

Teacher Candidates' Perceptions of Principal and Teacher Leadership: A Functional Disconnect

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Abstract

In Ontario, Canada, and in many teacher-education programs throughout North America, preservice teacher education students complete a substantial proportion of time practice teaching in schools. Although there is extensive research about the experiences of new teachers, there is far less attention on preservice teachers' perceptions and observations of school and teacher leadership. The aim of this mixed methods research was to determine the effect of the teaching practicum on prospective teachers' beliefs about principal and teacher leadership in schools. The three main findings include: i) the practicum had a unanimously negative effect upon participants' beliefs of school principals as supporting and engaging teachers in leadership capacities, ii) participants' perceptions of leaders remained embedded in formal roles of additional responsibility, and iii) participants' perceptions of leadership characteristics strongly resembled the self-reported characteristics they expected to enact as beginning teachers. The study also discusses the implications for elementary and secondary school principals of the fundamental disconnect between prospective teachers' perceptions and observed realities of school and teacher leadership.

Introduction

The school principal, as the formally recognized leader in kindergarten to grade 12 schools across North America, has a profound bearing on creating effective schools (Reeves & Reitzug, 1992; Sergiovanni, 2001). Principals are the instructional leaders and organizational managers of schools and have a critical influence on teachers' motivation to improve their practice (Goddard et al., 2000; Hoy & Sabo, 1998), on establishing positive professional cultures in schools (Hoy & Miskel, 2005), and on contributing to teachers' heightened collective efficacy (Goddard et al., 2004; Hoy & Miskel, 2001). Hallinger and Heck (1998) suggest that leadership is directly related to one's role within the organization, and that role differentiation between principals and teachers delineates the process by which individuals enact their roles within the school (Aldrich & Ruef, 2006). School principals administer policy, supervise programs of study, coordinate staffing, distribute resources, and operate a safe school environment (Cunningham & Cordeiro, 2006). As school administrators, principals serve not only as conduits to external stakeholders, but are considered curriculum experts and commissioned to improve student learning by empowering organizational members to be a community of learners (Glatthorn, 1994; Goodwin, 2004; Shen & Crawford, 2003; Ubben, Hughes, & Norris, 2001).

Further, and in light of conceptualizations of leadership that transcend formal roles in school hierarchy, the concept of teachers as leaders has assumed a prominent role in the sustainability of post-modern schooling (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006). Schools that best support teachers in exercising their leadership capacities articulate school goals based on collective voices, embody collegial organizational cultures, and practice shared decision-making (Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Leithwood, 1994; Ogawa & Bossert, 1995). The purposes and goals of these schools consist of what the membership understands to be the direction of the organization (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000; 2005; Reynolds et al., 1996; Stringfield & Slavin, 1992). The concepts of principal leadership (understood as formally recognized positions of additional responsibility) and teacher leadership cannot be analyzed apart from the school contexts in which they are found (Duke, 2004). Although the focus of leadership has traditionally been reserved for school principals (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002; Hargreaves, 2005) the interest in concepts related to distributed teacher leadership continues to swell (Crowther et al., 2002; Elmore, 2006; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2002). Both individually and collaboratively educators strive to further improve the conditions of student learning (Fullan, 2003; Hargreaves & Fink, 2006; Hord, 1997; Mitchell & Sackney, 2000). Leadership, in this view, is not necessarily the exclusive property of school principals (Foster & Hilaire, 2003; Smylie et al., 2002). The literature attests to the fact that teacher leadership consists of professional and active engagement to improve teaching and learning within the school organization (Lambert, 2002). In this context, teachers are critical and reflective practitioners who envision their contributions in light of a collaborative school organizational culture (Little, 1993). An increased emphasis in teacher leadership capacity has contributed to

varying interrelated conceptual notions of diverse, cultural, and transformational leadership (Bolman & Deal, 2003; Fletcher & Kaufer, 2003; Leithwood et al., 2004).

Purpose of the Study

As a significant component of teacher education programs in Ontario, Canada, and in various other faculties of Education across the continent, preservice teachers complete between 10 and 12 weeks practice teaching in schools. They are, in the process, exposed to a variety of principal leadership styles within school organizations that influence the actions of reference constituents since the work of educators transcends classroom practices (Williams, 2005; Young, 2000). During their practicum assignments in schools, preservice teacher-candidates are exposed to concepts of leadership as they manifest themselves in the field. Although there is a wealth of research as it pertains to new teachers' experiences in their schools (Cherubini, *in press*; Kardos et al., 2001; Olebe, 2005), a significant gap in the scholarship exists in terms of preservice teachers' expectations, experiences, and perceptions of school and teacher leadership (Menon & Christou, 2002).

Utilizing a mixed methods research design, the research examined teacher candidates' expectations of school and teacher leadership before their practicum and compared these with their eventual observations at the conclusion of their preservice training. The study attempted to determine the effect of the student-teacher practicum experience on prospective teachers' impressions of formal and informal leadership in schools.

Methods

The study employed a mixed methods research design and therefore used quantitative and qualitative means to add significantly to the current understanding of the field of inquiry (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007; Elliot, 2005; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). The theoretical context and systemic data analysis processes replicated those used in a larger-scale research project (Cherubini, 2007).

Participants

Preservice teacher candidates enrolled in a consecutive one-year post-graduate bachelor of education teacher-preparation program from a mid-sized Canadian university in southwestern Ontario were invited to participate in this study. In Canada, education is a provincial mandate and, aside from First Nations Education, does not fall under the auspices of the Federal government. To be eligible for admission to the bachelor of education program (one year of full-time study) students must have an undergraduate bachelors degree as a minimum qualification. As part of the application procedure prospective teacher education students choose either the primary / junior (p/j) or intermediate / senior (i/s) teaching divisions. The p/j program leads to certification to teach grades 1 to 6; the i/s program leads to certification to teach grades 7 to 12. Seventy-five students participated in the study (from the 145 originally enlisted) representing a 52% response rate. One percent of the responses were rejected during the initial vetting

as a result of response prevarication. In self-reported measurement indicators, 63% of participants were female and 17% male; 51% were enrolled in the intermediate/senior qualification program and 41% in the primary/junior divisional qualifications; 65% belonged to the 20 to 29 year old age bracket, 11% to the 30 to 39 year old age category, and 13% of those who responded indicated that they were 40 years of age or older.

Procedure

The triangulation design of this mixed methods research allowed for the comparison of participant responses from the quantitative items with the qualitative written reflections. It involved the concurrent collection of quantitative and qualitative data (of equal weighting) and the amalgamation of these two data sets when the body of evidence was interpreted (Creswell, Plano Clark, et al., 2003; Hanson et al., 2005). Using a Likert-type scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree, participants recorded their expectations of school contexts as supporting teachers in leadership capacities as well as about principal leadership roles as observed in the schools before their initial practicum experience at the commencement of the school year, and then ranked the identical quantitative items after their final teaching practicum during the last month of their teacher education program. Each of the five statements began with, *During my interning and practice-teaching in schools, I expect that....* The statements were scripted as follows:

- *Experienced teachers will have opportunities to take initiative and lead where appropriate.*
- *Beginning teachers will have opportunities to take initiative and lead where appropriate.*
- *The school administration will expect experienced teachers to significantly contribute towards improving student learning.*
- *The school administration will nurture beginning teachers' capacities to significantly contribute towards improving student learning.*
- *All teachers, regardless of their years of experience, will believe that they have choices in school-related initiatives.*

In the qualitative section of the pre-survey, participants commented upon their expectation of who would be the most influential leaders in schools, the characteristics that would distinguish them, and the attitudes and skills that they themselves expected would define their practice as teachers. Specifically, the three questions were stated as follows:

- (i.) *Who do you expect will be the leaders on the school staff?*
- (ii.) *Identify the attitudes / skills that will distinguish these individuals as leaders.*
- (iii.) *List and explain the attitudes / skills that will distinguish you most as a teacher in your school community.*

Conversely, the post-survey invited their qualitative and descriptive explanations to the following questions:

- (iv.) *Who were the leaders on the school staff?*
- (v.) *Identify the attitudes / skills that distinguished these individuals as leaders.*
- (vi.) *List and explain the attitudes / skills that will distinguish you most as a teacher in your school community.*

Both the pre- and post-surveys were administered at the conclusion of scheduled class time with minimal disruption to coursework. Course instructors were provided with a description of the study and the relevant instructions in advance of the survey distribution. The quantitative and qualitative sections of the survey were field tested in a relatively similar environment with different samples of preservice student cohorts to address instrument fidelity (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2007). Peer debriefing sessions after each field test were implemented for external evaluation (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Maxwell, 2005; Merriam, 1998; Newman & Benz, 1998). An experienced colleague with vast experience in mixed methods designs constructively criticized the interpretations as they became apparent (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Sample integration legitimation made the merger of inferences that emanated from this dual research approach into meta-inferences acceptable (Onwuegbuzie & Johnson, 2006; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2006).

Data Analysis

The five statement responses were analyzed by means and frequencies and subjected to t-tests to factor significant differences. The findings of the quantitative analyses are reported in a table in the Results section. The quantitative responses were also analyzed on multiple comparisons based on participants' self-reported age, gender, and divisional qualifications.

The qualitative responses were entered into Ethnograph software to identify patterns. Grounded theory (Cherubini, 2007; Glaser & Strauss, 1967), as an analytical mode of analysis, coded the patterns into themes as they were grounded in the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The process of constant comparison saturated the conceptual relationships into the categories (Glaser, 1978; 1992). The qualitative data was inductively analyzed using a cross-section of variables including participants' age and divisional qualifications.

Results

The results for each of the variables from both the quantitative and qualitative analyses are described respectively (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). The three main findings of the study include: i) student teachers' experiences during their teaching-practicum assignments had a unanimously negative effect upon their beliefs of school principals as supporting and engaging teachers in leadership capacities, ii) participants' perceptions of leaders remained embedded in formal roles of additional responsibility, and iii) participants' perceptions of leadership characteristics strongly resembled the self-reported skills and attitudes they expected to exert as beginning teachers.

Quantitative data: A ranking of descriptive means

The descriptive means for all five statements were lower in the post-survey than they were in the first administration of the survey. Preservice candidates had higher expectations of school principals as supporting and engaging teachers in leadership capacities prior to their practicum assignments in the field (see Table 1).

The most significant difference between mean scores was in relation to the perception of school principals as expecting experienced teachers to significantly contribute towards improving student learning, while teachers as having choice in school-related initiatives also resulted in a key difference between teacher candidates' expectations and perceptions while in schools. The other three differences also reflected the prevalent trend of preservice candidates' expectations of leadership in the field as being meaningfully different than the perceptions they garnered during their practice-teaching placements.

Table 1

Descriptive Means for School Leadership Influence

Responses	N	Pre-mean	SD	N	Post-mean	SD
Experienced teachers to take initiative and lead	75	4.19	.711	75	4.06	.776
New teachers to take initiative and lead	75	3.99	.726	75	3.85	.89
Administrators to nurture new teachers' capacities	75	4.15	.833	75	3.90	.988
Administrators will expect experienced teachers to contribute	75	4.25	.824	75	3.90	.988
All teachers regardless of years experience will have choices in school-related matters	75	3.83	.935	75	3.57	1.01

Significant Differences: 2-Tailed t-Tests

The data was subjected to 2-tailed t-tests at an alpha of .05. A statistically significant difference was found in one response (see Table 2). Consistent with the paired sample statistics, the belief and subsequent perception of school principals expecting experienced teachers to significantly contribute towards improving student learning represented the most statistically significant difference.

Table 2

Paired Samples Test

Items	Mean	Standard Deviation	Std. Error Mean	T	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pair 1 experienced teachers leading	.12000	.91474	.10563	1.136	.260
Pair 2 new teachers initiative to lead	.13333	1.01786	.11753	1.134	.260
Pair 3 school admin. to nurture new teacher capacities	.24000	1.18367	.13668	1.756	.083
Pair 4 school admin. expectation of experienced teachers to contribute	.34667	1.23566	.14268	2.430	.018
Pair 5 all teachers having choice	.25333	1.35660	.15665	1.617	.110

Qualitative data: A grounded theory analysis

The written entries for both the pre- and post-surveys were independently coded according to participants' ages and divisional qualifications. Categories were identified for each question in the pre- and post-surveys. A core category for each question

saturated the pre- and post-survey responses. The respective core categories are appended (see Appendix A).

Question 1. The results across both the age and divisional qualification variables were overwhelmingly consistent. Participants expected and then perceived school leaders to be those in formal positions of additional responsibility, namely, principals and vice-principals. Typical of the responses were these: “the principal and the vice-principal have the most say in the school,” “the school administrators were the leaders by far,” and “for the most part the principals of the schools led the way.” The 22-29 year old and p/j cohorts did, however, note that experienced teachers exercised some leadership influence in their schools. Some participants observed that “experienced teachers with the strong voices were leaders too,” as were “department heads who shared resources were leaders” and “teachers who had taught for over 15 years and knew the ropes” were also perceived to be influential as leaders.

Question 2. Participants’ responses regarding the attitudes and skills that distinguish educators as leaders were consistent across the age variable, but were significantly different across divisional qualifications. Apart from the i/s cohort, leaders were described by different participants in pre-survey responses as “having a positive attitude,” “being compassionate towards others,” “patient in working with kids and staff,” and “approachable if you need them in a crunch.” The responses to the post-survey were also consistent and represented a notable shift from expectations of leaders’ attitudes and skills described as abstract concepts to more observable behaviors that had a direct impact on the daily functions of teachers. Participants identified those leaders “who were directly involved in the school at all levels,” leaders that “were so organized,” who “communicated their expectations clearly,” and who “seemed to be always fair but firm with students and their parents.” Interestingly, the i/s cohort responses represented an opposing pattern. They marked their pre-survey expectations of leaders’ attitudes and skills by their “knowledge of policy and curriculum,” “how they organize the flow of resources between departments,” and by “their management of student expectations with the parents.” Post-survey comments were more representative of less tangible attitudes and skills and more reflective of key interpersonal skills. Similar to other responses from this same cohort were these: “school administrators can’t get lost in paperwork and have to be a visible presence in the hallways,” leaders “need to show their flexibility and roll with the punches,” and last, “the good principals were those who had a passion for learning and it showed.”

Question 3. The responses to question three, where participants self-described the attitudes and skills that would distinguish them as teachers, reflected a similar shift that emerged in the majority of question two responses. Namely, the nature of the characteristics participants identified in the pre-survey shifted away from interpersonal skills to distinctions of professional behavior and student-centered approaches to teaching. Where in the pre-survey typical responses included, “students will know that I am committed and enthusiastic about teaching,” “I’ll be careful to not get down on them,” and “they will know me for my empathy and care,” the post-survey reflections included, “kids have to know that I’m about learning,” “organization seems critical to

being a good teacher and I know it is one of my strengths,” and “I can manage a class based on respect so that students can learn.”

Also of note, participants’ frames of reference to describe their anticipated unique contributions to a school mirrored the characteristics they attributed to the formal leaders in their respective school communities. Consistent throughout post-survey responses to questions two and three were references to “being driven to improve as professionals,” “tending to the learning needs of all students,” “understanding teaching to better learning,” and “making a contribution to a department and school that has positive impacts.”

Discussion

The statistical analyses that revealed significant differences between participants’ expectations and subsequent perceptions were augmented through the qualitative responses to reveal blatant inconsistencies. The key results of the study are threefold: i) preservice teacher experiences during their practicum assignments had a negative effect upon their beliefs in school principals as supporting and engaging teachers in leadership capacities, ii) their perceptions of school leaders after their practicum remained embedded in formal roles of additional responsibility, and iii) participants’ perceptions of leadership characteristics strongly resembled the self-reported skills and attitudes they expected to enact as new teachers.

To begin, leadership influence, as the literature attests to (Pearce & Conger, 2003; Spillane et al, 2000), was expected to be more distributed between experienced teachers in schools. Participants reported few observable opportunities for experienced teachers to exercise their individual strengths in a network of interdependent behavior (see Cox et al., 2003; Gronn, 2002). Participants, and particularly those in the i/s cohort, observed school administration recreating the traditional structure of power relations in the school. As they reported, teachers catered to furthering the educational value of teaching and learning in the classroom while principals administered over the school organization and exclusively made executive decisions. Participants noted that some experienced teachers had a voice in “bus schedule supervision” and “with planning the graduation formal,” but decisions that had school-wide implications were “handled by those in charge in the main office.” Professional development was most often relegated to the principal or department chairperson very much reflecting the hierarchical structure of schools (Marshall et al., 2004). While “procedures and interactions in the school leader’s decision-making process can favor a select cadre of teachers in the hierarchy” (Johnson, 2005, p. 61), this was not necessarily apparent to preservice teachers in terms of the significant issues related to student learning.

Further, participants (and especially the over 40 year old cohort) were less confident after their teaching practicum that school principals will endorse their unique skills and talents to contribute towards improved student learning and school effectiveness. They expected principals to more readily embrace the contributions of new teachers and recognize the benefits that novices bring to a school community. Participants felt new teachers were

under-recognized despite the fact that some of the qualitative descriptions of formal leaders referenced their sensitivity to new teachers' struggles as novice professionals (as also discussed in Beach & Pearson, 1998; Goldstein & Lake, 2000). Of special note is the statistically significant disconnect between participants' expectations and perceptions of beginning teachers taking the initiative and leading where appropriate. If it is true that leadership "is emerging as a set of functions rather than a formal role" as Lieberman (1992, p. 163) wrote over 15 years ago, the overt manifestations of this theory are not readily apparent to this sample. Neither, for that matter, was leadership that establishes collaborative and trustful relationships among staff and a shared capacity to address school-wide goals clearly evident (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001; Lieberman & Grolnick, 1999). New and experienced teachers were not perceived as exercising their leadership capacities into the school community.

Second, participants' definitions of school leaders remained embedded in formal roles of additional responsibility. These findings tell a cogent story of school leadership as it was perceived by preservice candidates. The manifestation of leadership capacity was selective. Leadership was perceived almost exclusively in light of school administrators. Seldom did participants identify leadership exclusive from school hierarchy and distributed among educators based on competence, experience, and expertise (as discussed in Reynolds et al., 2002). References to leaders engaged in and leading significant initiatives that had school-wide implications were scarce (as in Donaldson, 2001; Fullan, 2002). Instead, participants consistently referred to the school principal as being "the ones who set the school vision and led the rest of the school towards it." Rarely were leadership initiatives differentiated from those who held formal positions of authority in the school. Teachers were perceived as more readily assimilated as subordinates whose leadership influence was presumably reserved strictly for the classroom.

Third, and last, participants' perceptions of leaders' characteristics strongly resembled the self-reported skills and attitudes they expected to exert as new teachers. Principals were perceived as having a positive disposition and being supportive of teachers' needs (see, as well, Clark & Clark, 1996; Marshall et al.; Sergiovanni, 2001). Participants noted in post-survey reflections principals' proficiency in adapting their professional style to what were often unpredictable circumstances, reminiscent of situational leadership theory (Hersey et al., 1996). In fact, the attributes that participants employed to describe the behavior that will distinguish them as novice educators were many of the same characteristics used to capture the behavior and disposition of school principals. For both formal leaders and themselves as prospective new teachers, they identified the importance of strong interpersonal skills, a high degree of professional competence as a practitioner, and a purposeful commitment to the ethical standards of teaching. Yet, only one participant in a single reflection identified new teachers as potential school leaders. Unmistakably participants distinguished themselves by certain dimensions of school and teacher leadership (see Katzenmeyer & Moller) but did not perceive themselves as prospective teacher-leaders. This inconsistency is very much in tune with the literature that recognizes teaching as a profession that does not foster or celebrate leadership within the ranks of teachers since formal school hierarchies, based on 19th century paradigms,

entrench an adversarial relationship between principals as managers and teachers as service providers (Zepeda et al., 2003). The results of this study underscore prospective teachers' awareness that their role as teachers encompasses leadership attributes, though they are reluctant to identify themselves as teacher-leaders.

Implications of the Study

This study calls attention to a significant phenomena; more specifically, that student-teacher practicum assignments sincerely impact upon candidates' perceptions of school and teacher leadership. In both the qualitative and quantitative post-practicum survey results, participants' perceptions were appreciably lower than their expectations prior to the field placements. The sample of this study, the prospective teachers themselves, perceived school leaders through various lenses. Given the broad representation of schools in which the participants taught, the data generated a very deliberate perception of school leadership that is overtly manifest in formal positions of added responsibility. Participants identified quite clearly that the power to exercise meaningful decisions that impact upon student learning is unilateral and they noted teachers' hesitancy and apprehension in engaging towards a bilateral process of leadership with the school administrators. Beyond the various decisions as they relate to the prescribed curriculum, teachers in the respective schools were perceived as being less than secure in their professional roles to express their choices and foster a more dynamic interaction with the recognized school leaders – the principals. Instead, participants perceived that teachers drew upon a very different skill-base that to some extent removed them from more pronounced roles of school leadership. This, in turn, implicated the school culture since it firmly established the existence of a dual status between principals and teachers. Participants perceived, as a result of this implication, a multi-dimensional variable existing within school cultures whereby principals seemed to have territorial rights by virtue of their position over teacher's initiatives to exercise leadership. Principals' strengths and individual characteristics significantly influenced, according to participants, the socio-political culture of the school and the extent to which, if any, teachers were perceived as having the liberty to negotiate their leadership in the school community.

The results of the study pose significant implications on elementary and secondary school principals given the fundamental disconnect between prospective teachers' perceptions and observations of principal and teacher leadership. Principals who fail to entertain the notion of teachers as leaders may be sacrificing the most valuable resources in their schools at the altar of control and formal authority (Tomlinson, 2004; Zepeda et al., 2003). School administrators willing to share leadership with deserving teachers heighten the collective human potential in schools, increase teacher efficacy, and generally lead to school improvement (Merideth, 2000). By refusing to share and distribute leadership, principals curtail their effectiveness as instructional leaders and limit the spirit of collegiality and collaboration amongst their staff. By acknowledging the potential of teachers to serve in meaningful leadership capacities principals can be more effective leaders and, as particularly significant to this research study, be perceived by teachers as visionaries who are committed to the genuine professional development of the staff and their personal and professional growth as individuals and teachers (Murdoch, 2001).

From a pragmatic perspective, principals need to be aware of their influence as formal leaders on the expression of school culture, and re-frame their leadership philosophy to align with those of their teachers. This can be accomplished by legitimizing teacher-leadership potential. It may be especially prudent for principals to ground their leadership in the context of being inter-connected with the leadership influence of their teachers. They could establish social and professional relationships within the school culture that are conducive for teachers to express and renew themselves as leaders. This, however, is potentially a daunting task given that it necessitates a fundamental paradigm shift in the entrenched understandings of traditional school leadership. Principals could begin by giving expression to teacher voices who choose to distinguish themselves in a leadership capacity. By relinquishing some of the control traditionally held by the principal, school administrators can conceptualize leadership in more relational terms by endorsing it as being purposeful and beneficial to the greater school community. For this to occur principals must ensure that meaningful opportunities to exercise leadership exist in schools and are founded upon mutual respect, professional modeling, shared goals, and collaborative networks. In this vein, teachers need to have the freedom and choice to exercise their initiative, and just as significantly, need to be trusted as professionals that their engagement and commitment meaningfully facilitates the actualization of leadership potential.

The novice teacher, given this paradigm of effective school leadership, could rely on administration and teacher colleagues alike to help him or her become a contributing member of an inclusive and progressive school staff (Kardos et al., 2001). In turn, both new and experienced teachers can better identify with an occupational community (see Daley, 2002) that promotes and sustains leadership beyond the school principal, and translates into pedagogical partnerships, stronger teaching practices, and improved student learning (Williams, 2003).

Limitations

Political legitimization was addressed through the mixed method design implemented in this research study and the respective qualitative and quantitative techniques. Nonetheless, replications of this inquiry would strengthen the reliability of its findings. According to Onwuegbuzie and Johnson (2006), other mixed-methods research designs applied to a similar context could acknowledge sequential and conversion legitimization.

As well, the results are not necessarily generalizable beyond the sample from one preservice teacher education program in an Ontario university. The findings of the study would be reinforced if applied using the same research procedure on other teacher education students from faculties of education situated across Canada and the United States of America.

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Appendix A

Core Categories Grounded in the Qualitative Data.

Questions 1 (pre- and post-survey respectively):

Who do you expect will be the leaders on the school staff?

Who were the leaders on the school staff?

(22 to 29 year old cohort): Perception of leaders remained embedded in formal roles of additional responsibility with some attention to voices of experienced teachers.

(30 to 39 year old cohort): Perception of leaders was fixed in formal roles of the school hierarchy with minimal attention to the roles of experienced teachers.

(40 and older cohort): Perceptions of school leaders became further entrenched after the teaching practicum assignments in formal positions of school administration. (p/j):

Perceptions of leaders rooted in formal organizational positions with some attention to voices of experienced teachers.

(i/s): Perceptions of leaders defined by formal organizational roles.

Question 2 (pre- and post-survey respectively):

What attitudes and skills will distinguish these individuals as leaders?

Describe the attitudes and skills that distinguished these individuals as leaders.

(22 to 29): Leaders' attributes defined by direct manifestations of what it means to lead.

(30 to 39): Distinct move in participants' perceptions from abstract attributes to more concrete and observable behaviours that directly impact upon functions of teachers.

(40 +): Shift in perception to a more grounded view of leadership attributes in terms of a leaders' efficacy on student learning and welfare.

(p/j): Conceptual transfer of participants' focus from the affective attributes of leaders to characteristics that lent themselves to having a visible presence in the school.

(i/s): Conceptual change from participants' focus on leadership characteristics positioned in technical and professional competence towards a greater attention to leaders who exercised affective attributes.

Question 3 (pre- and post-survey respectively):

List and explain the attitudes / skills that will distinguish you most as a teacher in your school community.

List and explain the attitudes / skills that you feel will distinguish you most as a teacher in your school community.

(22 to 29): Focus of self-described characteristics altered from the interpersonal to the professional behaviours associated with teaching.

(30 to 39): Greater focus of self-descriptions in the post-survey on their demonstrations of student-centered approaches to teaching.

(40+): Post-practicum self-reported characteristics of distinction were framed in the context of professional duties and responsibilities.

(p/j): Conceptual shift of self-reported attributes from the abstract and subjective to those describing effective pedagogy.

(i/s): A reallocation of focus from the affective to the more technical and professional aspects of teaching.
