

Teachers Helping Teachers: A Professional Development Model that Promotes Teacher Leadership

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Abstract

This mixed methods study reports on the outcomes of a professional development model (PDM) developed by a K-12 private school in Beirut, Lebanon, after 3 years of its employment. Specifically, an evaluation of this PDM is provided with special emphasis on its potential of developing teacher leaders at school. The PDM embraces a constructivist approach whereby teachers train colleague teachers and some high school students provide ushering services during professional development events. Data was collected using focus group interviews with teacher trainers, surveying teacher trainees and asking student ushers to describe their most important gain from this model using a single statement. Findings of the study highlight resonant school gains from this PDM and underscore its potential in developing not only teacher leadership but also student leadership. The study provides important implications for professional development program designers.

Keywords: professional development, teacher leadership, school improvement, distributed leadership, student leadership

1. Introduction

1.1 The Problem

Successful school reform has been strongly linked to effective school leadership (Ofsted, 2000; Harris, 2004). Particularly, distributed leadership has been underscored by several studies in that line and has been considered as a tool for school improvement and enhanced learning (NCSL 2004, LDS 2007, OECD 2008, Mulford 2008; Ghamrawi, 2010). When leadership is dispersed, all school members demonstrate leadership including classroom teachers (Spillane, 2006). Teacher leadership has been widely recognized in the literature as means for relieving principals from their work burden (OECD, 2008); disclosing a trust message that motivates teachers to have input into school improvement (Ghamrawi, 2011); furthering collaboration and collegiality between staff (Duignan, 2006), and augmenting teachers' capacities (Spillane, 2006).

Teacher leaders are not viewed as occupants of formal leadership roles by their colleagues, but acclaimed as connoisseur teachers who provide situational assistance to other teachers cooperatively and collegially (Hatch et al., 2005). They share their successes and failures to further professional development and teacher growth within professional learning communities (Hatch et al., 2005; Ghamrawi, 2010). However, bringing about teacher leaders is a controversial issue and this is evident through the discussions that appear in the work of Harris (2004), McGatha et al. (2005), Spillane (2006), Harris and Townsend (2007), OECD (2009), Weaver and Dick (2009), and Ghamrawi (2010; 2011).

Although the literature provides rich and ramified information as to what teachers leaders do in schools, Harrison and Killion (2007) provide a short comprehensive summary consisting of ten roles. These are presented in Figure 1 which shows convergence with many studies such as Marzano et al. (2001), Lerner (2004), York and Duke (2004), (2005), Blase and Blase (2006), Spillane (2006) and Ghamrawi (2010).

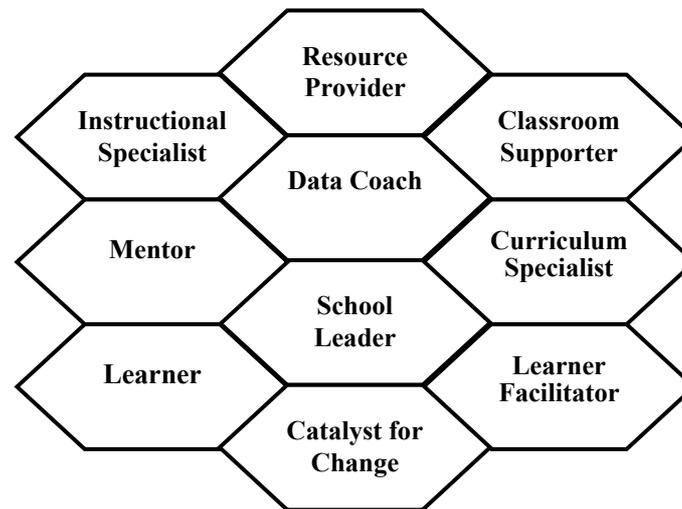


Figure 1. Roles of teacher leaders from Harrison and Killion (2007)

On the other hand, professional development of teachers in K-12 settings has undergone a lot of discourse among researchers and practitioners. In fact, teachers' professional development has been considered central to any school reform (Garet et al., 2001), without which no school improvement may be consummated (Yoon et al., 2007). This has been attributed to the fact that teachers who lead the core of the learning and teaching process (OECD, 2009) exhibit the greatest influence on student achievement (U.S. Department of Education, 2010).

Effective teacher professional development bears five important features according to Archibald et al. (2011) based on an extensive review of the literature. These include: (1) alignment with school goals; (2) focus on core content and modeling of teaching strategies for the content; (3) inclusion of opportunities for active learning of new teaching strategies; (4) provision of opportunities for collaboration among teachers; and (5) inclusion of embedded follow-up and continuous feedback.

Based on what has preceded, it may be argued that teacher professional development that makes a difference in terms of school improvement in general, and at the level of enhancing teacher leadership in particular, would be quite a complex issue to tackle. This is particularly the purpose of this study.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of a professional development model (PDM) employed over three years and developed by one private K-12 school in Beirut, Lebanon; on school improvement in general. Specifically, the aim was to assess: (1) school gains at the level of teachers who participated as trainers during PDs; (2) school gains at the level of teachers who attended PDs as trainees; (3) school gains at the level of students who served as ushers during PDs; and (4) the potential of this PDM at enhancing teacher leadership.

1.3 Context of the Study

1.3.1 The Lebanese Educational System

Lebanon enjoys one of the most privatized educational systems in the world (Chapman and Miric, 2009) as approximately 70% of students are enrolled in private schools (CERD, 2010). There are approximately 1400 private schools in Lebanon (CERD, 2010). The religious denominations own the majority of those private schools, while the rest are shared between foreign governments/organizations and secular individuals (El-Amine, 1994). Unlike public schools which are tightly monitored by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE), private schools enjoy an enormous margin of freedom in managing the school. They are very independent and self-funded entities exhibiting very little ministerial authority. School principals of private schools are free to decide on policies, teacher recruitment, curriculum, textbooks, fund-raising, professional development, enrollment, and all school matters. The only aspect that ties them to MEHE is the ninth grade national exam and the end-of-school, twelfth grade national certificate.

1.3.2 The Participating School

The school involved in the study is a private, co-educational Lebanese Anglophone school situated in Beirut. It accommodates more than 1400 students who attend classes from Nursery to Grade 12. The number of the teaching staff at this school is 154. The school is a regular attendee of teacher training providing agencies and universities available in the country. Teachers at school used to attend workshops outside the school in the absence of any follow-up from their subject leaders later on. So the utilization of newly acquired knowledge and skills is purely left out for the teacher him/herself. The school administration claims through its profile (published on its website); that it embraces the concept of shared leadership. Three years ago, the school devised a new approach to professional development of teachers. According to the principal, the school community felt a pressing need to revise and amend schools' professional development strategy. The concern was to adopt a teacher-centered approach to professional development that ensures professional growth and contributes to school improvement. Consequently, the school came up with an initiative called 'Professional Days' (PDs).

1.3.3 Professional Days

A PD is a venue for teachers to collaborate under an overarching motto: 'teachers helping teachers'. During PDs classroom teachers share instructional strategies, techniques and methodologies with other teachers in a very systematic and thoroughly planned mode. The school website describes PDs with the following:

“Professional Days provide an intellectual and professional forum for teachers to explore recent and up-to-date theoretical and practical issues regarding the teaching/learning process. It is hoped that this forum would catalyze the professional growth of its attendees” (School Website).

A PD is a long educational day comprised of a large number of in-house workshops (a total of 20 workshops on the average per day) taking place in two sets of 10 workshops, over two different time slots. In other words, each set of 10 workshops take place concurrently. All the workshops offered during a PD are conducted by teacher trainers. In addition, PDs encompass one key-note speech, often conducted by a local university professional, the school principal, or one of the subject leaders. All teacher trainees attend the key note speech. Beside this, they attend 2 workshops, one from each set of concurrent sessions. Teacher trainees sign up ahead of time to attend the workshops that they select based on their personal needs. This happens in consultation with their subject leaders. Though the subject leader or a departmental colleague of a certain teacher may be delivering a workshop during a PD, there is no obligation as to the attendance of such a teacher in this workshop. Consequently, teachers end up attending workshops delivered by colleagues from other departments, with whom they normally have minimal or no interaction.

The school organizes three PDs per year, one per each term as the academic year is divided into three terms in this school. PDs take place over normal working school days where parents are sent a notice informing them not to send their children to school as their teachers are involved in professional development activities. By this, common and non-stressful time for sharing ideas among teachers is allocated.

Teachers who would like to deliver a workshop to colleagues often submit a proposal to the professional development officer at school. All proposal received by this officer are prepared for double-blind review by a committee comprised of school principal and some subject leaders who are selected by the school principal on the basis of experience. Based on a set of criteria that is made clear to all school members prior to any PD, proposals are evaluated and teachers who prepared those proposals are notified so as to develop their workshops. Situational assistance by any member of the organizing committee is often made available to any teacher during any preparation phase, from the writing up of the proposal till the execution of the workshop which takes place during the PD.

1.3.4 Follow-up on PDs

By the end of each professional day, a world café is held in the school. Within the world café, teachers sit around round tables per department and contemplate vis-à-vis the means of utilizing the knowledge and skills acquired during the day. The end product would be setting-up a term plan for the professional activities to be carried out by members of the department. Examples on such activities include: testing teaching strategies in classrooms, trying out new assessment procedures, setting-up a plan for exchanging expertise gained through the day, etc.. The departmental professional term plan, thus prepared, is kept with the subject leader who ensures its fulfillment.

1.3.5 Ushering during PDs

The most interesting element of PDs is the ushering process which is carried out by secondary school students. Approximately 24 students carry out ushering during each PD. Student ushers are chosen on the basis of first-come-first-served basis where by students who first sign up for the event at the office of professional development at school are selected right after the announcement. Once the needed number of students is registered, the professional development officer delivers a workshop for the ushering team highlighting key leadership skills (communication skills- problem solving- decision making) to be exhibited by students during the PD and discussing the role of each student during the day.

2. Method

2.1 Participants

The study uses data derived after three years of conducting PDs. In other words, the study assesses school's experience after the administration of nine PDs. Twenty one teacher trainers who delivered workshops in all the nine workshops constituted the sample of teacher trainers. Besides this, all teaching staff at school who attended all the nine PDs (N=113) constituted the sample of teacher trainees. Finally, all students (N=90) who served as ushers and who were still enrolled in the school, wrote statements describing how they benefitted from PDs.

2.2 Gaining Access

During a professional development event led by the researcher outside school, the school principal presented the PDM endorsed by her institution. The researcher expressed deep interest in the PDM thus overviewed, and at the same time the school principal expressed inquisitiveness to conduct a research study to evaluate school's endeavour. Consequently, the researcher was invited by the school principal to lead this study ensuring adequate facilitation and full access to any kind of data.

Teachers were emailed via school intranet by the assistant principal and were given details about the purpose of the study and how data will be used. It was also noted that participation in the study was optional; however, the school deeply stresses the importance of the cooperation of all teachers within this initiative so as to inform future practice through data-driven decisions. Consequently, all teacher trainers who were invited to take part in the study responded positively. Teacher trainees who attended all the nine PDs (N=123) were then emailed the questionnaire by the assistant principal and were requested to complete the questionnaire and drop it in boxes made available in teachers' lounges. 113 questionnaires were returned after the passage of one week. Finally, ninety students who ushered during PDs (who were actually still enrolled in school) were requested to meet at the school's assembly hall. Students were given a brief overview about the purpose of the study. Then, they were given a blank sheet and were asked to write down one statement describing the most important benefit from ushering during PDs. They were told that if they were not interested in taking part in the study they can drop a blank sheet in the box placed at the exit of the hall for the purpose of collecting students' sheets.

2.3 Data Collection

Data was collected from teacher trainers through four focus group interviews, each being forty-minutes long. In addition, a questionnaire was administered to teacher trainees. Finally, 90 students were asked to write one statement each, describing their major gain from participating in the PDs.

Thus the study uses mixed methods utilizing qualitative interviewing and quantitative surveying. The interview schedule of the focus groups consisted of only one question: what are your gains from participating as a teacher trainer within the PDs? Teacher questionnaire consisted of 20 items. The first ten items of the questionnaire evaluate PDs generically, based on the literature of effective professional development reviewed by Archibald (2001). The second ten items evaluate teacher leadership eminence, based on teacher leadership conceptual framework developed by Harrison and Killion (2004) presented earlier in figure (1).

2.4 Data Analysis

Data derived from focus groups as well as student-written statements was subjected to thematic analysis aided by NVivo 7.0 from QSR International, whereas questionnaire data was processed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 18.0) software.

2.5 Pilot Study

The interview schedule was piloted through a focus group interview with four teachers who played the role of teacher trainers in PDs less than nine times. The questionnaire was tested with five teachers who were not part of the study sample. The pilot study assured to the researcher the applicability of the research tools.

3. Results

3.1 School Gains at the Level of Teacher Trainers

Data derived from focus group interviews portrayed teachers' gains as a result of serving as teacher trainers during professional days. Thematic analysis using Nvivo 7.0 helped conceptualize data as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2 includes all the themes that redundantly surfaced focus group interviews. It may be categorized into two segments. Segment (A) exposes 'professional learning skills' developed by teacher trainers as a consequence of participating in PDs. These include: research and ICT skills, content and pedagogical skills, and reflective practice. Segment (B) displays 'assertiveness skills' enhanced by teachers as a corollary of training colleagues during PDs. These include: acquisition of senior leadership trust, collegiality and leadership. Sub-themes included within this category included: self-efficacy, and motivation.

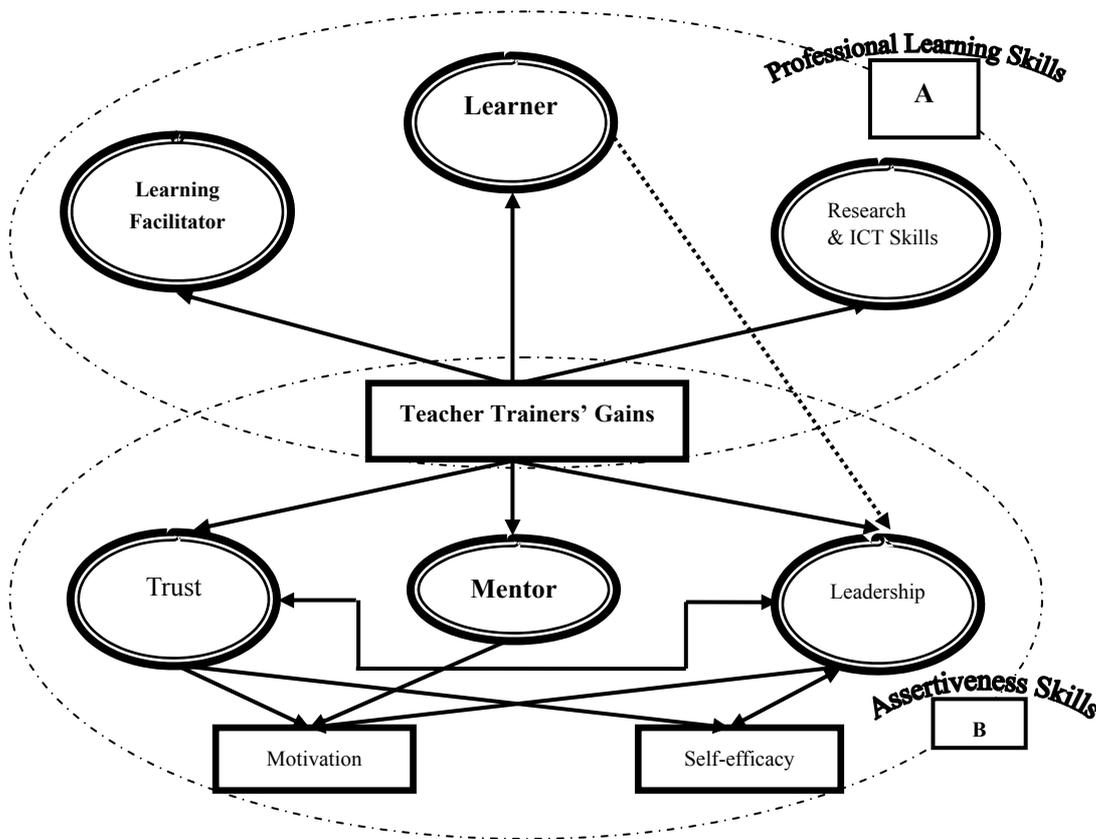


Figure 2. Conceptual framework of teacher trainers' gains from PDs

3.1.1 Professional Learning Skills

All teacher trainers considered PDs to constitute learning opportunities for themselves; engaging them in new erudition and exposing them to novel horizons. When affianced to deliver a workshop during a PD, teacher trainers find themselves bound to inquiry about the topics they would be addressing within their workshops. By this they nurture and expand their content knowledge of the subjects they taught, update their pedagogical knowledge pertaining to classroom instructional strategies, develop their computer skills and consequently boost their inquiry and research skills.

“...normally you wouldn't get committed to studying a book in chemistry or physics unless you are registered in a course where you sit for exams...it's the commitment to this course which makes you study....similarly, when I sign up to deliver a workshop during PDs, I start reading books, articles, surf the net...believe me I mastered using many software only because of PDs...[] and the very rewarding thing is that due to all of that reading, I feel I'm changing a lot in my classroom with my students...I started using computer software with my students, I started using new approach to assess their learning...I tried

differentiating instruction for the first time in my life...I really have never learned from any workshop I attended outside school what I'm learning by virtue of PDs." (Teacher Leader 17)

"I participate in PDs only for one reason; for my own sake and not for any other reason. You know, when you teach something you master it; so what I do is that when I hear about something new, I search for it and read about ; but the best way to really learn it is to teach it to others, so the PDs act as a perfect place for me to do that . This is the real growth that experienced teachers need" (Teacher Trainer 5)

Teacher trainers explained how their professional knowledge is further refined when they use the newly acquired knowledge and skills in their classrooms. They illustrate that they develop greater awareness of how they deploy their knowledge in practical situations, thus increase their learning and innovative capacities.

"It is new learning to us before it is new learning to those whom we deliver workshops. The maximum learning happens later on when we go into classes and start thinking back about what we taught, how we taught it and how we could do it better next time" (Teacher Trainer 7)

By this, teachers would be illustrating the reflective practitioner role they play in their classes, without naming it explicitly. Through reflective practice, teachers develop a deeper understanding of their teaching, cultivate informed decision-making skills, and become proactive and confident in their teaching. Thus, as Farrell (2007) asserts, teacher growth happens at a fast rate when they are given the chance to act as reflective practitioners.

In other words, PDs seem to be providing teacher trainers with the opportunity to explore the most recent and up-to-date theoretical and practical issues regarding the teaching/learning process and setting induction for reflective practice; thus enhancing their professional learning skills.

3.1.2 Assertiveness Skills

Almost all trainees considered PDs to be of great value in terms of fortifying many of their inter and intra-relationships. Inter-relationships consolidated through PDs include collegiality and cooperation among all staff. The structure and organization of PDs seem to foster cross connections between various departments countenancing them to work and learn from each other.

"I never thought before [the PDs] that teachers at the elementary school were doing all of that...now I have a totally different outlook towards what I should be doing with my students in my class" (Teacher Trainer 20)

" PDs have helped the school to open up departments and break barriers between various levels...I never thought I would have a friend from preschool and I am aiding her now with ideas on how to teach her space theme better" (Teacher Trainer 1).

Intra-relationships that teacher trainers considered to be augmented by virtue of the PDs are topped by trust. All teacher trainers considered trust to be one of the most important gains from PDs.

" When they [senior leadership] allow you to come and show your expertise to others ; when they ask you to help other teachers; this means that they value what you know and that they respect you and most importantly they trust you; this makes me love myself more and makes me love my school more and makes me very willing to bring new ideas to my workplace. This makes me feel I'm a co-leader in this school and that I am a very valuable school member" (Teacher Trainer 6)

"If the only thing I gain from PDs is trust of senior leadership that I'm good, trust of my departmental colleagues that I'm creative, trust of colleagues from other departments that I am knowledgeable, then I would be moving away from the tight shell that limit teachers in schools; you know why because I would be respecting myself above all...If that trust is the only gain, then PDs should be a model that need to be used with all teachers in all schools to help them survive through the career" (Teacher Trainer 10)

Trust has been highly valued by all trainees and considered it as a major gain from PDs (1) motivating them to work and try out new ideas and issues in their classes; (2) recuperating their self-efficacy; and (3) polishing their self-images as leaders. Yet leadership which has been considered as a bi-product of gaining trust, has also been considered as an immediate and superb outcome of PDs that itself yields trust. In fact, teacher trainers spoke of the chance offered to them to practice, develop and nourish their leadership skills when they act out as trainers during PDs. This group of interviewee viewed trust as a consequence of the leadership margin made available to them.

" when you act out as a trainer you are also acting out as a leader, because you are leading your colleagues and impacting their learning and their teaching methods...when you are a leader, then you are a trusted person in your school" (Teacher Trainer 13)

The same way leadership and trust have been reciprocated; leadership has also been interchanged with self-efficacy, as some teacher trainers considered self-efficacy gained through trust a means to coin the leadership image inside one's self.

“ I think that when I feel I'm a trusted person in school I tend to respect myself and believe more in myself and this makes me consider myself as a leader who can bring change to his/her surrounding” (Teacher Trainer 4)

Thus, assertiveness skills gained from teacher trainers' participation in PDs include trust, collegiality, leadership, self-efficacy and motivation with many fashions to illustrate which leads to which.

3.1.3 Crossing Over

An interesting finding from this study has to do with the crossing over between professional learning skills and assertiveness skills gained from the participation of teachers as trainers during PDs. In fact, a key emergent theme is the tight relationship existing between teachers as reflective practitioners and teachers as leaders.

“When you acquire this habit [of thinking about what we taught, how we taught it and how we could do it better next time] you start utilizing this habit with other instances, for example, personally, I have started doing the same in issues and problems confronting me with colleagues and with my subject leader...I feel that this is making me a better problem-solver, a better communicator, a better leader, and above all do predictions very efficiently ” (Teacher Trainer 7)

“The ability to review or self-evaluate your activities so that you could plan better for the next time reflects also on your own personality...you start using this in dealing with colleagues and with senior leadership...so you become a better leader more able to influence others” (Teacher Trainer 19)

In other words, teacher trainers considered reflective practice as a powerful tool that imparts to teachers how to become self-responsive. With self-responsiveness, teachers come to recognize more the consequences of their reactions. As explained earlier, reflective practice enhances teachers' abilities at cultivating informed decision-making. This element over time, transfers to teachers' character, making them more susceptible to deciphering the connotations of what is behind what they see, understanding things they normally do not and hence impacting others accordingly. When this is the case, teachers tend to consider themselves as leaders.

3.2 School Gains at the Level of Teacher Trainees

Data derived from questionnaires were used to analyze teachers' gains as a result of attending PDs as teacher trainees. Questionnaires consisted of 20 items with a four Likert rating scale, Strongly disagree(SD) Disagree (D) Agree(A) Strongly agree (SA).Statistical Package Software for Social Sciences (SPSS 18.0) was employed to compute frequencies, percentages, mean scores and standard deviations of teachers' responses.

Table 1 shows the mean score values ranged between 1.65 and 3.83 with 6 items bearing perception levels falling into [90-100%]; 6 items also bearing perception levels falling into [80-90%]; 7 items bearing perception levels falling into [70-80%]; and 1 item bearing perception level falling into [40-50%]. The results, thus, show that the majority of the mean scores (12 items) fall at the high perception levels (more than 80%), indicating that generally speaking the PDM employed at the study school receives appreciation on behalf of teachers.

Thus the school community value PDs and consider them as: (1) opportunities to grow professionally collaboratively, respecting active adult learning theories; (2) chances to expand content and pedagogical knowledge and related skills in line with school standards strengthened by systematic follow-ups; and (3) means for impacting student achievement positively. These findings seem to fit impeccably with the literature of effective professional development of teachers (Archibeld, 2001).

However, a more focused examination of the results indicates that highest percentages were recorded for Set I items which address PDs globally and generically (success of PDs as professional development venues). This is opposed to Set II items which address personal and particular gains of teachers from PDs (success of PDs as means for fostering teacher leadership). This is illustrated in Table 2.

It maybe then argued that though the school community cherishes PDs generically, they do have some reservations as to the degree those PDs fulfilled their personal and specific needs as teacher leaders. In fact, when it comes to the practical application of what might have been learned through PDs, teachers seem to be less confident, dropping the level of responses into the [60-70] interval. Yet, two matters of facts among those findings receive radical scores by teachers. First, PDs do not seems to procure a big margin for coaching teachers on using student data to improve instruction (41.2%). Second, PDs are authentic venues for (1) acquiring the skills needed to become life-long learners (91.2%); and (2) promoting teacher leadership in school (90%). So,

though Set II items reveal a relatively moderate capacity of PDs to promote teacher leadership (60-70%), the majority of teachers viewed themselves to be growing as leaders by virtue of those PDs.

In conclusion, PDs act out as an effective professional development venue for teacher trainees ensuring collaborative professional growth of teachers, yet, promoting leadership skills judiciously.

Table 1. Frequencies, Percentages, Mean Scores and Standard Deviations of Teachers' Responses

	<i>Items</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std Dev.</i>
<i>Set I: Global Items (Items 1-10)</i>	1. PDs contribute to professional growth of teachers at school	96 85.0%	6 5.3%	5 4.4%	6 5.3%	3.70 92.5%	.789
	2. PDs deepen and broaden knowledge of content for all teachers.	92 81.4%	4 3.5%	11 9.7%	6 5.3%	3.61 92.0%	.870
	3. PDs provide a strong foundation in the pedagogy of particular disciplines.	90 79.6%	12 10.6%	5 4.4%	6 5.3%	3.65 91.2%	.801
	4. PDs provide knowledge about the teaching and learning processes at school.	90 79.6	0 0%	17 15.0%	6 5.3%	3.54 88.5%	.936
	5. PDs are aligned with the standards and curricula teachers use.	78 69.0%	9 8.0%	10 8.8%	16 14.2%	3.32 83.0%	.120
	6. PDs contribute to measurable improvement in student achievement.	53 46.9%	45 39.8%	4 3.5%	11 9.7%	3.24 81.0%	.057
	7. PDs intellectually engaging and address the complexity of teaching.	48 42.5%	50 44.2%	9 8.0%	6 5.3%	3.24 81.0%	.011
	8. PDs provide ensure collaboration between teachers.	102 90.3%	6 5.3%	2 1.8%	3 2.7%	3.83 95.7%	.581
	9. PDs are reinforced by a robust follow-up system.	76 67.3%	26 23.0%	5 4.4%	6 5.3%	3.52 88.0%	.814
	10. PDs secure active adult learning opportunities.	76 67.3%	26 23.0%	5 4.4%	6 5.3%	3.52 88.0%	.814
<i>Set II: Particular Items (Items 11-20)</i>	11. PDs motivate me to share resources with other teachers.	21 18.6%	11 9.7%	75 66.4%	6 5.3%	2.42 60.5%	.939
	12. PDs constitute a venue for me to support other teachers whilst implementing new teaching strategies.	17 15.0%	17 15.0%	73 64.6%	6 5.3%	2.40 60.0%	.919
	13. PDs supported me understanding the curriculum and how to use it with colleagues during planning and assessment.	22 19.5%	36 31.9%	31 27.4%	24 21.2%	2.50 62.5%	.847
	14. Through PDs follow-up I often enter other teachers' classrooms to provide support.	16 14.2%	45 39.8%	28 24.8%	24 21.2%	2.47 61.7%	.847
	15. PDs boost me to play a leading role in facilitating professional learning activities among my colleagues.	22 19.5%	30 26.5%	37 32.7%	24 21.2%	2.44 61.0%	.847
	16. I often mentor some colleagues as part of PDs follow-up activities.	26 23.0%	32 28.3%	31 27.4%	24 21.2%	2.53 63.2%	.574
	17. PDs push me to utilize student data to improve instruction.	7 6.2%	11 9.7%	30 26.5%	65 57.5%	1.65 41.2%	.763
	18. Through PDs I became a sponsor of change among colleagues by bringing new ideas to discussion table.	19 16.8%	58 51.3%	22 19.5%	14 12.4%	2.73 68.2%	.889
	19. PDs enhance my 'learning to learn' abilities.	88 77.9%	16 14.2%	3 2.7%	6 5.3%	3.64 91.2%	.780
	20. PDs enhance my role as a leader at school.	88 77.9%	11 9.7%	8 7.1%	6 5.3%	3.60 90.0%	.840

3.3 School Gains at the Level of Ushers

Students who served as ushers were requested to describe their gains from participating as ushers during PDs. The themes that surfaced amongst students' answers were classified and are presented in Table 3.

Student ushers reported that their gains from PDs varied from strengthening or building relationships within the school (16%); to strengthening their sense of belonging to school (22%); and developing their leadership skills

(55%). This is besides some unclassified responses pertaining to teaching career, fun and imagining what teachers do after school in classrooms (7%).

An interesting finding is the fact that PDs contribute to the development and nourishment of student leadership. In fact, more than 50% of student sample expressed that PDs boosted their leadership skills without giving it a label. They made statements revolving around responsibility, delegation of responsibility, management skills, problem-solving skills, communication skills, team work, and self-confidence. Such features appear in the works of Komives et al. (2006), Dugan (2006) and Lucas (2007) in which they address student leadership development in colleges. Such studies assert the importance of training college students so that they acquire such features before leaving their schools.

Table 2. Distribution of mean scores of set I and set II items over intervals of width 10%

Range	<i>Set I</i>	<i>Set II</i>
[40-50[%	X	-
[50-60[%	-	-
[60-70[%	X X X X X X X	-
[70-80[%	-	-
[80-90[%	-	X X X X X X
[90-100] %	X X	X X X X

Table 3. Students' gains from ushering during PDs

	Theme	Response Rate	%	
1	Relationships	My relationship with teachers is strengthened	7	
		My relationship with students from other levels is improved	3	16%
		My relationship with colleagues from my class is improved	4	
2	Sense of Belonging	I feel more proud to be enrolled in this school	5	
		I respect what the school is doing to improve learning	4	
		My sense of belongingness to school is enhanced	6	22%
		PDs has taught me to love school more	5	
3	Leadership Development	PDs has taught me responsibility/delegating responsibility	12	
		I have learned through PDs how to communicate effectively	6	
		PDs participation taught me that however I get old, I have to keep on learning and learning	8	
		I became more self-confident through PDs	4	
		PDs has taught me how deal with problems	7	55 %
		PDs has taught me a lot about team work	6	
4	Unclassified	PDs taught me important management skills	6	
		PDs have made me make up my mind about my future career and hence I chose to become a teacher.	1	
		PDs are real fun	1	
		PDs taught me what happens in our classrooms after school	1	7%
		PDs made me know how hard out teachers work	3	

3.4 Potential of the PDM at Developing Teacher Leadership

Findings of the study demonstrate that high-quality; teacher-led professional development has the potential of fueling up the process of developing leaders at school. Teachers whether trainers or trainees are primary beneficiaries from such a model, though with varying degrees of profit.

In fact, the chief legatees are teacher trainers who seem to fulfill a big deal of the roles attributed to teacher leaders according to the literature (Harrison and Killion, 2007). They make strong connotations between their roles as leaders and the tasks they carry outside their classrooms, particularly with their peers by virtue of the PDM.

"I think professional days have brought out of me the leader who has long been waiting to be released, because through professional days, I now support new teachers in their development and inspire experienced teachers with the new ideas I bring to table" (Teacher Trainer 18)

"I think professional days have really strengthened my confidence in myself that I am a leader among my colleagues who can help them change and even take actions in their classrooms they would never take without my encouragement, shadowing or support" (Teacher Trainer 11)

None of the teacher trainers attributed teacher leadership to formal leadership positions. Contrary to this, the focus was always on encouraging, inspiring and motivating other teachers to change, take risks and develop. This is a finding quite similar to the rich literature on teacher leadership (Harris, 2004; Spillane 2006; Harris and Townsend 2007; OECD 2009; Ghamrawi, 2010). In fact, teacher trainers considered their acquisition of new skills is itself an added value to their roles as leaders. That's why they talked with pride about their acquisition of content and pedagogical skills; research and IT skills and reflective practitioners' skill. They also expressed smugness because PDs helped them polish their self-image as leaders, strengthen collegiality with peers and build trusting relationships with the wider school community. Thus, they felt highly motivated themselves and their self-efficacy elevated.

The leadership development of teacher trainees does not seem to be as intense or bold as that of teacher trainers. They do portrait themselves as leaders and enchanted learners, yet they do not seem to be practically fully involved in tasks that are attributed to teacher leaders according to the literature. For example, compared to teacher trainers, their roles as resource providers, mentors and coaches, curriculum developers, classroom supporters to other teachers, leaders of professional learning activities and acting as sponsors of change are weak. One possible justification can be made in relation to Ghamrawi's (2010) study in which she considers 'culture' and 'structure' as two basic premises for teacher leadership development. In fact, teacher trainees seem to be enjoying the collegial culture of mutual learning conducive to teacher leadership advancement, however, the structure within which they would practice leadership seems to be partially painted within the school. For this reason, only around 60% of teacher trainers found for themselves spaces to practice leadership. Yet the fact that PDs motivated teacher trainees to develop self-images as leaders is in itself rewarding as the literature indicates that teachers even when they practice leadership they hesitate to view themselves as leaders (Muijs & Harris, 2003; Lieberman et al., 2000).

Thus the PDM under investigation can be made to payoff more in terms of teacher leadership enhancement with greater attention to the follow-up activities to each particular professional day. Senior leadership at school should make sure that there are ample opportunities for all teachers to impact other teachers through carefully designed structures. One possibility has to do with the term planners that subject leaders often prepare after each particular professional day. As mentioned earlier, such planners are kept with subject leaders who take the role of fulfilling it. In fact, it could be useful to submit those reports to the school principal and the professional development officer who can help ensure that the appropriate structures for teachers' practice are made available. In addition, it would be useful to receive reports from subject leaders by the end of the term including reflections about barriers, pitfalls and successes as well as lessons learnt by the whole department members. Individual teacher reflection papers can be very helpful as well. With this in place, PDs can be strongly enhanced and rendered strong venues for developing and safeguarding teacher leaders.

3.5 An Unanticipated Finding

An unanticipated finding pertains to the potential of the PDM in terms of inaugurating student leadership when they get involved in such events. The study has shown that students who get involved in PDs tend to acquire many of the skills that characterize student leaders according to the literature (Komives et al., 2006; Dugan, 2006; Lucas, 2007). Their involvement in PDs puts them held for several responsibilities which seem to impart in them leadership principles. Their participation as volunteers during those days is one form of apprenticeship whereby

beside the tasks and responsibilities attributed to them, students observe and apply the thinking processes used by practitioners. When they observe leadership in action, they probably tend to acquire related skills. Notably, the removal of structural barriers between different groups within the school (students and staff), and the dismantling of separate programmes, services and specialisms has played some role in this unanticipated finding: contribution to the development of student leadership.

4. Conclusion

The study shows that the programmatic use of processes promoting focused dialogue around communal problem-solving, shared visioning, collegial alliance, collaborative learning, and shared work seems to play a role in rendering the school community into one that celebrates and appreciates new learning. Teachers, who are at the heart of the educational process, enjoy the know-how and proficiency to lead their own professional growth.

However, tapping into that expertise, entails the recognition, development and nourishment of teacher leaders. Vice versa, it seems prudent to embolden and nurture teacher leadership by providing the resources, culture, and structures it needs to thrive. Leading professional development events by teachers is one possible structure for nurturing teacher leadership. In fact, drawing on the ingenuity of veteran teachers and permitting them to expedite school improvement is one way to ensure the sustainability of school reform efforts.

In the language of Physics, a lot of energy is produced when protons and neutrons combine to form a nucleus. This energy, called binding energy, gives a lot of stability to the atom. Similarly, when teachers bond together, great binding happens within the school community. The energy thus released, fuels the process of building leaders and ensuring a culture conducive to learning. When this is the case professional development becomes an integral and intrinsic element for rendering teachers more adept and productive.

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