need for greater planning and strategic focus to meet public challenges connected to cultural trends and expectations and often blurred the lines between secularized and religious/faith-based worldviews.

Confusion, accusations, and beliefs about discriminatory practices required Christian schools to maintain a distinct moral imperative and provide clearer understanding of the issues for people on both sides of the discussion. On one side of this discussion, some saw themselves protecting important tenets of faith, espousing narrowly-defined faith practices for adoption in the public forum (Johnson, 2019). A recent court challenge to the funding of Catholic Schools in Saskatchewan, by the Good Spirit Public School Division, further illustrated this dichotomy (Guignard & Wilson, 2021).

A speaker at the November 2019 *InspirED Convention* in British Columbia, Canada identified ongoing challenges experienced by Christian educators and administrators. Challenges to school practice, budgets, health-related issues, general leadership challenges, Community Covenants, and missional concerns drew an important picture for Christian school educators and administrators to consider (Atha, 2019).

Budgets

Budgets created economic anxiety among parents as they felt there was insufficient budgetary support for student needs and growth. This anxiety underscored a growing sense of stagnation with middle-class incomes, as it relates to Christian school education and tuitions, which added increasing parental concern for their children’s future education (Millar, 2015). The fear of economic hardship, future uncertainty, anxiety, and pressure seemed to replace rational thinking. Well-meaning parents pushed their “kids toward what they hope [would] ensure a secure future; good grades, top colleges, and prestigious jobs” (Reischer, 2015, p. 1). Economic competitiveness in budgets proved increasingly problematic for school educators and administrators who commonly focused more on faith practices, values, individualized attention, curriculum, and enhanced education quality for “the whole child” (Hunt & Van Pelt, 2019, p. 6).

Community Covenants

Educators and administrators also saw challenges to school missional identity through the contract elements of community covenants:

Parties to a contract know what they are expected to do and what they can expect from others. It is written out in black and white. And because we know that people do not always do what they say they will do, contracts also spell out terms for what will happen if any party fails to keep his or her promise. Ultimately, every contract has a dissolution policy that outlines from the very start what the relationship will look like if it ultimately falls apart. Every contract, then, is conditional. (Wilson-Hartgrove, 2012, p. 6)

Community covenants were meant to provide “meaning in the patterns and habits of the way of life [they] share together” (Wilson-Hartgrove, 2012, p. 5), but confusion arose from many notable and publicly-reported cases of covenant-related issues.

1. One Canadian Christian school did not renew a teacher’s contract because the teacher lived in a common-law relationship, contrary to the school’s employment contract (aka community covenant) prohibiting “sexual activity outside of a heterosexual marriage.” (Johnson, 2019, p. 1)
2. A Western Washington Christian school saw public response to their return to core values regarding sexual orientation and gender identity divide the community after an email sent out to families of students stated the school’s position on sexual expression being “confined within the marriage of one man and one woman.” (Grande, 2019, p. 1)
3. Vancouver’s Catholic Independent Schools came under fire for their school policy statements aimed at community, relationship, family statements and standards, parental codes, and standards of conduct (Bushfield, 2018, p. 3). Inconsistent application of the policies led to a human rights complaint by a teacher fired for “disclosing she was in a same sex relationship” (p. 1).

Missional Issues

Christian educators and administrators also reported high incidences of complacency in their schools (Atha, 2019). Many believed education and administrative environments were going in a thousand different directions, creating a lack of focus on important core identity principles. Whether the lack was from a weakened foundation of espoused missional values or a focus on God overall, participants indicated the existence of missional drift with a degree of increasing tolerance for behaviours outside school missional values (Atha, 2019, pp. 7-8). Other issues included escalating parental expectations (apart from financial anxiety), educational values,

and differences between curricular activity and character focus.

Leadership Transitions

Morale and missional focus challenges also arose through poorly planned or executed leadership transitions. Poor leadership transitions negatively affect morale, school identity, and school mission, underscoring the negative impacts on pre-pandemic Christian school experiences. Peters-Hawkins et al. (2018) identified teacher morale as directly “affected by the constant, haphazard transitions in leadership (p. 26).” Blamer (2017) cited negative morale as a direct result of ill-prepared transitions. The Leadership Transition Institute (LTI) showed “that up to half of leadership transitions go poorly” (Staal, 2014, p. 1). Delaying transition announcements to those directly impacted further complicated morale issues within schools (Blamer, 2017, p. 3).

VUCA Influences

VUCA influences painted a bleak picture for strategic development. Originating from a description of the war conditions in Afghanistan and Iraq in 1991, the term evolved as a descriptor of strategic planning for business and other disciplines (Balita, 2020) and changed the way the world viewed and responded to strategic environments (Ungerer et al., 2016). Where traditional strategies focused on planning and execution (Mancesti, 2015), pre-VUCA realities saw strategic teams gather information to ensure alignment between strategy and organizational priorities (Messineo, n.d.). Identified strategies became part of organizational action plans with timelines and results were tied to strategy completion.

VUCA creates a more fluid repeat-and-act framework versus the plan-and-execute frameworks normally associated with strategic execution. VUCA focuses on discovery, doing and learning something from it, back to discovery, then doing and learning something from it as a focus for developing agility within ever-changing and diverse organizational contexts (Ungerer et al., 2016).

Unique Challenges of the Post-pandemic Context

Christian school educational focus changed during the COVID 19 pandemic and added a level of complexity to educational environments everywhere (Blinkoff et al., 2020). Christian school educators and administrators scrambled to navigate pandemic challenges to their mandate to ensure stability in operations with campus closures which involved “sending students, faculty, and staff home; and moving to remote learning and telecommuting” (Santilli, 2021, p. 1).

Many organizations faced ongoing challenges during COVID-19 as governments imposed travel bans, stay-at-home orders, restrictions on gatherings, the closure of places of worship, and the closure of nonessential stores and other businesses (Cohut, 2021) and disrupted everyday practices in one way or another (Fortune Staff & Lobdell, 2021).

As the post-pandemic world emerges, VUCA levels are ratcheting up, causing inevitable volatility for Christian educators and administrators navigating the uncertain times. Uncertainty leads to changes that require rethinking and reimagining educational approaches at Christian schools. Even the formerly irrefutable three Rs of reading, writing, and arithmetic are now joined by a fourth R: rethink (Spencer, 2020). This new normal in Christian educational practice has the potential to increase the challenges beyond those occurring pre-pandemic (Chye, n.d.).

The Deficits of VUCA and Introduction of VUCA 2.0 Model

Though leaders are encouraged to practice VUCA leadership by gaining experience through vision casting, preparedness, flexibility and adaptability, decision-making, collaboration, teamwork, and a stakeholder focus (Bennett, 2021), most VUCA leaders react to these forces by believing they are powerless to act against them. Many leaders see everything as unexpected and unknown, and they often give in to the pressure of the surrounding environment (Balita, 2020) and feel helpless to address the issues they face (Bennett & Lemoine, 2014). Christian school educators and administrators often feel VUCA forces and influences are greater than the principles and practices to which they commit.

VUCA 2.0 emerged from the Brexit and Donald Trump era, where newer and more diverse threats required a new way of leading (George, 2017). As the future unfolds around us, Christian educators and administrators need to make bold decisions to further traditional and historically accepted Judeo-Christian practice, which is central to Christian school practice.

Moving into a post-pandemic environment means Christian school educators and administrators need to realize the one-size-fits-all educational environment they experienced in the past century has changed (Spencer, 2020). Christian schools need to pay even greater attention to long-term planning and its details, while developing agility to adjust plans on short notice (Santilli, 2021). The best way forward means addressing VUCA challenges and the impact they have on the mission, vision, and value development in these environments (Spencer & Salvatico, 2021).

Horton (2017) noted, “The Bible speaks of the moral and spiritual instruction of believers in general and of children in particular” (p. 3). Though Judeo-Christian principles within Christian schools are not specifically outlined in the Bible, values and practices related to declaring these truths to present and succeeding generations make Christian education an important part of fulfilling the biblical impetus for developing godly character and action.

Important Judeo-Christian and Biblical principles in Christian school environments include providing an awareness of God and His Word so students receive the fullest understanding of important principles around Biblical doctrine and faith. Understanding truths around God making man in His image, the fall of man through

disobedience to God, the restoration of man through Jesus Christ, the purpose of the church, and the importance of ongoing education to meet these objectives are important to protect in the unpredictable environments we face (Horton, 2017).

This requires developing new non-reactive strategies to address unpredictable and reactive VUCA dynamics (Ungerer et al., 2016) and developing a more predictive VUCA 2.0 strategic response (George, 2017). Where VUCA describes the volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous forces affecting the strategic environment around us (Ungerer et al., 2016), VUCA 2.0 aims to establish a visionary, understandable, courageous and adaptive messaging to thrive in the post-pandemic Christian educational environment (George, 2017).

Where VUCA described volatility as the unpredictable speed, magnitude and nature of change (Ungerer et al., 2016), VUCA 2.0 focuses leaders on vision and “the ability to see through the chaos to have a clear vision for their organizations” (George, 2017, p. 2). Similarly, where VUCA describes uncertainty in making future forecasts based on past events and issues (Ungerer et al., 2016), VUCA 2.0 aims toward understanding “organizational capabilities and strategies to take advantage of rapidly changing circumstances by playing to their strengths while minimizing their weaknesses” (George, 2017, p. 3). Where VUCA complexity describes the emergence of problems with multiple and challenging influences affecting various and varying outcomes (Ungerer et al., 2016), VUCA 2.0 draws on the courage and ability to “step up to these challenges and make audacious decisions that embody risks and often go against the grain” (George, 2017, p. 4).

On one side, VUCA looks at ambiguity as a lack in clarity for the patterns and events experienced, by “identifying the “who, what, where how and why” associated with what is happening around [them]” (Ungerer et al., 2016). On the other, VUCA 2.0 directs leaders toward flexible adaptability for creating multiple plans. This helps leaders prepare for unforeseen possibilities in planning and then prepares them to cope more effectively in unpredictable environments (George, 2017).

The post-pandemic environment also requires the development of effective VUCA 2.0 strategies. This helps provide committed responses to Christian school missional directions and influences and protects foundational discipleship principles unique to Christian school practice and leadership. The result is an important affirmation of “the direction, alignment, and commitment needed to achieve the enduring performance potential of the [Christian school] organization” (Hughes et al., 2014, p. 11).

VUCA 2.0 Responses for Post-pandemic Christian Education and Administration

As the world returns to normal with Christian schools burdened by rapidly changing social, political, and environmental factors, Christian educators and administrators need to investigate and implement changes to their strategies and practice transitioning from a VUCA-focused pre-pandemic and pandemic world (Ungerer et al., 2016) and look closer at adopting VUCA 2.0 post-pandemic strategic approaches (George, 2017). Christian educators and administrators need to become well versed in a wide variety of talking points related to their roles for protecting Christian school identity.

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points related to their roles for protecting Christian school identity.

Adaptability is a necessary part of developing enhanced comfort level profiles to implement post-pandemic strategies as part of a whole Christian educational response (George, 2017). Responding to the differing and changing needs of the Christian school environment requires ongoing development by “seeking out different resources to better explain or illustrate key points” (Collie & Martin, 2016, p. 5). Adaptability also calls for finding new ways to cope with the post-pandemic school dynamics through finding “alternative ways to solve problems” (p. 5). Whatever the stakeholder group encounters in the process, educators and administrators must navigate the new environment to develop an understanding of the challenges they face in order to feel comfortable in the new environment.

Wise decision-making aimed at developing greater clarity in purpose and practice and a commitment to responding with clear VUCA 2.0 strategic intent for navigating the chaos is paramount in post-pandemic practice (George, 2017). This allows Christian school educators and administrators to resist external events that can pull “them off course” (p. 3). Healthy VUCA 2.0 responses play to strengths, minimize weaknesses, and take advantage of rapidly changing circumstances.

VUCA 2.0 strategic leaders do not react, but stay true to essential core purposes (George, 2017). By remaining flexible enough to listen and adapt, Christian educators and administrators can innovate, collaborate, and communicate with purpose and intent while adding value to school focus and mission, and a consistent commitment to “higher-order critical thinking skills” (Das & Ara, 2014, p. 6417), to emphasize “high-quality education” (Hunt & Van Pelt, 2019, p. 6).

Visionary

VUCA 2.0 strategies strike an important balance between promoting clearly focused Judeo-Christian and biblically-based traditional views of education, and a world opposed to them. VUCA 2.0 leaders focus needs alongside vision to define essential Christian practices for influencing/enhancing missional direction. The associated initiatives help address emerging

trends to protect foundational discipleship principles unique to Christian school practice by providing “the direction, alignment, and commitment needed to achieve the enduring performance potential of the organization” (Hughes et al., 2014, p. 11).

VUCA 2.0 leaders consistently apply vision and values to support necessary educational and administrative processes essential for school health and discerning the best strategic responses for the schools they serve. Developing a clear missional focus and vision increases collaboration for meeting the challenges related to a school where this honest missional responsibility and vision help Christian school educators and administrators:

Create/make/display visual reminders of school practice related to mission, vision, and values in strategic places throughout the schools and remind stakeholders of the importance defining principles hold. The ideas historically guiding us — hierarchical structures of society and organizations, top-down governance, segmented industries, intellectual property, personal ownership — are becoming increasingly irrelevant. This requires them to:

1. Plan and practice consistent Christian messaging throughout all levels of school communication.
2. Involve stakeholders in conversations and engage the tough discussions at the school, so everyone understands and is familiar with the implications of mission, vision, and values practice. (Atha, 2019, p.19)

School identity “is what it is, as opposed to what it's supposed to be doing, or how it goes about doing it” (Peterson, 2016, p. 5) and stems from missional support, commitments to discipleship and the beliefs shaping school decision-making processes, and protects the internal identity for Christian school students, parents, faculty, administration, and boards, along with the external community, media, and governmental entities. A protected school identity provides

effective and necessary vision for rapidly unfolding and changeable situations.

To take advantage of this, Christian school educators and administrators must learn to:

- Leverage diversity – as stakeholder networks increase in size and complexity, Christian school educators and administrators need to draw from multiple points of view and experiences to anticipate the unexpected, including tensions that exist between these ideas and a traditional Christian school mindset.
- Improve focus on employee engagement - to provide better strategic direction and allow people freedom to innovate new processes, products, and services.
- Welcome discomfort. Learning to resist the temptation to cling to outdated, inadequate processes and behaviours, and taking positive leaps of faith toward strategic discovery. (Ungerer et al., 2016, p. 5)

The navigation of post-pandemic norms calls Christian school educators and administrators to:

1. Establish guidelines to adjust to longer term realities (i.e., remote learning, staggered semesters, alternate work schedules, etc.) while facilitating access to necessary support systems.
2. Develop stakeholder forum groups:
 - 2.1. To implement new policies and guidelines and provide equal treatment and access to resources.
 - 2.2. To address professional and personal concerns related to policies and guidelines within school culture and practice.
3. Recognize everyone's contribution, large or small. (Deloitte, 2020, p. 2)

Understanding

VUCA 2.0 strategic leaders play to strengths, minimize weaknesses, and take advantage of rapid changes to the environment to allow Christian school educators and administrators to build strategic capacity (George, 2017) by:

1. Remaining flexible: Understanding inevitable change.

Feldman and Pentland (2003) noted, "While routines can be a source of inertia and inflexibility, they can also be an important source of flexibility and change" (p. 94). Where policy and procedure remain inflexible and out-of-touch with building momentum for addressing issues challenging missional practices and identities, this can cause "inflexible, unchanging patterns of action" (p. 98). Flexible school administrative practice can then address and anticipate inevitable change by applying best practices and principles in support of the organizational mission (Adhanom, 2016, p. 72).

2. Communicating better.

Gathering necessary information to find agreement/disagreement with planned directions and views before making important decisions (Atha, 2019, p. 20).

"Organizational change requires effective leadership, technical plan, stakeholder engagement, and clear communication, along with a well-articulated rationale for the transformation effort that specifies the impact of the change initiative for the future of the organization" (Adhanom, 2016, p. 60).

Improved interpersonal communication creates opportunity for honest and contextual conversations to better communicate Christian school missional identity by creating space for transparent and meaningful dialogue with stakeholders. The discussion builds healthy understanding and dialogue points around missional principles to further Christian educational practice. Where there is honest conversation, transparent discussion and a meaningful exchange of ideas, relevance for Christian school leadership can be maintained (Adhanom, 2016).

Courageous

The courage required to meet the challenges in a post-pandemic culture is more than keeping our heads down to avoid criticism and risk but involves making necessary moves to benefit the school's future educational and administrative health (George, 2017). Keenan (2002) suggested, "Authentic school leaders are motivated to achieve their organizational vision and mission by a pervasive passion to take their people and their institutions to the next step" (p. 3). VUCA 2.0 strategic Christian school educators and administrators incorporate values into overarching missional and visionary goals, not as religious add-ons, but as clear reflections of missional identity to focus strategy as "an integral part of [their] modus operandi" (Peterson, 2016, p. 3). When VUCA 2.0 leaders lack courage, they run the risk of returning to VUCA-style responses and leaving their schools "entirely at the mercy of changes in the environment" (p. 3).

VUCA 2.0 Christian school educators and administrators need courage to use strategic response tools to re-envision master schedules for accommodating collaborative/experiential learning opportunities (Swaner & Ferguson, 2019). To accomplish this requires Christian school educators and administrators to:

- Embrace new classroom technologies and practice thoughtful and intentional sabbaticals to promote stillness and reflection.
- Work toward common goals for sharing resources and partner with other Christian organizations (schools, churches, and/or community, etc.).
- Meet family needs and broaden access to Christian education for students from diverse backgrounds by changing admissions/financial aid policies and/or practices.
- Seek alternative income sources, beyond traditional tuition and fundraising models.
- Entrust teachers with greater responsibility for developing a deeper instructional culture and empowering teacher-led professional development and peer observations.

- Allocate resources toward underserved students, families, and communities.
- Give students more choice in their studies and authentic leadership experiences.
- Reimagine curricular and pedagogical practices to nurture learning and enhance student/teacher character as image bearers of God.
- Take active roles toward Christian service and advocacy through positive engagement with the local community and government.
- Create capacity for aligning school mission, vision and values with what God calls the school to accomplish. (Swaner & Ferguson, 2019, p. 3)

Adaptable

VUCA 2.0 leaders must also build self-awareness and leverage personal strength to work collaboratively with stakeholders for greater clarity around the opportunities and threats experienced. Adaptability engages the changes impacting the Christian school educational environments from the culture at large (Ungerer et al., 2016) and is necessary for responding to unforeseen events threatening to alter strategic course direction (George, 2017).

When Christian school environments remain exclusionary and defensive, the challenge toward change increases and the environment suffers. Adaptive post-pandemic practice requires cultural sensitivity and a commitment to recognizing everyone's value, so inclusive practice takes root. Adapting to inclusivity provides opportunity for a greater range of tolerance in school policy and practice. Though there are blind spots, commitment to change adds weight to the messaging for Christian schools to their internal community and the communities around them. Effective Christian-school messaging focuses missional aims toward effective and transformative education based on faithful and faith-filled commitments toward school practice (Swaner et al., 2021).

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Langley Christian School (LCS) applied these principles when adapting inclusive practices to their common beliefs, values, and practices, as part of their Christian identity to ensure children at the school experienced a thriving school experience. Their beliefs, values, and practices support LCS aims, and build a more inclusive Christian educational environment that commits to:

1. Inspirational and engaging curriculum integrated with core Christian faith and values.
2. Building authentic relationship and rapport with every student, modelling grace, love, and safety, ensuring your child finds inclusion, connection, and belonging.

3. Ensuring high impact, quality instruction in every classroom through our instructional framework that guides our professional learning and helps ensure every child achieves.
4. Intentional focus on early years' foundations, literacy, and numeracy.
5. Intentional focus on programming designed for Innovation and Impact.
6. Value-added athletics, arts, and extra-curricular opportunities that encourage wellness and wholeness.

[\(https://www.langleychristian.com/about-lcs/\)](https://www.langleychristian.com/about-lcs/)

A Christian university in British Columbia, Canada provides an inclusion statement (with supporting scriptures) in line with VUCA 2.0 principles for understanding how hospitality, equity, diversity, and inclusion are central tenets of an effective Christian faith practice. Using scriptural references for describing the Biblical origins of equity and being created in God's image (Genesis 1: 26-28; 5: 1-2; Colossians 1: 15), the statement provides scriptural evidence in support of God's creative diversity and inclusion expressed through the diverse world and creatures living here (including man) (Genesis 1:11-31).

The statement goes on to note inclusion as central to the diverse and interdependent nature of Christian expression through the Body of Christ (Isaiah 56: 6-8; 1 Corinthians 12: 12-31). The university also adds an inclusion statement to graduate syllabi instructions, paying specific attention to marginalized peoples and voices, and encouraging open, thoughtful expression when it comes to the many diverse views and voices expressed and experienced in the learning environment.

Christian schools can develop "a cultural vocabulary word bank that is used within [the] school community" (Gaines, 2020, p. 3). By focusing on diversity, the conversation "draws attention to the fact that we all have culture—every person, family, and school" (p. 3). Healthy cultural intelligence helps inform and understand important concepts for recognizing everyone as "charitable in their judgment and speech with one another" (p. 3).

Culturally-intelligent unity recognizes God as creator of “each person in your school community in His image and with purpose” (Gaines, 2020, p. 4). “Ethnicity, race, and culture can either bring us together or cause a further divide” (p. 1). De Ruyter (1999) suggested “Cultural groups have to find new ways of coexistence” (p. 213). Developing cultural intelligence is an important step for adapting cultural awareness within existing Christian school environments. Christian schools must allow diversity “to come to the table” (Gaines, 2020, p. 4) and embrace differing perspectives.

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Conclusion

In pre-pandemic life, VUCA introduced extraordinary challenges (Ungerer et al., 2016), requiring Christian school educators and administrators to develop new strategies for addressing and transforming past reactive practices with fresh emphases toward engaging more predictive and strategic VUCA 2.0 responses. This commitment to VUCA 2.0 practice will focus “the direction, alignment, and commitment needed to achieve the enduring performance potential of the [Christian school] organization” (Hughes et al., 2014, p. 11).

Post-pandemic challenges necessitate Christian school educators and administrators to create a clear VUCA 2.0 strategic focus versus being controlled by VUCA reactions. Strategies that foster a healthy Christian worldview and take advantage of the improvements are needed for developing a healthy post pandemic Christian school environment. Christian educational and administrative practice needs to help Christian schools return to the ‘new normal’ and avoid the reactive VUCA environment by shifting to an intentional VUCA 2.0 focus - a focus offering effective and transformative faith-based Christian education, committed to faithful and faith-filled commitments to all student, teacher, and stakeholder relationships (Swaner et al., 2021).

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