

# *Teacher Leadership Development in PDSs: Perceptions of 22 Veteran Teachers*

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**ABSTRACT:** Although there is no common definition for teacher leadership, the concept is continually advanced as a key component for both the success of schools and professionalization of teachers. Many view teacher leadership as specific administrative roles while others view it as any opportunity in which teachers contribute to the decision-making process. Whichever way it is defined, it is commonly accepted that teacher leadership capacity, though a highly desirable trait, is underdeveloped. This article shares the perceptions of 22 veteran teachers working at two Professional Development Schools (PDSs). It will identify their perceptions about whether the PDS model contributes to leadership development and which specific roles within the partnership are responsible. Though several themes emerged, the collaborative and mentoring components of the PDS were reported as primary factors for increased teacher leadership. These findings are further evidence that can be used by PDS advocates to promote the PDS model as standard method for teacher education programs.

*NAPDS Essentials Addressed: #3/Ongoing and reciprocal professional development for all participants guided by need; #4/A shared commitment to innovative and reflective practice by all participants; #5/Engagement in and public sharing of the results of deliberative investigations of practice by respective participants*

## **Background**

There is no standardized definition of teacher leadership. It often means different things to different people, which causes teacher leadership to be underrecognized and misunderstood (Donaldson, 2006). Teacher leadership is often thought of as administrative roles, while others view it as any opportunity in which teachers contribute to the decision-making process (Donaldson & Johnson, 2007). Whichever way it is defined, it is commonly accepted that teacher leadership

capacity is underdeveloped in most schools (Greenlee, 2007).

Creating new hierarchical roles is not necessary to provide leadership opportunities to teachers, but rather, an expansion of their normal role (Darling-Hammond, Bullmaster, & Cobb, 1995). Petrie (1995) and Teitel (2003) write about how teachers have long been accustomed to working in isolation within the boundaries of their own classrooms. Going beyond the classroom by providing input at meetings, sharing best practices, working with the community, working with university faculty, and mentoring teacher candidates are examples of

additional challenges that can foster the development of leadership. Barth (1990) and Teitel (2003) suggested that if teachers are taken out of their isolated environment and enabled as school leaders, everyone can benefit and the success of school initiatives will have greater success.

York-Barr and Duke (2004) suggested that teacher leadership is a unique form of leadership that borrows from multiple conceptions that focus more on collaboration than on authority vested in one person. This idea was advanced further by Danielson (2006) who suggested the nature of teacher leadership is informal and teachers rise to the occasion on a voluntary basis. This type of emergent leadership characterizes the highest level of professionalism in education. Teacher leaders are rarely compensated for the roles they play. The motivation of teacher leaders is to improve teaching practice and serve their students well. Danielson (2006) further suggested that teacher leadership is the exhibition of four attributes, which include providing influence beyond one's own classroom, mobilizing and energizing others, engaging in complex work with others, and having passion for the core mission of the school.

If it is true that the development of teacher leadership is an important component for overall school improvement, then teachers' roles need expanding (NCATE, 2001; Smith, 1999; Teitel, 2003). Teacher leadership opportunities are usually limited to the basics such as class scheduling and textbook selection. It should go further to incorporate collaboration for best practices, mentoring student teachers, providing support for new teachers and having access to student data to inform their teaching practices (NCATE, 2001). Teacher leadership is really a collective effort that enables teachers to make positive contributions to the school community while establishing expectations for all teachers (Greenlee, 2007).

This study explores whether or not the collegial and professional learning environment of the PDS model promotes the development of teacher leadership. The findings could suggest that the PDS model become the standard method, or at least a preferred method, in which new teachers are prepared and veteran teachers are provided ongoing professional development both in pedagogical and leadership skills. This study will refer to more progressive descriptions of the term teacher leadership because a single definition did not emerge from the literature. The more progressive descriptions suggest that teacher leadership is not about management or holding appointed leadership roles, such as Department Chair, Union Representative, Grade Level Representative and the like, but rather about opportunities for teachers to reframe their own identities and provide influence beyond the walls of their own classrooms.

## Teacher Leadership and PDSs

Teacher leadership development is not typically considered one of the goals of the PDS model. It is possible that the emergence of teacher leadership is an unintended yet positive consequence of the model. If PDSs unintentionally develop teachers as leaders in addition to achieving other intended goals, the model becomes even more valuable to the future of education. The PDS model provides multiple opportunities for teachers to influence policy, teaching practice, and educational change through unique collaborative roles that do not exist in non-PDS schools (Boles & Troen, 1994; Holmes Group, 2007). These unique collaborative roles in a PDS vary but are typically those that involve mentoring student teachers and collaborating with university faculty.

Greenlee (2007) pointed out that the top-down bureaucratic structure of schools is a challenge for the development of teacher leadership capacity. Ideally, the PDS model

is a collaborative atmosphere where veteran teachers, administrators and university faculty share in the decision-making process (Holmes Group, 2007; NAPDS, 2008; NCATE, 2001; Teitel, 2003). The collaborative nature of the PDS model has the potential of developing new paradigms of leadership without formally designated or defined roles (Boles & Troen, 1994).

Darling-Hammond et al. (1995) suggested that leadership is the act of influencing others and that leadership roles should emerge in well-developed PDSs. These roles include mentoring student teachers, acting as teacher educators, participating in curriculum development, participating in research, and acting as agents of change. Through these informal roles, teachers become leaders in a manner that is different than those where functions are limited to a specific task. Instead, empowerment comes from teacher-initiated collaboration and the embracing of the informal roles that develop (Boles & Troen, 1994, Crowther, Kaagan, Ferguson, & Hann, 2002).

Often, university faculty provide overly theoretical curriculum to student teachers, leaving a gap in their preparedness to take over a classroom (*A Nation at Risk*, 1983; Holmes Group, 2007). Connecting theory to practice is an important component of teacher preparation programs. The term "practice" typically refers to the strategies, methods and overall pedagogy that are employed in a classroom. Collaboration between veteran teachers and university professors can help define the curriculum that bridges the gap with teaching practice. On the same note, veteran teachers who are mentoring student teachers often overlook the connections to theory and become reinvigorated in their teaching styles when collaborating with the university staff in a PDS model (Clark, 1999; Goodlad, 1990). The reciprocal development of veteran teachers is an important contributor to the success of the PDS model and is in itself another form of teacher

leadership (Abdal-Haqq, 1989, 1999; Goodlad, 1990). This reciprocal professional development comes as a result of open dialogue within the PDS community that permits veteran teachers to become reacquainted with effective methodology. In the end, collaboration results in quality decision-making, problem solving, and the development of teacher leadership skills, which ultimately enhances performance and morale (Lieberman, 1995).

## Research Aims

For the PDS model to be broadly accepted as a valid method, credible evidence and research is needed to document its effectiveness (Breault, 2010; Teitel, 2000). This article explores whether or not the collegial and collaborative environment of the PDS model promotes the development of teacher leadership. Two broad categories of inquiry have guided this study. First, it will uncover the participants' perceptions about whether the PDS provides leadership opportunities. Second, it will describe the specific roles and responsibilities within the PDS partnership that contributed to increased teacher leadership.

## Methodology

It is recommended that qualitative research be used when the goal is to gain fresh insight about topics or when little is known about a particular research question (Creswell, 2005; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The intention of this qualitative study was to elicit the perceptions of the participants to discover whether the PDS partnership provides veteran teachers with leadership opportunities and, if so, which PDS activities provided leadership development. The participants were asked to respond to two prompts. The first asked them to report whether or not they thought the PDS partnership provided leadership opportunities that would not normally be available

absent the partnership. If they responded in the affirmative to the first question, they were subsequently asked to report which activities within the PDS partnership provided them opportunities to be teacher leaders.

Thematic analysis was conducted by using the systematic design theory, which is widely used in educational research (Creswell, 2005). The transcriptions of the interviews were read and open-coded to determine initial categories. Subsequently, the information was axial-coded to determine interrelationships and possible causal conditions between categories. Selective coding was done to determine the final categories that relate to leadership development.

## PDS Site Descriptions

The first location for this study was an elementary school in a suburban community in Ventura County, California. This is a public elementary school serving kindergarten through fifth-grade students. This school has been in a PDS partnership with a local university since August 2007.

The second location for this study was a middle school also located in a suburban community in Ventura County, California. The middle school is a public school serving grades six through eight. The school has been in a PDS partnership with the same local university since August 2008.

A cohort ranging from twelve to twenty teacher candidates is placed at both of these PDSs each semester. The model for these PDSs requires the candidates to spend half of the day working with a veteran teacher in the classroom and half of the day taking university methods courses. Candidates are matched with veteran teachers after an interview process which is designed to determine compatibility. School site and university faculty work together to conduct these interviews and collaborate to make the placements. At each of the PDS sites, several teachers are comfortable with a paired model

of placements and work with two candidates each semester. Candidates stay on site for university methods courses. University professors come to the school each day to teach these courses. By collaborating regularly with the veteran teachers at the PDS site, course syllabi and assignments have been designed to best provide connections between theory and teaching practice. In collaboration with the university professors, veteran teachers model lessons for the cohort using various teaching strategies, grouping strategies and classroom management techniques. Additionally, veteran teachers guest lecture in courses and university professors likewise teach lessons in K-12 classes. This cross-teaching model keeps everyone involved at all levels and provides reciprocal professional development for candidates, teachers and professors.

Each of the PDS sites has a steering committee which serves as the governing body of the partnership. The committee meets five or six times each year to evaluate the effectiveness of the partnership and to make certain the needs of the stakeholders are being met. The committee's structure encourages equitable contribution and collaboration between all stakeholders, all of whom are committed to the professional development of current and future educators. It is here where annual goals are developed, new programs are created, professional development is planned, problems are solved, data are analyzed, and reflection occurs on best teaching practices. The stakeholder groups represented on the steering committees include school and university administrators, liaisons, professors, teacher candidates, parents and classroom teachers. This ensures that decision-making is collaborative and not made by directive.

Ultimately, by staying true to the Holmes Model for PDSs (Holmes Partnership, 2007) and housing all stakeholders on a single campus, the doors to communication are wide open. The university faculty and teacher candidates become part of the school community, and all participants have the oppor-

tunity to reflect, collaborate and communicate on a daily basis. To further support communication and collaboration, each site has a teacher that serves as the liaison to the university. Though these liaisons do not receive compensation for their work, the university provides a small amount of funding for release time so that each of them has time to collaborate with the university, visit classrooms and facilitate steering committee meetings.

## Limitations and Biases

The researcher's relationship with the first site is twofold. The researcher teaches two of the university's methods courses on the campus of the elementary school. Because of this, the researcher has frequent interaction with the staff of this school, which includes planning, visiting classrooms, and collaborating with others about PDS activities. The researcher also serves as the university's PDS liaison to this site, which includes the responsibilities of co-facilitating the steering committee meetings and arranging for the placements of student teachers with veteran teachers for their fieldwork.

The researcher's relationship with the second site is serving in the role as the university's PDS liaison. As in the elementary site, this includes the responsibility of co-facilitating the steering committee meetings and arranging for the placements of student teachers with veteran teachers for their fieldwork.

The relationships described between the researcher and the two sites had the potential of limiting respondents' candor during the interview process. The researcher encouraged each participant to answer truthfully. With this in mind, the researcher made every attempt to ensure anonymity while creating a comfortable and nonthreatening atmosphere to encourage sincere responses.

A limitation in this study was the need to restrict participation to those who have

experience working in a PDS. In qualitative research, the intent is to discover information about a particular shared phenomenon (Creswell, 2005). As a result, purposeful sampling was used by selecting participants who shared similar experiences within the PDS partnership. Because this research was seeking specific information regarding PDSs, the participants needed to be teachers who were active in the joint activities of the partnership, which limited the study to 22 participants.

## Participants

Purposeful sampling was used to select the participants for this study. The participants were intentionally limited to the veteran teachers from both sites. Patton (1990) suggested that purposeful sampling is appropriate when seeking information about situations that participants have in common. The common characteristic required in this study was experience in working in a PDS partnership. For the participants to be able to adequately describe their perceptions to the research questions, it was necessary for them to have been actively involved in PDS activities.

## Data Collection

In an effort to make it convenient for the participants, an offer was made to conduct the interviews at any location that was suitable for them. All the participants chose their respective school sites as the location for the interviews because it apparently offered them the greatest convenience. A 30-minute block of time was scheduled for each interview. All the interviews had a duration that fell between twenty and 30 minutes.

Upon arrival of the researcher, each participant was greeted and thanked for her time. Each participant was provided a letter of consent which included an opportunity to opt out at any time. The participants were given

Table 1. PDS Model and Additional Leadership Opportunities

Question	Yes	No
Does the PDS partnership provide additional opportunities for teacher leadership?	21	1

time to read it through and ask any questions they had about the study. A signed copy of each letter of consent was retained by the researcher, and a copy was given to each participant to retain for her records. Each participant was reminded that the conversation was to be recorded and that she had the right to withdraw her responses to the questions at any time.

The interview discussion sought to determine the participant's overall perceptions of whether or not the PDS partnership provided opportunities for leadership and, if so, which activities made that contribution. The actual interviews were digitally recorded with the permission of the participants. All recordings were transcribed. Once transcribed, recordings were destroyed to ensure anonymity of participants. Since this study involved interaction with human subjects, all the methodological procedures described were submitted to and approved by the university's institutional review board (IRB).

## Findings

Table 1 illustrates what the participants reported in response to the first prompt. The strong agreement from 21 participants supports the suggestion of Darling-Hammond et al. (1995) that leadership roles will emerge when a PDS is well developed. These are very positive findings for proponents of the PDS model and suggest that PDSs offer additional leadership opportunities for veteran teachers that would not normally be available if there was no partnership. This implies that the PDS model can go beyond the scope of its intended goals and provide additional professional development in the area of teacher leadership. This aspect of the model may also be a strong factor in sustaining PDS partner-

ships because veteran teachers see these additional roles in leadership as personal opportunities for professional development, which can make a long-term partnership more desirable.

Table 2 illustrates the findings of the second prompt. Five themes emerged as PDS activities that promoted teacher leadership opportunities.

*Theme 1: Mentoring student teachers.* The first emergent theme was *mentoring student teachers*. When discussing the mentoring of student teachers, many participants cited the different ways in which they worked with preservice candidates from the university. These responses suggest that having the opportunity to mentor an aspiring teacher created a leadership opportunity that does not exist when teaching alone in a classroom. Some of the veteran teachers mentioned that the ability to influence the next generation of teachers was a very empowering feeling. They reported that through the mentoring of a preservice teacher, they felt empowered to influence the future of education.

The responses also emphasized the opportunities that cause one to stay fresh in the profession through reflective practice. The participants noted that to provide coaching to a student teacher, a teacher needs to think more clearly about his or her own teaching practices. The participants believed that through the reflection process that resulted from mentoring a student teacher, their own professionalism benefited. The consensus was that simply having a student teacher in the classroom required mentor teachers to be more reflective on their own teaching strategies. Veteran teachers need to be prepared to explain the rationale for their actions so that the student teacher can make connections between theory and teaching practice. Several veteran teachers noted that they had thought they were being reflective practitioners but then came to realize through the mentoring

**Table 2. PDS Activities Contributing to Increased Opportunities for Teacher Leadership**

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Characteristics</i>	<i>Number of participants who included it in discussion</i>
Mentoring student teachers	Influence next generation of teachers Coach and provide guidance Share knowledge and method	19
Guest lecturing	Influence next generation of teachers Share knowledge and method Recognition for their expertise	17
Collaboration	Work with both peers and university faculty to influence next generation of teachers Decisions that affect change Plan professional development	14
Steering committee	Higher-stakes decisions that affect real change Collaboration with all stakeholder groups expanding field of influence	13
TPA assessor	Practice the profession outside the classroom Opportunity to reflect on practice Provides more insight to be a better mentor and coach when working with student teachers	9

process that their reflections had become more thorough and informed future teaching practice in a meaningful way. Some cited that they came to realize that they had no reasonable rationale for some of their routines, but through the reflection process that accompanied the mentoring of a student teacher, they made changes to their own teaching strategies.

The participants also cited the fact that through reflection and discussion with their student teachers, they were reminded of theory and strategies that they may have long forgotten. They also noted that new ideas from the student teacher helped reinvigorate them, thus providing a reciprocal form of professional development through the mentoring process. This suggests that mentoring a student teacher may be a form of professional development that helps classroom veterans become better teachers themselves.

The overall consensus suggests that the prospect to work with student teachers is an action that provides opportunities for both increased leadership capacity and reciprocal professional development. Darling-Hammond et al. (1995) stated it succinctly when they suggested that many people define leadership as the ability to influence others. The responses from these interviews suggest that veteran

teachers feel enabled as leaders because they are given the opportunity to influence the student teacher's growth and development through the mentoring process. Several viewed this as opportunities to not only shape the individual, but to influence the future of the profession. The occasion for a veteran teacher to work in this capacity would not necessarily be afforded if the school did not have a PDS partnership with the university.

In developing the PDS model, the Holmes Group (2007) stressed that reciprocity is essential to the success of a PDS because all stakeholders need to have something to gain for the partnership to thrive and sustain itself. Teitel (2003) further supports the concept of reciprocity suggesting that all stakeholders develop professionally as a result of collaboration. The interview responses suggest that reciprocity is taking place during the mentoring process because both mentor and mentee have opportunities to learn from one another. Reciprocal professional development has the potential to take place each time a veteran teacher works with a student teacher. This further supports the work of Goodlad (1990) and Abdal-Haqq (1989), who both wrote that the PDS model provides a strong platform for simultaneous renewal. This ultimately suggests that the

mentoring process and other activities of the PDS model provide reciprocal professional development, which allows both the veteran teacher and student teacher to become leaders.

Petrie (1995) and Teitel (2003) discuss the need for teachers to stop practicing their trade in isolation. Working with student teachers is another example put forward as an opportunity to develop leadership in veteran teachers. The interview responses suggest that this is true because the mentoring process takes veteran teachers out of isolation requiring them to explain their practices to student teachers. This leads back to providing leadership through the mentoring process.

*Theme 2: Guest lecturing.* The second theme that emerged was related to adjunct work and guest lecturing opportunities. The term for the theme *guest lecturing* was used to cover three different types of experiences that the participants spoke about during the interviews. The veteran teachers at each site have opportunities to be guest speakers for college courses, present a two-hour seminar for student teachers on an area in which they have expertise, or model a real lesson within their classroom for groups of preservice teachers to observe. The participants discussed an underlying belief that this is a new opportunity for teacher leadership because all three give veteran teachers an opportunity to share their knowledge and expertise with those who are preparing to enter the profession.

When speaking about these activities, the participants reported that they felt like leaders because they were contributing to the preparation of the next generation of teachers. They suggested that this was a form of leadership because they were sharing best practices and providing guidance to groups of aspiring teachers. Several participants also reported that these three actions were inspirational experiences because they were being recognized as professionals and receiving the respect that teachers often do not get. They suggested this was leadership because their expertise was being validated before the entire educational community.

The responses suggested a perception that the opportunities to guest speak during university course meetings or teach workshops to aspiring teachers were opportunities for leadership that would not be available absent the PDS partnership. Seventeen participants reported that guest lecturing was an opportunity to step outside their own classroom and influence the profession. The findings suggest that this aspect of the PDS model caused teachers to sense recognition for their talents and feel validated as professional educators. These findings further suggest that a carefully planned PDS that includes guest lecturing opportunities for veteran teachers also provides an avenue for leadership. This emergent theme aligns with two of Danielson's (2006) characteristics of teacher leadership, including (a) providing influence beyond one's own classroom (b) mobilizing and energizing others.

*Theme 3: Collaboration.* The third theme that emerged from the interviews was collaboration. When discussing collaboration with the participants, several discussed working together with the university as well as increased interaction with their own colleagues. Collaboration with the university focused on the occasions when veteran teachers worked with the university faculty to develop opportunities that provided clear connections between theory and teaching practice. Participants discussed examples of collaboration with university faculty to plan seminars, improve university curriculum, and create model lessons for student teachers to observe. They also discussed the collaborative efforts to plan professional development seminars specifically for the benefit of the veteran teachers.

Three participants also reported that collaboration between veteran teachers has increased since the inception of the PDS model. They specifically cited an increase in collaboration among veteran teachers who were mentoring student teachers during the same semester. They explained that those who were mentoring student teachers found themselves working together often with a goal of developing more experiences for the student teachers that



enhanced teaching practice and connected theory to teaching methodology. It was suggested that the common experience of working with a student teacher caused veteran teachers to collaborate who may not normally have worked together.

Overall, it seems clear that the collaborative component of the PDS is responsible for a great deal of the participants' perceptions of teacher leadership opportunities. Their responses suggest that the collaboration built into the PDS model gave the participants a heightened sense of leadership. The compelling perceptions that surrounded collaboration imply that the PDS model has contributed to the development of a highly collaborative environment which brings teachers out of the confines of their classroom. The manner in which collaboration was described by the participants also aligns to all four of Danielson's (2006) attributes for teacher leadership.

*Theme 4: Steering committee.* The fourth theme that emerged from the study was the role of the PDS steering committee as a leadership opportunity. Though the work of the steering committee is collaborative in nature, it is being reported as a separate theme because it was specifically mentioned as a factor in developing leadership capacity by thirteen of the participants.

The steering committee is a group of stakeholders including school faculty, professors, administrators, parents, union leaders and preservice teachers. Its role is to serve as the governing body of the PDS. The members of this working group are not appointed or selected, instead, an open invitation is made at the beginning of the school year and any stakeholder who is interested is able to join.

The main distinction that the participants made between the steering committee and collaboration was that the steering committee had higher stakes. When clarifying the meaning behind the term higher stakes, the participants reported that the steering committee was an opportunity to work not only with their immediate colleagues but with all the stakehold-

er groups, thus expanding their field of influence. The consensus was that the steering committee was a genuine forum for veteran teachers to have consequential input in to the decision-making process and that their contributions developed into visible results. This supports Abdal-Haqq's (1999) argument that the most distinguishing factor of the PDS is the collaboration between the institutions.

The standards published by NCATE (2001) give guidelines for PDS steering committees. It is apparent from those interviewed that both of these sites have developed an appropriate governing group that is responsible to evaluate, monitor, and sustain the PDS partnership. The teachers that discussed the steering committee as an opportunity for leadership also made it clear that this was another form of collaboration. It was interesting to note that not everyone who referred to it were actual members of the committee. This suggests that even those who did not actively participate on the committee recognized it as an opportunity for leadership. This further suggests that the mere existence of the steering committee is seen as an important opportunity for veteran teachers to have a voice and act as leaders.

The participants' comments also support the notion put forward by York-Barr and Duke (2004) that leadership should focus more on collaboration than on authority vested in one person. It is clear that the steering committee is viewed as a collaborative authority providing every participant with true opportunities for leadership.

The activities of the steering committee as described by the participants also supports the writing of Abdal-Haqq (1999), who suggested that the collaborative component of a PDS model can provide professional development to all the participants in the relationship. The professional development in this case is the opportunity for all the participants to develop as leaders.

*Theme 5: TPA training.* The fifth theme to emerge focused on TPA training and becoming a TPA assessor. The California Teaching

Performance Assessments (TPAs) is one of three models of performance assessments that all teacher candidates must pass in the state of California in order to earn a teaching credential. A TPA assessor is a person responsible for reading and scoring the various TPA tasks. To become an assessor, people must participate in a formal training program where they become calibrated and certified to score these tasks (see CCTC website at [www.ctc.ca.gov](http://www.ctc.ca.gov)). The university partner of the PDS retains a pool of assessors to score the TPAs. The assessors are employed as part-time staff and are paid for each TPA they score. The university offered the entire faculty at both sites the opportunity to be trained and certified as TPA assessors.

When referring to the opportunity to be trained as a TPA assessor, the responses overlapped with some of the themes that have all ready been discussed. There was a belief that the training itself was collaborative and provided opportunities to practice the profession outside the classroom. Several thought it provided an opportunity to reflect on practice, which offered additional insights into how to be a better mentor and coach when working with student teachers. Several discussed how the training provided personal professional development that refreshed their ideas about the connections between theory and teaching practice. The participants felt renewed as leaders in the classroom because this activity allowed new and relearned skills to be brought back to the classroom.

TPA training and eventually serving as a TPA assessor is another opportunity for veteran teachers to work outside the confines of their own classrooms. It is important to call attention to the fact that this opportunity is unique to the State of California. The TPA is legislated by the state government as a requirement for teacher credentialing. Some states are piloting versions of the TPA which would allow them to replicate this opportunity. PDS partnerships in states without a TPA can also replicate this activity by giving veteran teachers opportunities to evaluate student teacher portfolios or other assessments that are customary in their states. This is worth

exploring since it seems evident from this study that this was a primary contributor to the development of leadership skills.

The participants also made note of how the TPA training and subsequent scoring was a form of professional development. The professional development discussed when speaking about TPA training is further evidence of Danielson's (2006) assertion that the nature of teacher leadership is informal and teachers rise to the occasion on a voluntary basis. TPA training was a voluntary opportunity that some teachers chose to pursue.

## Conclusions

The participants placed a great deal of emphasis on the collaborative culture that exists in the PDS partnership. The theme of collaboration was actually interconnected with several of the other themes that emerged from the study. This suggests that the collaborative component of the PDS is responsible for a great deal of the participants' perceptions on teacher leadership opportunities. In their responses, the participants portray teacher leadership primarily as a collaborative activity that draws them into the decision-making process. This is a powerful affirmation that teachers at these two sites are beginning to view themselves as professionals who have a voice in their own profession.

The literature referenced in this article suggests that the development of teacher leadership is essential to the success of students and equally essential for retaining teachers in the profession. Teacher leadership is not specifically a goal of the PDS model; however, the results from this qualitative study suggest that the PDS model provides many opportunities for teachers to emerge as leaders. This unintended yet very positive side effect of the PDS model suggests that the development of teacher leadership can be provided while simultaneously preparing new teachers for the profession.

## Implications of This Research

This study revealed that PDSs have the potential to provide multiple opportunities for teacher leadership. These opportunities would not normally exist in schools that are not partnered with a university. Typically, teachers who have a desire to become leaders spend personal time to earn additional credentials so they can become administrators. This takes them out of the classroom and into a whole new role. The PDS model can provide the environment for teachers to be leaders without giving up their classrooms.

The relationship between PDSs and the development of teacher leaders is an area that has not been thoroughly explored. Though this study only accounts for the perceptions of 22 teachers at two schools, it demonstrates the potential of how a PDS can impact teacher leadership which is worthy of further investigation.

Future research in this area should include comparing teacher perceptions regarding leadership capacity between schools that are not in a PDS partnership and those that are. These comparisons could provide greater clarity about the leadership-building activities inherent in the PDS partnership. It would also be interesting to conduct longitudinal research with the same participants of this study to determine if their views change over time. This type of study could explore whether leadership capacity continues to increase, and if the overall PDS experience continues to keep them fresh in their practice.

It would also be wise for PDS advocates to explore whether or not administrators of PDS sites share the same perceptions as the teachers. Principals can be interviewed to discuss the leadership capacity of their staff. This could help determine if teachers who were already strong leaders simply continue to be leaders or if the PDS partnership helps to develop new leaders as well.

Overall, this study provides an encouraging beginning in support of the PDS model as a means for providing leadership development for veteran teachers while simultaneously preparing aspiring teachers to enter the profession. This is encouraging news for future researchers and proponents of the PDS model who work to promote it as a standard practice for teacher education programs. <sup>SUP</sup>

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