# Deepening the Leadership Capacity of Teacher Leaders

**Shawna Myers**
**Reach Institute for School Leadership**

## Abstract

This action research seeks to understand whether an intentional investment in the leadership development of teacher leaders through input, modeling, coaching and consultation in instructional leadership team meetings will result in improved effectiveness of facilitation of professional learning communities (PLCs) by teacher leaders and whether that improved facilitation will in turn result in shared best practices among teacher participants and improved academic outcomes for students. The research was conducted in an Oakland elementary school with six teacher leaders. During the intervention period, teacher leaders participated in nine weeks of professional development in ILT focused specifically on facilitating the professional learning of their teams. Data was collected from research participants via self assessments of leadership competencies, facilitation skills, and overall PLC effectiveness. Additionally, video observations of PLC meetings were conducted to assess teacher leader growth in facilitation of adult learning. Teacher evaluation scores and PLC participant survey data were also analyzed to understand the effectiveness of the research interventions. Results of this action research highlight the nuanced nature of teacher leadership and its impact on professional learning. While teacher leaders reported a decrease in efficacy following the intervention period, they also reported a significant growth in their leadership competencies and in the overall effectiveness of their PLCs. Interestingly, although teacher evaluation scores improved across most teams, PLC participants reported a relatively low impact of PLCs on their instructional practice. As a whole, it appears focused leadership development for teacher leaders yielded positive impacts for the teacher leaders themselves, their teams, and their students, however, further research is needed to determine which professional learning strategies are most beneficial for strengthening teacher leadership and moving a school towards a distributive leadership model.

## Context and Problem of Practice

Success Elementary School (SES) is an elementary school of nearly 700 students in grades Tk-5 located in the Fruitvale area of Oakland. The school was started in 2012 as a part of a family-initiated charter network, which strives to create neighborhood schools that are responsive to and reflective of the communities they serve. Success Elementary School's vision is to support all students in reaching their full potential by developing their critical thinking, agency, community advocacy, and sense of self.

SES' student body is 90% Latino, 4% Asian, 3% African American, and 2% Middle Eastern. Nearly 80% of students are classified as English Learners, with an additional 10% considered redesignated as fluent in English. 10% of English Language Learners are Newcomers, having spent less that one year in the American school system. Only 10% of the student body speaks English as their first language, with the most common home languages for students being Spanish, Mam, and Arabic. 95% of students are considered low-income.

Although Success Elementary School has received accolades in the past for student achievement--it was named a CA Distinguished School in 2014 (based on CST growth,)-- in recent years, it has struggled to demonstrate sustained academic outcomes for students. On the most recent SBAC assessment, only 15% of students met the standard for ELA and 24% for math. Of the 22 students (now in grade 4 and 5) who scored proficient on ELA on the SBAC, all were either redesignated ELLs or English only. Interestingly, student's growth in English Language proficiency, as measured by the CELDT, is not a strong predictor of success for students when faced with the demands of the SBAC. The majority of students classified as early advanced, advanced and

redesignated scored as not meeting the standard. This indicates that even though the school has made strides in reclassifying students, 32% of ELLs reclassify within 5 years, the majority of students are not prepared to meet the language demands of the SBAC.

Success Elementary School teachers frequently voice concern about student outcomes, especially in conversations about students' reading levels, yet they rarely highlight language acquisition as a significant barrier to student success. The majority of teachers express beliefs about the importance of equity in education and having a social justice lens while teaching, few explicitly name ELL education as an equity issue on our campus. When interviewed about the school's stance on ELL education, most teachers are unable to articulate a clear vision for success and often cite a lack of vision, resources and common expectations as contributing factors to the lack of ELL support and growth in classrooms. Teachers also express a sentiment of being frustrated and at a loss for how to best support their ELLs.

Across all grade levels, Success Elementary School classrooms are generally calm, caring and learning-conducive environments. TNTP Core Teaching Evaluation data reveals that teachers score highest in the domains of Culture of Learning (environment is structured, pacing is appropriate and students are on-task) and Essential Content (instructional and tasks are appropriately demanding and aligned to the work of the grade). While SES teachers have demonstrated success in creating caring classroom communities and have recently strengthened their practice by adopting and implementing Common Core-aligned curriculum with fidelity, they continue to struggle with the domains of academic ownership and demonstration of learning, meaning that teachers continue to do much of the cognitive work for students and have not yet developed clear strategies for monitoring and responding to to student learning. This is often characterized by over-scaffolding

grade-level content, asking low-rigor questions and providing few opportunities for students to engage in meaningful academic discourse.

Classroom observations and walkthroughs indicate a lack of integrated ELD supports for ELLs, a reluctance on the part of teachers to allow students to experience productive struggle, and a tendency to forgo opportunities for expanded oral output for the sake of pacing. Teachers consistently build turn and talks into the direct instruction, however students generally engage in these conversations at a surface level--by responding to a prompt with a single sentence frame but without actively listening to, paraphrasing or building on their partner's thinking. Partners rarely speak for longer than a minute each and do not provide feedback to each other. Many teachers listen to these turn and talks, but they appear to be monitoring for compliance rather than pushing students' thinking or offering feedback on their language output. In school-wide scans of student engagement, the most typical type of off-task behavior is passive non-participation, meaning that students appear to be well-behaved but are not actively engaged in the learning. These trends across classrooms have resulted in ELLs having insufficient opportunities develop, practice and refine language to have likely have contributed to the stagnation of language learners' ELA growth at Success Elementary School.

Consideration of professional development and adult learning provide additional context on the patterns seen in classrooms. In conversations regarding past professional development, teachers often express a disappointing experience characterized by an unclear arc in PD themes, an ongoing cycle of "trying new things" for a short period of time then abandoning them when results are lackluster and starting the next new thing, as well as a scarcity of time to come together as grade level teams to plan lessons, analyze student work and adjust instruction. Teachers have indicated

that working in their grade level teams with instructional coaches has been the most beneficial support for their practice, however there are not enough opportunities to do this given the limited resource of coaches' time and the demands of a large staff. Although occasionally coming together to look at summative student data and discuss larger trends with their coach has been helpful, teachers continually advocate for a regular routine to consider the nuances of day-today instruction and decision-making.

Conversations with teachers about grade-level planning time and professional learning communities (terms that are used interchangeably at Success Elementary School ) reveals that while time has been provided for teachers to meet there has been a lack of guidance and expectations on how to use that time most effectively in support of student learning. Teachers report the most common use of the time being for discussing behavior concerns, planning logistics and occasionally delegating instructional planning amongst team members. Teachers also indicate very few opportunities to observe one another, offer feedback or engage in critical conversations to push each other's practice.

When discussing their role and approach to PLCs, teacher leaders have indicated that their primary role in the past was to disseminate school-wide information and support their team in accessing materials and share curriculum or lessons. Teacher Leaders describe their past experience as members of the Instructional Leadership Team as being one characterized by a lack of focus on instruction and instead a concentration on school culture and climate, as well as school logistics. When prompted to consider their role as instructional leaders, they often express a lack of confidence in engaging their teams in instructional work. Survey data of teacher leaders indicates that they have received very few formal leadership development opportunities, including very

little experience engaging in or leading collaborative inquiry and even less feedback on their leadership practice. Teacher leaders have indicated a need for additional development in facilitating meetings with an instructional focus, leading a team in an inquiry cycle, and navigating team dynamics to move members towards deeper (and more honest) analysis of their practice.

Careful consideration of the root causes of student learning at Success Elementary School,indicate that teacher leadership has not been maximized to create powerful professional learning experiences for their grade level teams. Given the size of the school, it is critical that teachers are efficacious in driving improved outcomes for students, for this reason this action research will focus on **the problem of practice is that teacher leaders are not facilitating adult learning that pushes grade level teams to examine student learning and improve their teaching practice.**

# Review of the Literature

## Introduction to the Literature

A review of the literature builds the case for the importance of focusing on teacher leadership as a key lever for school transformation. Distributed Leadership theory posits that sharing decision-making and establishing buy-in with key stakeholders leads to collective responsibility for new initiatives and sustained change (Spillane, 2005.) By leveraging the leadership of teachers, principals can accelerate school-wide initiatives and deepen the impact on student outcomes. However, the literature also indicates that in order to be effective, teacher leaders must demonstrate and develop strong leadership competencies (Derrington and Angelle 2013) and be supported through navigating the many challenges they face in their leadership (Jacobs, Gordon, Solis 2016.) This literature review also argues that one of the venues where teacher leadership may be especially impactful is in Professional Learning Communities. “Through leadership and participation in PLCs, in particular, teacher leaders have the potential to create the contexts and guide the conversations necessary to lead instructional improvement (Fairman & Mackenzie, 2012; Harris & Muijs, 2004; Margolis, 2012 cited in Charner-Laird, Ippolito, & Dobbs 2016.) Finally, this literature review investigates the role of principals and school administrators in providing the professional learning and support needed for TLs to strengthen their leadership competencies and improve the effectiveness of their leadership.

**Teacher Leadership as a Key Lever for Distributed Leadership in Schools**

Perhaps one of the most significant shifts in education in recent history has been a move from hierarchical, or top-down leadership to a model of distributed leadership, or leadership that is shared across numerous stakeholders within a school. In his foundational work on distributed leadership, Spillane describes the shift in leadership from one that emphasizes the narrative of a single heroic leader, usually the principal, to one that considers leadership as a practice that relies on complex interactions between members of a school community. "Leadership practice" posits Spillane, "typically involves multiple leaders, some with and some without formal leadership positions" (Spillane 2005.) "It is essential," argues Spillane, "to move beyond viewing leadership in terms of superhuman actions" because "equating school leadership with an individual leader" creates a false narrative that school principals, can "single-handedly lead a school to greatness'" when, in fact, "leadership involves an array of individuals with various tools and structures" (Spillane 2005.) In the distributed leadership model, leadership is not viewed as the actions of a single leader or even a group of leaders, but rather as the "activities tied to the core work of the organization that are designed by organizational members to influence the motivation, knowledge, affect or practices of other organizational members" (Spillane 2006.) Through consideration of the complex entanglement of formal and informal leadership that informs the culture and core work of schools, "the distributed leadership perspective attempts to acknowledge and incorporate the work of all the individuals who have a hand in leadership practice" (Spillane 2006.)

The shift to a model of distributed leadership involves several key factors, first it acknowledges an"interplay of leadership from the formal leader(s) with others who can provide meaningful knowledge or influence to a particular situation" (Jacobs and Solis 2017.) Second, it requires that

"in a school environment responsibilities, duties and actions [are] shared among school principals and teachers (Sergiovanni, 2005)." It is impossible to discuss a model of distributed leadership in schools without also considering the role of teacher leadership. Although Spillane cautions that "the tendency to compartmentalize school leadership by creating "pigeon holes for principal leadership and teacher leadership" can lead to a "disjointed portrayal of leadership" when they are viewed as the isolated work of individuals, consideration of the larger landscape of school decision-making and reform highlights that "distributed leadership and teacher leadership are inextricably intertwined concepts" (Kurt 2016.) Rather than viewing teacher leadership as a distinct role held by a few individuals, it is important to see it an integral part of the landscape of distributed leadership. "Teacher leadership matters for school success, not just for the teacher who participates in a leadership role. Teacher leadership is a larger organizational construct that extends beyond an individual teacher's roles and responsibilities" (Derrington & Angelle 2013.)

Much of the literature highlights the importance of leveraging teacher leadership to drive school reform and improve outcomes for students (Kurt,T. 2016, Buchanan, J. 2012, Jacob, Gordon, & Solis 2016, Stein, K., Macaluso, M., & Stanulis, R. 2016) Activating the formal and informal leadership of teachers is critical for two key reasons. First, it allows schools to benefit from the "on-the-ground" expertise of teachers, "teachers are better qualified than anyone else to be the driving force behind education change" (Heins 2017) "because they have daily contacts with learners, are in the best position to make critical decisions about curriculum and instruction. Moreover, they are better able to implement changes in a comprehensive and continuous manner" (Boyd-Dimock & McGree, 1995.) And secondly, because including teachers in leadership decisions and reform initiatives increases the likelihood that they will succeed. "Any proposed

regime on the part of management or systems to improve the quality of teaching and learning should involve, in its development, operation and evaluation, a broad, genuine and transparent consultation with staff on their views, suggestions, ideas, hopes, aspirations and fears and on quality teaching and its enhancement" (Buchanan 2012.) The very positionality of teacher leaders, with one foot in the classroom and one outside, allows them to engage their colleagues in shifting practice in ways that are often inaccessible through the formal leadership of the principal, "In [their] unique boundary-crossing position, teacher leaders may have a voice in decision-making and goal-setting, yet can maintain their access and credibility with teachers, all of which may allow them to play an important role in conveying the necessary sense of urgency to initiate and propel change" (Cooper et al 2016.) Distributive leadership, therefore, requires thoughtful incorporation of teachers so that "teacher leadership—as a process of individual and collective influence" becomes "the critical bridge between organizational structure and teacher agency that makes building collective capacity for instructional improvement possible (Szczesiul 2017).

As schools become increasingly complex organizations, striving to educate diverse communities of learners in times of political uncertainty, chronic underfunding and continuous cycles of improvement, it is vital that distributed leadership be employed to bring more stakeholders into driving the work of schools: "Schools across the United States are undergoing educational reform aimed to support an increasingly diverse population of learners. Active involvement from teacher leaders is critical for supporting the deep shifts in teaching and learning advocated by these reforms (Lee Bae, Hayes, O'Conner, Seitz, & Distefano 2016.) Furthermore, in the environment of increased demands on students and teachers brought about by Common Core and high-stakes testing, initiatives pushed forward without teacher input and leadership are unlikely to succeed,

both because of resistance: "'reform' initiatives, in and of themselves are pre-programmed to fail because they seek to 'impose' change on educators and school stakeholders without expending the necessary time and effort to obtain genuine 'buy-in' from these stakeholders" (Claudet 2014.) and because of the inability of any one person to lead comprehensive change: "The new insight on leadership advocates that alone and solo leader would fail to cope with the chaos modern schools face; hence leadership should not be vested upon one person but distributed among school members" (Storey 2004).

Although moving towards a model of distributive leadership is espoused as a necessary shift for school transformation, Spillane himself, argues that "What matters for instructional improvement and student achievement is not that leadership is distributed, but *how* it is distributed" (Spillane 2005.) When teacher leadership is doled out by administrations, or when it is focused on nonessential work, its impact on student outcomes becomes diffused and ineffective. "Such power imbalances and an associated lack of teacher involvement in decision-making are particularly common in low-performing urban schools (Payne 2008), making such schools potentially challenging environments for authentic teacher leadership. In such cases, teacher leaders may take on leadership roles without any expectation for actually leading change and may simply go through the motions" (Cooper, Stanulis, Brondyk, Hamilton, Macaluso, & Meier, 2016). Teachers and school stakeholders' leadership must be brought into the realm of teaching and learning in order to truly impact outcomes for students: "For school turnaround efforts in elementary and secondary schools to be genuinely effective, education stakeholders (teachers, principals, assistant principals, campus- and district-based instructional support personnel, parents, and community members) in these schools must learn how to work collaboratively and synergistically to engage in

focused, ongoing data mining and analysis, and then be able to creatively leverage the results of these data analyses to inform their instructional decision making" (Claudet, 2014.) When leadership is distributed in a meaningful way, such that teachers are empowered agents of change within in their schools, they have the capacity to "transform the profession on micro and macro levels, offer more ways for teachers to grow within the profession, improv[e] school cultures and the overall culture of education, and consequently, creat[e] environments in which students can flourish (Center for Teaching Quality 2014.)

## Distributed Leadership Enhances School-wide Efficacy

### The Role of Teacher Leadership in Schools

Teacher leadership occurs in a variety of contexts and capacities in schools and is described in the literature in terms of both formal and informal leadership, as being the work of specific individuals taking on roles within their school and as a framework for teacher engagement in school-based decision-making. "Overall, the concept of teacher leadership is widely used, but the conceptualizations of teacher leadership are varied and often vague" (Lee Bae, Hayes, O'Connor, Seitz, Distefano 2016). A consistent component of teacher leadership is that it most often occupies a position of informal authority, "Despite the designation as leader, the instructional teacher leader's role is nonsupervisory. Teacher leaders do not evaluate teachers to determine performance-based promotions or sanctions" (Mangin & Stoelinga 2011). Teacher leaders, then are expected to lead through influence and careful negotiation of power dynamics. The roles taken up by teacher leaders are varied and far- reaching, from instructional coach to mentor, to

facilitator of professional learning to peer evaluator to data coordinator (Kurt 2016, Jacobs, Gordon, & Solis 2016, Lee Bae, Hayes, O'Connor, Seitz and Distefano 2016.) The work of the teacher leader includes "working within their classroom to learn about or experimenting with practice; working with teachers one-on-one in coaching or mentoring relationships; and working with groups of teachers to promote school re-culturing, school wide improvement, and organizational capacity building" (Jacobs, Gordon, & Solis 2016.) As pointed out in a literature review on the subject, " most research studies fail to adequately define the construct of teacher leadership and the theoretical frameworks upon which the studies are based. As a result, it is difficult to form consensus about what teacher leadership is" (Killion 2017.)

Despite the variance in the definition of teacher leadership, the literature does reveal common themes in the important aspects of teacher leaders' work. Dillion summarizes, "Five themes emerged from the research related to the definition of teacher leadership. They are: Teacher leadership goes beyond the classroom walls; teacher leaders should support the professional learning in their schools; teacher leaders should be involved in policy- and/ or decision-making at some level; the ultimate goal of teacher leadership is improving student learning and success; and teacher leaders work toward improvement and change for the whole organization" (Dillion 2017.) One study describes teacher leadership as: "Teachers are leaders when they function in professional learning communities to effect student learning; contribute to school improvement; inspire excellence in practice; and empower stakeholders to participate in educational improvement" (Childs-Bowen, Moller, & Scrivner, 2000). Another describes teacher leaders as "work[ing] with colleagues to shape school improvement efforts and take some lead in guiding teachers towards a collective goal" (Harris 2002.) Dillon's synthesizes the literature on teacher

leadership to conclude that "Teacher leaders have a single guiding purpose — to build capacity in others. They use their talents to influence, shape, support, and catalyze change that results in increased student achievement" For the purposes of this action research paper, we will rely on Katzenmeyer and Moller definition of teacher leadership as "lead[ing] within and beyond the classroom, identify[in] with and contribut[ing] to a community of teacher learners and leaders, and influenc[ing] others toward improved educational practice" (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009).

The work of teacher leadership is complex and requires a diversified skill set that supports the work of "demonstrat[ing] a focus on student learning, a propensity to develop and maintain relationships, and an ability to plan, organize, and lead change" (Moller, Childs-Bowen, & Scrivner, 2001). "Hanuscin and colleagues (2012) described teacher leaders in their study as possessing the ability to make a difference, share knowledge, and motivate others as well as having organizational, decision-making, and facilitation skills" (cited in Jacobs 2016). In a survey of 177 teachers across the United States, Jacobs et al found that "teacher leader's perceptions of attributes necessary for successful teacher leadership included having multiple areas of experience, the ability to work collaboratively with others, commitment, innovative ideas, organizational skills, and ethical behavior" (Jacobs, Gordon, & Solis 2016.) Synthesis of current literature indicate the need for teacher leaders to develop skill sets across several core competencies. "The role of a teacher leader is not sequenced, nor dependent upon completion of one level after another. Problems are recursive, and this requires an iterative approach and highly flexible response. " Development of these core competencies allow teacher leaders "to navigate in a system that is complex and interconnected" (Center for Teaching Quality, 2014.)

For the purposes of this action research, core leadership competencies will be categorized as the ability to:

| **Core Competencies of Effective Teacher Leaders** |
| --- |
| Model personal leadership |
| Demonstrate Content knowledge and instructional expertise |
| Build relationships and motivate teams |
| Activate the leadership and efficacy of others |
| Facilitate strong adult learning |

**Model personal leadership**

Several sources cite characteristics that fall within the competency of personal leadership as being key to work of teacher leadership (Hanuscin 2012, Center for Quality Teaching 2014, Jacobs et al. 2016) Hanuscin and colleagues (2012) found that teachers' definitions of leadership included personal characteristics of being accountable, collaborative, trustworthy, and reflective; having good intentions, a clear vision, and a positive attitude; being intrinsically motivated, selfless, and sensitive to others' needs; and being a positive role model. In the survey conducted by Jacobs et al (2016), teacher leaders also cited the need to be creative and innovative as key to their work. "Teachers who are successful leaders are self-directed, take risks, and see opportunity where others might not" (Derrington 2013.) The characteristic most often cited by teacher leaders as key

to their success was “flexibility, which in their view included openness to change, new ideas, and diverse teacher characteristics (Jacobs et al 2016.) Responsibility, often described by survey participants as being well organized, includes managing material resources as well as time management (Jacobs et al 2016.) In a study of teachers leading equity work, James-Wilson and Hancock found that teachers with a high degree of teacher efficacy “were confident in their ability to influence student achievement and believed that it was their personal responsibility to do so. The power of this positive thinking was contagious and helped energize team members and colleagues” (James-Wilson & Hancock 2011.)

**Demonstrate Content Knowledge and Instructional Expertise:**

A skill set highlighted as necessary for teacher leadership by the literature is that of strong teaching practices, as demonstrated through both content knowledge and pedagogical expertise. “Expertise in teaching practices lends legitimacy to teacher leaders positions” (Jacobs et al 2016). Teacher leaders act as “instructional innovators” when their influence “extends beyond the classroom as they offer their classroom practices as a centerpiece of study for instructional learning, reflection, and improvement” (Lee Bae et al 2016). Participants in the the survey conducted by Jacobs et al “placed a high value on knowledge of the latest curriculum materials and teaching techniques” and believed that a teacher leader “must be a successful teacher . . . before s/he can become a successful mentor” (Jacobs et al 2016). “If teacher leaders are to introduce teachers to the latest instructional resources and help them develop innovative teaching methods, it makes sense that a disposition toward lifelong learning was an oft-mentioned characteristic” (Jacobs et al 2016.) In addition to demonstrating a commitment to growing their

own classroom practices, “teacher leaders also share a deep care for the teaching profession.” Teacher leaders should share a foundational passion for teaching and a desire to improve it” (Center for Teaching Quality 2014.)

**Build relationships and motivate teams**

Navigating team dynamics and using informal leadership to build trust and accountability are essential to the success of teacher leaders. Leading teams and influencing peers requires high emotional intelligence and an array of interrelated “people skills.” Participants in the survey conducted by Jacobs et al, identified three strategies critical for influencing their colleagues’ practice: “recognizing individual strengths, compromise, and conversations.” Effective communication was also cited as key to collaboration with “the most important part of being a good communicator [being] willingness to listen to others” (Jacobs et al 2016.) Teacher leadership also requires a careful balancing of power by “shar[ing] decision-making and giving teachers credit for their contributions to team efforts” as well as remaining nonjudgmental, flexible and “seeking] to empower others.” (Jacobs et al 2016.) In order to truly improve instructional practice, however, teacher leaders also need to become skilled at working through conflict and addressing deficit mindsets and entrenched patterns of behaviors in their teams. Jacobs (2012) argues that supporting other teachers in regard to equity issues is another critical practice of teacher leaders, who can challenge inequities by not remaining “silent when they hear deficit thinking” (cited in Jacobs p. 25). “Effective leaders choose to have courageous conversations rather than skirt conflict” (Fairman et al 2016.) Teacher leaders must rely on their ability to build relationships and motivate teams to establish trust and collaboration so that they can support their teams in

continually improving instructional practice.

**Activate the leadership and efficacy of others**

An important focus of a teacher leader's work is to develop the efficacy of other teachers. This requires that teacher leaders engage teams in "a reciprocal learning process that leads to collective action and meaningful change" (Harris 2002.) "As leaders, they work not to direct the work of others, but rather to build others' knowledge, skills, dispositions, and practices to lead their own reform or improvement efforts" (Killion 2011.) By maintaining a consistent focus on their team's growth and development, teacher leaders can create the conditions that support other teachers in experiencing success and making the connection between their efforts and improved student outcomes, thus building their efficacy and readiness to take additional risks in the future. "Teachers' willingness to engage others or be engaged... depends on how efficacious they feel in their work" (Szczesiul and Huizenga 2015.) As teacher leaders support their teams in becoming more efficacious, they initiate a shift in leadership from being held by individuals to being infused in the adult culture, "Leadership capacity is evident when a group of teacher leaders believe they can bring about change, desire to work for change, and have the knowledge and skills to do so" (DiRanna & Loucks-Horsley, 2001 cited in Derrington et al 2013).

**Facilitate strong adult learning**

The four teacher leadership competencies above describe *what* teacher leaders must do in order to be effective, *how* they must do it is through facilitating the professional learning of their colleagues. "Professional learning teacher leaders serve as agents to create and build a culture of

authentic collaboration and continuous professional learning; they facilitate a positive and trusting group dynamic while also challenging their team to critically examine each other's thinking, assumptions, and practice to promote growth that would be unachievable without collaboration" (Sherrill, 1999; Stoll et al., 2006 cited in Lee Bae 2017). By leading intentionally designed learning activities, through PLCs, coaching or professional development, teacher leaders support their colleagues in deepening their instructional practice, developing collaboration, and building their efficacy. Facilitating collective learning experiences, allows the teacher leader to expand the impact of best practices beyond the walls of siloed classrooms and to share them across the school. "Professional learning leaders also support the process of turning their group's shared learning into actionable steps to improve teaching and learning" (Lee Bae et al 2017.) Moreover, effective teacher leaders seek to move adult learning "beyond a simple division of tasks, and toward teachers collectively developing their professional knowledge and skills" (Lee Bae et al 2017.) Grounding teacher leadership in the practice of facilitating adult learning, widens the range of teachers who may see themselves as leaders. The egalitarian nature of learning alongside one's peers, implies that "driven, novice teachers may be well suited for, and more willing to take on facilitative leadership positions in the context of collaborative settings in which they are not expected to have the expertise of a veteran teacher" (Lee Bae et al 2017.)

Teacher leadership is a complex and nuanced practice that requires a teacher leaders to demonstrate a range of skills that support the influence and development of their peers. The practice of teacher leadership impacts the teacher leaders themselves, individual and teams of teachers, the larger school community and education in general. Szczesiul and Huizenga summarize the interconnected aspects of teacher leadership in the diagram below. This diagram

illustrates that the core competencies of teacher leadership are interdependent and fluid in supporting the continuous work of improving teaching and learning.

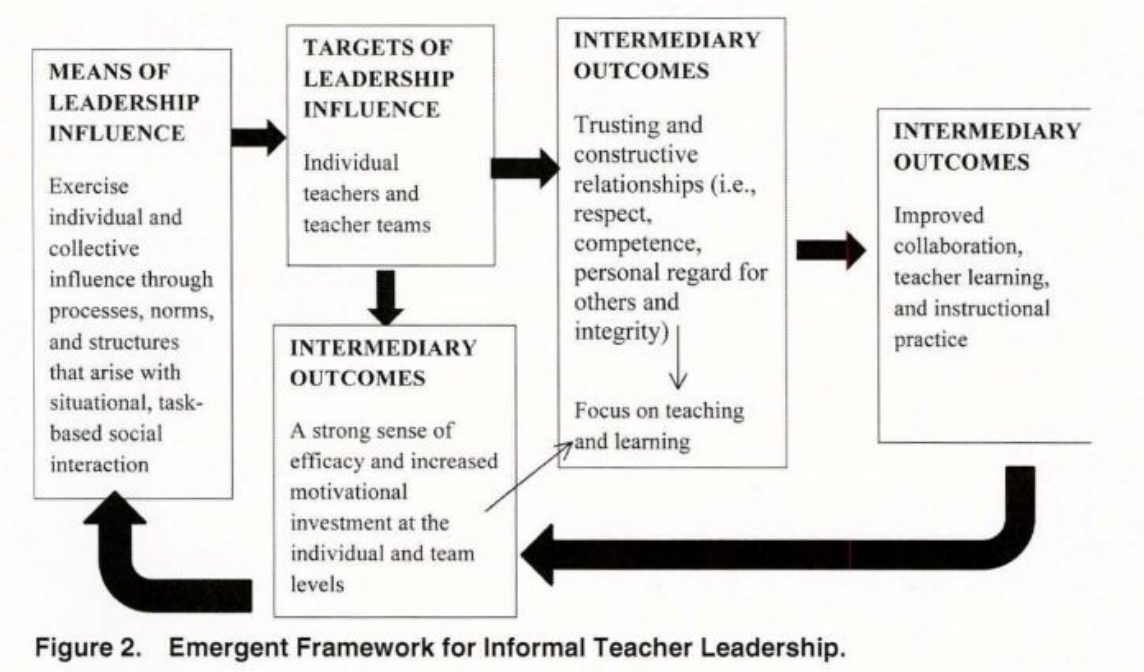


**Figure 2. Emergent Framework for Informal Teacher Leadership.**

(Szczesiul and Huizenga 2015)

**Effective Professional Development through PLCs**

Teaching in the US today is far different than it was 50 or even 20 years ago. In addition to the recent shift towards common core standards, urban schools in particular, must now also understand how to educate children with diverse language needs, limited early childhood education and increased exposure to the effects of poverty and trauma. Perhaps no other time in recent history has required the same demands on teachers to be continuous learners, to be collaborative, and to expand their skillsets in response to the needs of their students. For those reasons, the demands for quality professional development for teachers have also reached a historic level. “We have moved from a model that emphasize[s] the acquisition of discrete skills

and behaviors to a more complex vision of teacher thinking, learning, and practice in particular subject domains. We have moved increasingly away from an individualistic view of teacher growth and toward a view that emphasizes a school's collective capacity and that credits the potential power of strong professional community" (Little 2006.) According to the National Partnership for Excellence and Accountability in Teaching (NPEAT, 1998) the most effective professional development:

- Focuses on analyses of student learning, especially the examination of differences between actual student learning outcomes and goals and standards for student learning.
- Involves teachers identifying their own needs and developing learning experiences to meet those needs.
- Is school-based and embedded in teachers' daily work.
- Is organized around collaborative problem-solving.
- Is continuous and ongoing with follow-up and support for further learning.
- Incorporates evaluation of multiple sources of data detailing student learning and teacher instructional practices.
- Provides opportunities for teacher to link the theory that underlies knowledge and skills they are learning.
- Is connected to a comprehensive change process focused on improved student learning. (NPEAT, 1998)

These qualities of effective professional development, essentially describe the core practices of professional learning communities. Although there are many variations on the definition of a professional learning community, the core elements of PLCs are that they are comprised of groups

of teachers and key stakeholders who meet regularly to engage in continuous inquiry of examining the practice of teaching and the evidence of learning ( Dufour 2004, Wilson et al 2016, Stegall and Linton 2012, Little 2006, McLaughlin and Talbert 2010.) “As an integral part of their day-to-day professional work, teachers should be actively involved in collaboratively scrutinizing, discussing, and leveraging their own classroom- and grade-level data to improve and enhance instruction (Claudet 2014.) Much of the literature indicates that when given adequate investment by school administration and teachers, PLCs are highly effective structures for transforming teacher practice and student outcomes. “At best, PLCs harness collective mobilization of shared values, commitments, and actions to meet overarching goals that ultimately impact school improvement efforts. In essence, PLC’s are at the heart of teaching and learning within schools” (Wilson 2016.)

PLCs benefit schools and provide the opportunity for high-quality professional development in several key ways. First, they reduce isolationism and increase collaboration, “As teachers come together with colleagues to share best practices, analyze student data, and plan, they break down the traditional barriers that exist in many public schools. Teachers are no longer isolated from peers; they become a community of professionals working toward common goals (Stegall and Linton 2012.) Second, they promote innovation and spread best practices “Improvements in teaching are most likely to occur where there are opportunities for teachers to work together and to learn from each other. Teachers are more able to implement new ideas within the context of supportive collaborative relationships or partnerships” (Harris 2002.) Finally, they create a sense of common responsibility for the success of ALL students, “Supovitz (2006) noted that when members of PLs engage together in investigating challenges of practice, their understanding of those challenges grows deeper and is more unified, practice grows more sophisticated and

powerful, and the group develops a tighter sense of camaraderie and common purpose" (cited in Donahoo 2013.)

**Professional Learning Communities, Incubators for Teacher Leadership**

The potential for PLCs to transform teaching and learning and the acknowledgement that school administrators either do not have the capacity to lead effective PLCs on a school-wide level or may actually risk teacher resistance if they attempt to do so, highlights the importance of teacher leaders to serve as facilitators of their peers' learning through PLCs. "Through leadership and participation in PLCs, in particular, teacher leaders have the potential to create the contexts Andre guide the conversations necessary to lead instructional improvement" (Fairman & Mackenzie, 2012; Harris & Muijs, 2004; Margolis, 2012). Teacher leaders are uniquely positioned "to support their peers because they're able to apply experiences and strategies from their classrooms and have the additional level of credibility that comes from a peer-to-peer relationship" (Trapanese 2017.) "The structure provided by PLCs may allow teacher leaders to realize their full potential as they facilitate colleagues' growth, without encountering some of the hindrances that can come with more informal leadership (Donaldson et al., 2008)

Research on the role of teacher leadership in PLCs is relatively sparse, "most research on the use of PLCs for teacher learning includes little focus on the role that teacher leadership might play in the success of the model" however a few studies, based on teacher participant perception indicate that effective facilitation of PLCs by teacher leaders can be the difference between PLCs effectively driving instruction or becoming yet another meeting (Charner-Laird et al 2016.) "Most teachers noted the central role that team leaders played in facilitating PLC meetings as a key to their success. It was clear that team leaders helped the PLCs to function not as a collection of

teachers meeting together or as another opportunity to spend time with colleagues. Instead, they kept the focus on inquiry into disciplinary literacy practices and provided the needed structures and supports to move the work forward (Charner-Laird et al 2016.)

The role of PLC facilitator requires teacher leaders to utilize all of their core competencies in order to lead successful professional learning for their peers. They must model personal leadership by being reliable, resilient and committed to their own growth. "Working with team leaders who were also learners in the initiative, according to a number of initiative participants, allowed them to feel that their leaders were equal partners in creating and testing out new ideas. Ultimately, it led to a strong sense of collaboration as opposed to teacher learners following teacher leaders" (Charner-Laird 2016.) They must demonstrate content knowledge and expertise. In Coopers et al (2017) case study of teacher leaders' roles in PLCs, they found that "teacher leaders' depth of knowledge of the teaching practices they were promoting influenced their change efforts" (Coopers et al 2017.) Teacher leaders need to build relationships and motivate their team team, "teacher [leaders] must—through informal roles and social interactions—attend to the social, emotional, and psychological needs of the group to critically reflect on and experiment with practices alongside colleagues" (Szczesiul, S. & Huizenga, J. 2015). This also means creating the conditions for team members to talk honestly about their practice, " In their study of two teacher teams, Horn and Little (2010) noted that the presence of teachers who were skilled at and willing to facilitate hard conversations by asking curious questions and making significant observations about practice—their own and that of others—was a critical determinant of teams' capacity to move from talk that focused on specific individual accounts of classroom teaching to generalized lessons about and representations of practice" (Szczesiul, S. & Huizenga, J. 2015). In PLCs, teacher

leaders must also activate the leadership and efficacy of their teammates, “teacher leaders serve as agents to create and build a culture of authentic collaboration and continuous professional learning; they facilitate a positive and trusting group dynamic while also challenging their team to critically examine each other’s thinking, assumptions, and practice to promote growth that would be unachievable without collaboration (Sherrill, 1999; Stoll et al., 2006 cited in Lee Bae et al). In no other context is the ability to facilitate strong adult learning more important for teacher leaders than in facilitating PLCs “Having a team leader who, as one teacher put it, tended to “the big picture” helped teachers to focus on the inquiry work within their teams and to consider how best to apply that work to their own practice. Nurturing and holding onto the big ideas that emerged from teams’ inquiries meant that teams remained on task and could see the results of their work” (Charner-Laird 2016.)

**Challenges of Teacher Leadership**

**Unclear Roles and Responsibilities**

Despite the many potential benefits of teacher leadership for schools, its informal and variable nature makes it susceptible to a variety of technical and adaptive challenges. The lack of consistency and clarity around the role of teacher leaders across and within schools often results in a confusion around their role, while the lack of focus in responsibilities can lead to a diffusion of impact in their work. “Margolis and Huggins (2012) found that frequent changes in leadership, as well as multiple “disconnected” initiatives, contributed to a lack of clear role definition for teacher leaders, which, in turn, caused “misuse, underuse, and inefficient use” of teacher leaders” (cited in Jacobs et al 2016.) “ Ultimately, teacher leadership involves mobilizing and energizing others to

meet imperative goals of school improvement. Leadership does not necessarily reside in the title alone, but is instead identified by one's ability to influence" (Wilson 2016.) The failure of school administration to clearly articulate the role of teacher leaders and to support their efforts can further stymie attempts to transform school culture and instructional practices: "In cases where teacher-leaders' roles and responsibilities are not clearly defined, misunderstanding, conflict, and resentment can result" (Kurt 2016.)

**Limited Time**

The fact that many teacher leaders take on leadership roles in addition to their regular teaching responsibilities means that time is often a limiting factor in the reach of a teacher leader's impact. "Teacher leaders report that their single greatest problem is insufficient time to carry out all of their leadership responsibilities in addition to their teaching" (Gordon et al 2014.) Time is also a limiting factor in teacher leader's ability to support their peers, as participating teachers often report that the demands on their time make it difficult and frustrating to participate in meetings and PLCs. "It was hard for the teachers to give away an hour of their time together to take up issues that were not going to "help them now"' (Szczesiul and Huizenga 2015.) In a study of PLCs, Wilson et al report that 89% of survey participants described their PLC experience as "inundated with meetings." "As a result, teachers felt attending PLC meetings created additional time constraints that affected their job performance (Wilson et al 2016.)

**Inexperience Facilitating Adult Learning**

While these technical challenges can hinder teacher leader effectiveness, it is often the difficult-to-define adaptive work that presents teacher leaders with the most daunting obstacles.

These include facilitating adult learning, managing team dynamics and navigating staff culture. Teacher leaders must strike a difficult balance of sharing best practices with their teams, while avoiding top-down management tactics. “The nonsupervisory nature of the teacher leader role creates a paradoxical challenge for the teacher leader. In an effort to gain teachers’ trust, teacher leaders deemphasize their status as experts and avoid delivering hard feedback about teaching practice. Yet these actions ultimately undermine the work of improving instruction” (Mangin and Stoelinga 2011.) Teacher leaders are tasked with shifting meetings centered on “ complaints, particulars of classroom events, advice giving, and shared stories (Little, 1990, 2003 cited in Szczesiul and Huizenga 2015) to productive PLCs with a clear instructional focus, emphasis on inquiry and necessity for true collaboration. Providing time for teachers to meet and granting authority for teacher leaders to facilitate meetings and PLCs, does not guarantee that teams will shift practices to improve student outcomes. The lack of formal training for teacher leaders in supporting adult learning often results in a lack of focus during PLCs and an uncertainty about how to guide a team’s collaboration towards improved results. “Because participants are rarely taught how to work collaboratively or provided with ongoing guidance for how to best facilitate and utilize PLC time together, many teachers in PLCs struggle to collaborate effectively. Instead, teachers can often be seen working independently while in the same space, or focusing on logistical matters rather than problems of practice (Charner-Laird, Ippolito, & Dobbs 2016,). Inexperience in facilitation, coupled with a lack of feedback or coaching, often leaves teacher leaders to learn through a process of trial and error, resulting in a loss of valuable time and the risk of disillusionment by both the leader and the participating team.

**Reluctance to Provide Critical Feedback**

In order to truly impact a team's effectiveness teacher leaders must use their influence to push their colleagues to examine their collective results and beliefs, make changes to instructional practices, and engage in a process of continuous reflection and improvement. Often the individualistic and siloed nature of the teaching profession along with the emphasis of egalitarianism and unquestioned support for other teachers, means that teacher leaders feel pressure to operate in a "culture of nice" where outcomes go unexamined and feedback is primarily an affirmation of the status quo. "If a team collaborates without addressing and working to shift the culture of nice, the teacher leader puts the team at risk of gaining no insight into its own practice, obtaining no results (or unsustainable results) for students, going through the motions of collaboration, and ultimately dismissing the process as a waste of time" (MacDonald 2011.) A significant challenge for teacher leadership is the lack of development and support around providing the critical feedback needed to shift practice. "Teacher leaders' experiences as classroom teachers do not prepare them to engage in the critical conversations about instruction necessary to promote improvements in teaching. Not only do teacher leaders avoid giving hard feedback in an effort to preserve peer status, they generally lack effective strategies to do so" (Mangin and Stoelinga 2011.) As a result of the lack of comfort and proficiency in addressing team culture, teacher leaders can find themselves in a position of supporting the status quo through "provid[ing] assistance to teachers at a more superficial level," "downplay[ing] their expertise to maintain an identity as a trusted peer", and reinforcing counterproductive practices ((Mangin and Stoelinga 2011.) Shifting culture within teacher teams likely presents the most complex challenge for teacher leaders.

The challenges faced by teacher leaders are multi-layered and often intertwined. Cooper et al found that change efforts among teacher leaders "were overwhelmingly shaped by a multitude of systems, including the contexts of their leadership teams and schools, their individual PD experiences, their personal orientations toward teacher leadership and those of their colleagues, and external factors such as being in a large city and being charter schools" (Cooper et al 2016.) If the challenges to teacher leadership are not proactively and thoughtfully addressed, the move towards distributed leadership runs the risk of becoming yet another unsuccessful attempt at school reform.

**Role of the Principal in Supporting Teacher Leadership**

Much of the literature emphasizes the importance of the role of the principal in fostering successful teacher leadership in schools. The move to distributed leadership does not preclude the principal from decision-making or remove the onus of responsibility for instructional reform but rather redistributes power so that more stakeholders have ownership in the process and the outcomes. "Acknowledgement that leadership practice extends beyond the school principal in no way undermines the vial role of the principal in school leadership but instead shows that leadership is often a collective rather than an individualistic endeavor" (Spillane 1999.) Rather than being the hierarchal head of a school, the role of the principal shifts in a distributed leadership model to be in service of the growth and development of all staff to improve outcomes for students. " Coordinating teacher leaders, supervision, developing the leadership capacities of all school members, giving constructive feedback to teachers for their efforts and similar roles are among the new roles borne by distributed leaders" (Leithwood et al., 2007 cited in Kurt 2016). The support of principals is fundamental to establishing a strong culture for teacher leadership.

**Creating Conditions**

Principals are responsible for creating the conditions which allow teacher leadership to flourish. These conditions are both logistical and cultural. “For teachers to become effective leaders, administrators must create the appropriate environment. This includes providing opportunities for teachers to make appropriate instructional decisions for the school, processes for building trust and rapport, opportunities to collaborate with peers in order to build shared capacity, and occasions to make decisions regarding resource allocations and school processes (Stegall and Linton 2012.) Principals need to be strategic in allocating the resources--time, funding and training--that promote teacher leadership. Teacher efficacy is higher when “working for principals who were able to set school priorities, acquire resources, buffer teachers from pressures outside the school, and communicate clear expectations to staff (Lee et al cited in Stein et al 2016.) Principals also set the expectation for collaboration and create room for teachers to take ownership for their own learning. “School leaders can set the stage for school turnaround success by working proactively to nurture a collaborative professional learning culture in their school communities that emphasizes the importance of teachers actively and continuously engaging with their own school data” (Claudet 2012.) Principals have a responsibility to intentionally address the factors that undermine teacher leadership and to create the conditions that promote collective responsibility for the work of teaching and learning, this requires “a school principal willing to share power and champion the work of teacher leaders, including the allocation of human and material resources, and defending the importance of their work in the face of skeptics” (James-Wilson and Hancock 2011.) Often, the role of the principal is orchestrating the spaces and activities which invite stakeholders into the process of leading a school. “Transformational leaders

provide opportunities for ownership of new ideas and shared decision-making. Teacher leaders who work with transformational leaders feel that they are part of creating the vision for their school" (Stein 2016.)

**Empowering Teacher Leadership**

In tandem with setting an expectation for collaboration and teacher learning, principals also pave the way for teacher leaders to facilitate this work. "Principals make a critical contribution by establishing high expectations in two areas: high expectations that teacher leaders will positively impact instruction and high expectations that other teachers will turn to teacher leaders for support. (Mangin cited in Stein et al 2016.) In a model of distributed leadership, principals work to empower teacher leaders and their teams to develop strong practices for improving student outcomes. "Principals also help teachers become involved as decision makers in their own learning. Because teachers have traditionally been passive recipients of in-service training, the dominant professional development activity, principals need to initiate creative and reflective dialogues among teachers about the structure, process, and desired outcomes of teacher learning" (Bredeson 2006.) Principals may act in a coaching capacity to support teacher leaders; "offerings of support, advice, and guidance directly helped teacher leaders be more successful and feel more efficacious" (Stein 2016.) Principals and teacher leaders need to work together closely, "meet[ing] on a regular basis to provide each other feedback, discuss concerns, and plan for the future." (Bredeson 2006.) "School leaders become more of a resource to the teacher teams, helping them identify gaps and possible areas for improvement instead of defining the work that needs to be done. This "problems down, solutions up" approach empowers teachers and school

stakeholders to make decisions and address possible solutions to problems instead of waiting on the leader to tell them what needs to be done." (Stegall and Linton 2012.)

**Developing Teacher Leaders**

Due to the many challenges encountered by teacher leaders and the relatively sparse training and professional development opportunities available to them, principals play a particularly important role in ensuring TLs receive opportunities to develop their leadership competencies. "A major role of school principals in the area of teacher professional development is to build leadership capacity among staff in their schools to create, nurture, and maintain over time a vital, self-renewing and authentic learning community" (Bredeson 2006.) Although a review of the literature reveals very little research on the impact of principal's role in providing professional development for teacher leaders, several authors have indicated the need for this work (Breedson 2006, Cooper et al 2016, James-Wilson & Hancock 2011.) A deliberate effort, on the part of principals, to ensure that teacher leaders receive support in developing strong personal leadership, facilitating effective adult learning, navigating team dynamics and strengthening content knowledge will undoubtedly deepen the impact of teacher leaders' work and increase their ability to support their colleagues. "For teacher leadership to flourish, administrators must...not only provide resources for but also become active agents in teacher leaders' professional learning" (Gordon et al 2014.)

**Conclusion**

The increasingly complex demands encountered by urban schools, including the shift to common core standards, a growing population of English Language Learners, low teacher retention and a

widening achievement gap demand a transformational approach to school leadership. A model of distributed leadership invites teachers and staff into the process of teaching and learning, thus increasing collective efficacy and ownership for student outcomes. Teacher leaders are uniquely positioned to lead change in schools by facilitating professional learning communities that activate the leadership of their colleagues, focus on instructional best practices and develop the skill sets of entire teams of teachers through a continuous process of inquiry, data analysis and reflection on results. Teacher leaders, however face many challenges in their work, most notably a lack of intentional investment in and development of their facilitation and leadership skills. Principals have a responsibility to build the capacity of teacher leaders through thoughtful and deliberate partnership that empowers teacher leaders and provides the guidance and development needed to increase their effectiveness in leading teams to improve student outcomes.

**Theory of Action**

A primary assumption of this action research is that many teacher leaders, and especially those working in under-resourced schools, move into leadership roles with little understanding of and even less preparation for meeting the demands of the role. Often teacher leaders are selected to lead teams of their colleagues because they are effective in the classroom and thereby expected to be successful in transferring their expertise to their team members. While there is a shared understanding in education that school leaders, such as principals and instructional coaches, need intensive leadership development in order to be effective, this type of training is rarely offered to teacher leaders. Teacher leaders, therefore are often left to figure out how to facilitate meetings,

develop instructional interventions and navigate team dynamics through a process of trial and error. This haphazard approach often results in mixed outcomes, where some teacher leaders, perhaps those with a more intuitive understanding of leadership, are able to move teams while others experience frustration, resistance and little change in student outcomes. The intervention plan for this action research posits that through intentional and targeted development of leadership competencies and especially by focusing on the skills associated with facilitating adult learning, teacher leaders will experience an acceleration in their overall effectiveness and efficacy. A larger theory of action embedded in this intervention is that when teacher leaders facilitate more effective professional learning with their colleagues, there will be a noticeable improvement in student learning outcomes.

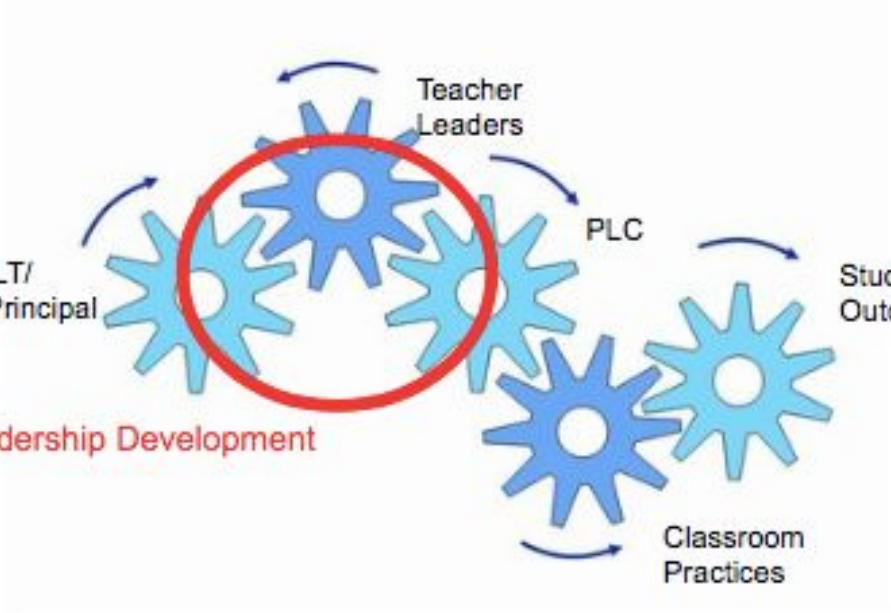


**Table 1: Overview of Action Research**

**Problem of Practice:** Teacher leaders are not facilitating adult learning that pushes grade level teams to examine student learning and improve their teaching practice

**Theory of Action:** If teacher leaders receive targeted leadership development on the facilitation of adult learning, through PD and coaching in ILT, then they will lead their teams in collaborative inquiry cycles, improve grade-level accountability for student outcomes and strengthen teaching practices across their grade level team.

**Literature Review Key Findings:**

**Teacher Leadership is Critical for School Transformation**

- Distributive leadership creates increased efficacy and maximizes potential for positive change
- TLs need to demonstrate key leadership competencies including: personal leadership, expert content knowledge, building relationships, activating the leadership of peers , and facilitating adult learning.
- Challenges to teacher leadership include role confusion, lack of time, navigating team dynamics, lack of leadership development.

**PLCs ideal venues for teacher leadership**

- PLCs offer effective professional development for teachers
- Increase collaboration and efficacy
- Focused on day-to-day teaching and learning through inquiry and data-driven instruction
- PLCs without strong facilitation flounder

- Strong Leadership competencies are essential for ensuring PLCs impact student outcomes

**Principal as Partners in Teacher Leadership**

- School Leadership must create the conditions for teacher leadership by aligning resources, supporting a culture of collaboration, and clarifying teacher leader roles.
- Principals should also support PLC inquiries and a teacher-driven focus.
- Principals should invest in the development of leadership competencies and support them in navigating challenges.

**Overarching research question(s):**

- How does targeted leadership development for teacher leaders, through ILT, impact their sense of efficacy and the effectiveness of their facilitation of professional learning for their teams?
- How does the understanding of the role of teacher leaders shift as a result of participating in leadership development?
- What intervention do TLs find most impactful for developing facilitation skills?
- Do PLC meetings show increased evidence of design for adult learning as a result of targeted professional development through ILT?
- How do PLC participants view the the effectiveness of their PLCs?

**Secondary Questions:**

- How does student talk change as a result of an increased focus on facilitation in PLCs?
- Does the effectiveness of the TL's own practice impact that of their team?

**Pre-Intervention:**

Building a strong ILT responsible for leading schoolwide instructional initiatives and developing teacher leaders so that they are leading effective professional learning for their colleagues is is a multi-year undertaking. Prior to the interventions that took place during the action research timeline, several months were spent developing a shared understanding of the role of ILT, PLCs, and teacher leaders and building the capacity of the ILT members to lead grade level teams in an inquiry cycle of academic talk across the school. During the pre-intervention phase, the ILT focused on three main strands of learning in it's weekly meetings:

1. Establishing a shared understanding that the role of ILT is to lead the charge on schoolwide instructional initiatives and the role of teacher leaders is to share the learning and instructional decisions from ILT in order to engage their teams in contributing to the instructional initiative. This was accomplished through a variety of readings and discussions on the behaviors of effective instructional leadership teams.

2. Building content knowledge on effective academic talk strategies and structures. This was accomplished through reading and discussing articles, developing a rubric of academic discourse, and utilizing a protocol for watching and discussing videos of academic discourse.

3. Becoming familiar with collaborative cycles of inquiry and how to lead teams through developing an inquiry question, designing interventions, analyzing data and drawing conclusions. This was accomplished through engaging in a mini cycle of inquiry as an ILT and discussing collaborative inquiry case studies.

Before launching the action research cycle, all ILT members participated in a half day retreat to focus on establishing a clear purpose for leading collaborative inquiry on academic discourse and to plan for the launch of this inquiry in their grade level PLCs.

**Interventions During Action Research:**

The intervention plan for this action research was designed to engage teacher leaders in several different learning exercises to develop their leadership competencies, facilitation skills, and reflective muscle. Since the research was inconclusive in regards to what kind of professional learning is most effective for leadership development, and with an understanding of diverse learning needs in mind, a menu of interventions were selected that attempted to create a balance between input and practice, including reading and discussing articles, watching and discussing exemplar videos, engaging in role plays and engaging in consultancies with ILT members. Interventions were delivered in weekly ILT meetings over the course of eight weeks. At the end of each ILT meeting, teacher leaders were prompted to reflect on their learning and record their next steps. After each ILT meeting, teacher leaders were asked to apply the skills or strategies discussed in their next PLC meeting. Teacher leaders were also asked to film the facilitation of their videos and submit them to the principal for feedback through an online video platform.

**Table 2: Intervention Plan**

| Intervention Component | Purpose | Intended Outcomes |
|---|---|---|
| **Pre-Intervention Input through ILT**<br><br>ILT members read anchor texts and engage in protocols that prompt discussion and reflection. TLs practice new skills in ILT before applying them in their PLCs. | 1. Establish role and responsibilities of teacher leaders and PLCs<br><br>2. Build content knowledge of TLs in academic discourse and collaborative inquiry<br><br>3. Collect baseline data and determine focus of intervention based on demonstrated needs of TLs | 1. TLs lead GL PLCs that are focused on instruction the whole time<br><br>2. TLs establish a clear focus with team on academic discourse<br><br>3. TLs bring learning from ILT to PLCs to develop GL team's knowledge on academic discourse<br><br>4. TLs launch cycle of collaborative inquiry with their teams |
| **Input through ILT on Effective Facilitation of Adult Learning**<br><br>ILT members read anchor texts on Adult Learning Theory and research on | 1. Build content knowledge on the qualities of effective professional learning<br><br>2. Develop shared understanding of facilitator behaviors that lead to effective adult learning | 1. TLs are aligned on the qualities of effective PD and facilitation best practices<br><br>2. TLs self-assess the current state of their PLC facilitation |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| effective PD that prompt discussion and reflection. TLs make connections between best practices and their current levels of facilitation. | 3. Practice facilitation behaviors through role plays and receive feedback from ILT members | 3. TLs set leadership and facilitation goal for intervention cycle |
| **Consultation on Problem of Practice in Facilitation of PLCs**<br><br>ILT members present problems of practice and engage in a consultancy protocol to analyze the problem and determine next steps. | 1. TLs receive feedback from their peers on how to improve facilitation practices and navigate team dynamics<br><br>2. TLs deepen reflective competency by analyzing their own and other's problems of practice and developing next steps | 1. TLs internalize effective facilitation as a primary aspect of their role<br><br>2. TLs demonstrate increased efficacy in planning learning experiences for their teams<br><br>3. TLs report increased competence in sequencing their team's learning and determining next steps when faced with dilemmas |
| **Video Coaching on Facilitation of Adult Learning in PLCS** | 1. TLs deepen reflective competency by watching and analyzing their facilitation of PLCS | 1. PLC facilitation is more effective as evidenced by a shift from "manager" facilitation to "change agent" facilitation |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | 2. TLs receive targeted feedback to strengthen facilitation behaviors | 2. TLs engage in active reflection and shifting of their practice |

**Participants**

The ILT consisted of 11 regular members--6 teacher leaders, 1 instructional coach, 3 assistant principals and myself (principal.) The entire administrative team (the principal and 3 APs) were new to the school and their positions, and therefore to the ILT. The 6 teacher leaders (TL) were the primary focus of this research. All participating teacher leaders were selected to participate in ILT by the previous administration. Each teacher leader agreed to participate in ILT with the understanding that they would act as a grade level chair and support their grade level teams over the course of the school year. Research participants began the year in ILT and as teacher leaders with varying levels of experience in both the classroom and in leading teams of the their colleagues.

**Table 3: Teacher Leader Demographics**

| Research Participants | # years teaching | # years as team chair | Evaluation rating at start of ILT | Number of team members in PLC |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Kinder | 6 | 4 | Proficient | 2* |
| 1st grade | 4 | 1 | Proficient | 3 |
| 2nd grade | 6 | 0 | Developing | 4 |
| 3rd grade | 19 | 3 | Developing | 4 |
| 5th grade | 13 | 3 | Proficient | 3 |
| Specials | 11 | 4 | Proficient | 2 |

*one additional teacher occasionally participated in the Kinder PLC, but was on maternity leave during the intervention period and was therefore omitted from data collection

**Research Methods**

To better understand the research question, data was collected from a variety of sources, including surveys, ILT discussions, TL reflection logs, video observations and evaluation scores. This data can be categorized into two main types: perception data--opinion and self-assessment data provided directly by TL and PLC participants and performance data--data collected by an outside observer (myself or the assistant principals) with the purpose of evaluating facilitation or teaching performance.

**Perception Data**

Leadership Competencies: Teacher Leaders were asked to self-assess key leadership qualities as defined by The Center for Teaching Quality (Appendix A) before and after the intervention period. This tool measured many of the essential qualities effectives leaders demonstrate, as discussed previously in the literature review. Unfortunately data is only available for 5 of the 6 TLs in the pre-intervention survey, however all 6 TLs completed the self-assessment at the end of the action research period. This data was analyzed to determine if TLs reported growth in their key leadership competencies as a result of the interventions delivered through ILT.

TL Role Survey: A survey (Appendix B) was given to Teacher Leaders before and after the intervention period to learn about TLs understanding of their role and their sense of efficacy in leading their teams to improve student outcomes. TL responses were analyzed to determine if they reported changes in the understanding of their role and capacity after the intervention period. It should be noted that the 5th grade TL did not attend the ILT meeting on the day this survey was administered, therefore the sample size for this data source is 5.

TL level of training: Embedded in the Pre-intervention TL role survey (Appendix C) were several questions designed to determine the level of support and training TLs had received in leadership development and PLC facilitation prior to participating in ILT. The results of this survey were used to identify needs to be addressed for professional development in ILT.

Effective Facilitation Indicators Checklist: The Effective Facilitation Indicators Checklist was employed as a self-assessment tool to measure teacher leaders' perception of their own facilitation effectiveness (Appendix D.) This tool was created by the ILT during the intervention

period to assess specific indicators of strong facilitation within the domains of: Preparing with Intentionality, Establishing Team, Fostering a Culture of Accountability, Building the Team's Capacity, and Modeling Personal Leadership. The the ILT created this tool in an effort to create a shared understanding of the specific behaviors that constitute effective facilitation. Unfortunately, because this tool was developed during the intervention period pre-intervention data is not available, making it difficult to determine if TL's perceptions of their use of these indicators changed over the course of the intervention. Teacher leaders took this self-assessment at the end of the intervention period and the results were analyzed to determine how many of the 6 participants indicated that they routinely exhibited each indicator during facilitation of their PLCs.

PLC assessment: Teacher leaders assessed their PLCs on three key elements: Ensuring that Students Learn, Culture of Collaboration, and Focus on Results (Appendix E.) Within each of these elements, TLs rated their PLCs effectiveness on specific indicators using a 5 point scale (beginning, emerging, developing, sustaining, refining.) All 6 TLs completed the PLC assessment after the intervention period, only 3 of 6, however, completed the PLC assessment prior to the intervention period, so it is not possible to determine how perceptions of PLC effectiveness changed for all research participants. The data from this assessment was analyzed by determining the average rating of each indicator for all TLs and by calculating the change for each indicator from before and after the intervention, where data was available.

Effective Interventions: At the end of the action research, TLs were surveyed to determine which interventions they felt had the largest impact on the development of their facilitation skills. TLs rated each intervention: Reading and discussing articles, consulting with peers, reflecting on PLC

videos, role playing and watching exemplar videos of classroom practices on a four point scale (not impactful, somewhat impactful, impactful, very impactful.)

PLC Participant Survey: Following the intervention period, PLC Participants were surveyed to measure the impact of the PLC on their professional learning and to rate the quality of facilitation. Fifteen of the eighteen teacher participants completed the survey (Appendix F). This data was analyzed to determine if there were noticeable patterns in teacher experience as a result of participating in PLCs.

**Performance Data**

Evaluation scores: TNTP evaluation scores were collected for all teacher leaders and all teachers participating in PLCs. Middle of the year (pre-intervention) scores were compared to end of year (post intervention) scores to determine if teachers had grown in the domain of academic ownership. The domain of academic ownership (Appendix G) evaluates academic discourse in the classroom. Data was collected on the scores for this domain as the focus of PLCs was on increasing and improving student talk. Evaluations were conducted by all members of the leadership team (principal and the assistant principals.) All evaluators were calibrated in scoring observations using the TNTP rubric.

PLC Video observation: Teacher leaders were asked to film their PLC meetings weekly during the intervention period and submit them via an online platform to the principal for video coaching. Video submission was intended to be an intervention to strengthen TL facilitation skills by encouraging TLs to observe and reflect on their facilitation practice and to receive targeted

feedback on key facilitation indicators. However, only three of six research participants (1st grade, 2nd grade and 3rd grade) regularly submitted videos. As it was difficult to provide timely feedback through the video platform and because TLs rarely responded to the feedback or questions provided through this format. For these reasons, the purpose of the video submission was modified to focus on data collection rather than coaching. One baseline, two middle of intervention and one end of intervention video were reviewed for each of the three TLs who submitted regularly. Videos ranged in length from 20-45 minutes. Each video was watched from start to finish. During these video observations, all instances of effective facilitation behaviors, as defined by the Facilitation Behavior Checklist (Appendix E) were recorded and categorized to determine if the number of effective facilitation indicators increased over the course of the intervention.

**Analysis and Findings**

The analysis of data gathered in this action research, seeks to understand if targeted professional development designed to strengthen the leadership capacity and facilitation skills of teacher leaders would increase the quality of PLCs, deepen instructional practice across grade levels and lead to improved student outcomes.

***What leadership development have teacher leaders already received and what are the needs of continued development?***

Although most of the research participants had lead a team of colleagues for multiple years previously (see table 3), several reported that they had received little formal leadership training in

their roles. This data was in line with research, which describes a general lack of training available to teacher leaders.

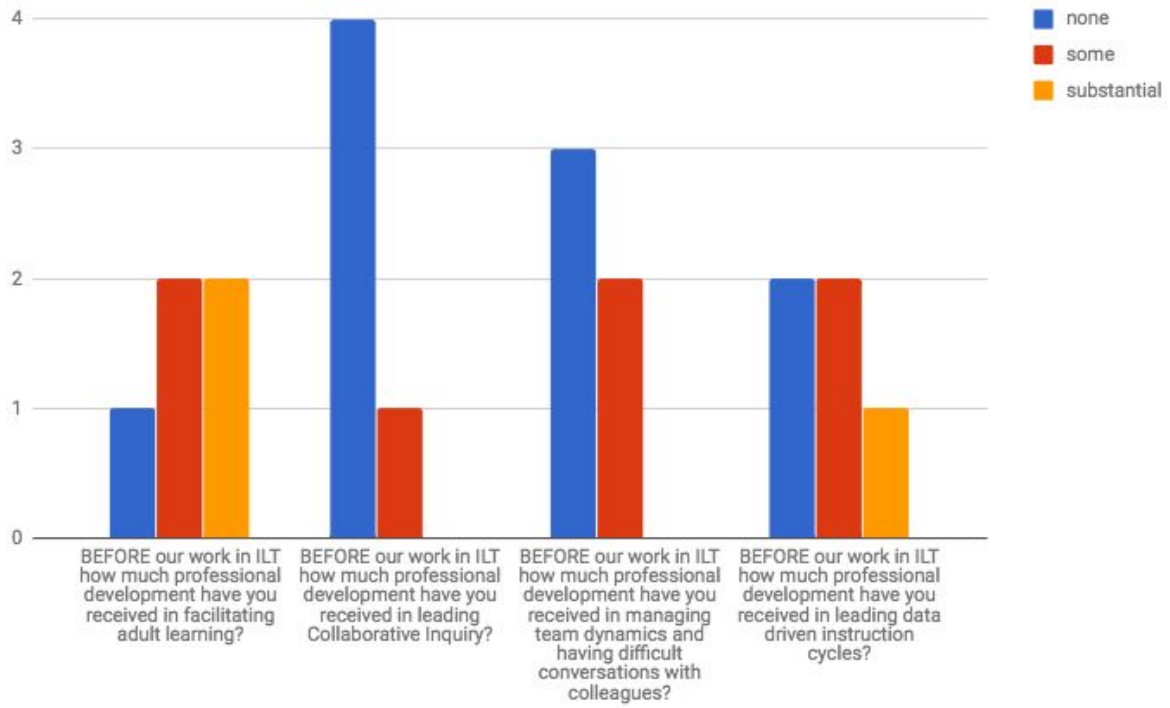


Figure 1. Level of Leadership Development Prior to Intervention (N=5)

Interestingly, despite having received limited leadership development, most teacher leaders expressed confidence in their ability to effectively lead their grade level teams prior to the intervention period. When asked to rate their confidence, on a 5 point scale, with leading a variety of aspects of professional learning, most TL responses ranged between 3 and 5 on most indicators. All surveyed TLs (N=5) reported feeling efficacious (rated 4) in improving their team's academic outcomes. Four of five TLs reported feeling confident (rated 4) in leading their team to develop a strong inquiry question, develop standards of excellence, and make data-driven instructional shifts. TLs felt slightly less confident (rated 2 or 3) in leading their teams with

analyzing student work, conducting peer observation cycles, and holding team members accountable for student outcomes. (See table 4.)

Contrary to what teacher leaders self-reported, observations of baseline videos of PLC facilitation (N=3) indicated that several key indicators of effective facilitation (Appendix E) were absent from PLC meetings. Baseline videos of the observed TLs (N=3) lacked evidence of the following indicators: select protocols to support team's learning, analyze student data, transfer ownership of learning to the team or provide opportunities for team member sto practice new skills. Two of three observed TLs, did not show evidence of the following indicators: identify critical input to deepen content knowledge, seek to connect team members to the "why", or invite feedback on facilitation of the meeting. Each of the baseline PLC videos were characterized by the TL dispensing information rather than collaborating with the team to make meaning together, a lack of time for processing or applying new information, a lack of formal structure to guide the team's learning and an absence of student data. An excerpt from the 1st grade PLC illustrates these trends.

> *TL: Today we are going to talk about our new goal for the rest of the year in our PLC which is really exciting because it's going to be like an actual PLC where we learn from each other, bring inquiry, which I'm really excited about and we can agree on a shared understanding of the why in why our school is going in this direction. So the ILT last Tuesday spent the majority of the time talking about conversations in our school, this is what we've been doing for all our ILT meetings so far, we been looking at videos and talking about where our school is in academic discourse. So this article, we read this, and it has a lot of awesome reasons why conversation is super important, if you want to find a reason why you yourself should be passionate about it. I*

*highlighted some reasons we can take a minute to look at if you guys want to, but first I was going to share my why. We all had to come up with a why on why we need to do this and what makes us excited about focusing on this. (TL shares her why statement for 50 seconds.) So that's my why, and now I'm gonna give you guys an opportunity to (splits article in half and gives half to one person and half to two people to share)...reading this is really dense so I didn't want to spend a lot of time reading it today, if you guys want a copy I can get you one--*

*T: I'd like one*

*TL: Ok cool. So I thought we could take a minute to read the highlighted reasons to reflect and maybe figure out a why for you. Why you think student talk is important especially in our population and in our school. And then we'll try to come up with a 1st grade why together.*

*T: Can we have a little bit of time to look at this?*

*TL: Yeah, we have like a minute."*

This excerpt highlights trends seen across PLCs prior to the intervention. The TL attempts to engage her team in buying-in to the PLC focus but does not structure the time in a way that supports her colleagues in doing their own critical thinking. The TL attempts to push content (the article) that was shared in ILT into her PLC but fails to replicate the process for engaging with the article in a meaningful way that was modeled in ILT. The focus on the meeting appears to be on completing a task, rather than on building the capacity of her team to utilize research and make connections to their own students.The decision to focus the intervention of this action research on facilitation of adult learning was largely informed by the findings from observations of the baseline PLC videos, which indicated that teacher leaders needed support in understanding their role as

facilitators of their team's learning as well as with the technical moves of planning meetings that build the capacity of their teams.

***How does targeted leadership development for teacher leaders, through ILT, impact their sense of efficacy and the effectiveness of their facilitation of professional learning for their teams?***

The findings of this action research reveal that teacher leader's perception of their own growth and effectiveness as a result of the intervention is complex and occasionally contradictory. Surprisingly, despite higher ratings on the Leadership Competencies self-assessment, most TL's perception of their efficacy decreased following this intervention, as did their confidence in leading their teams in analyzing student work, conducting peer observation cycles, and making data-driven instructional shifts. TL's also reported a decreased confidence in holding their teams accountable to student outcomes. On the other hand, teacher leaders reported an increased confidence in their ability to plan meetings focused on instruction, navigate team dynamics and facilitate difficult conversations with their team members. One teacher leader reported, "I learned what an effective agenda looks like and the importance of creating a "why" amongst all members of the team. The contradiction between TLs lower perception ratings and their testimonies of growth may be an indicator of a deeper understanding of the TL role and responsibilities. At the the beginning of the intervention, when most TLs were leading teams in a directive style with few opportunities given for team ownership of the work, TLs reported high confidence in their leadership skills. Through the work of ILT and the interventions of this action research, TLs deepened their understanding of what "facilitation" entails, realized the enormity of the work, and understandably felt humbled by the level of skill needed to be truly effective.

Table 4. Role of Teacher Leaders Pre and Post Intervention Survey Results

| | | Pre | Post |
|---|---|---|---|
| **How efficacious do you feel in being able to improve student academic outcomes across your grade level?** | **1** | | |
| | **2** | | |
| | **3** | | 4 |
| | **4** | 5 | 1 |
| | **5** | | |
| **How competent/ confident do you feel in planning team meetings focused on instruction?** | **1** | | |
| | **2** | | |
| | **3** | 1 | |
| | **4** | 3 | 3 |
| | **5** | 1 | 2 |
| **How competent/ confident do you feel leading your team in developing a focused inquiry question?** | **1** | | |
| | **2** | | |
| | **3** | 1 | |
| | **4** | 4 | 5 |
| | **5** | | |
| **How competent/ confident do you feel in leading your team to develop common look-fors and standards of excellence?** | **1** | | |
| | **2** | | |
| | **3** | 1 | 1 |
| | **4** | 4 | 3 |
| | **5** | | 1 |
| | **1** | | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **How competent/ confident do you feel in leading your team in analyzing student work?** | **2** | | 1 |
| | **3** | 1 | 1 |
| | **4** | 3 | 2 |
| | **5** | 1 | 1 |
| **How competent/ confident do you feel in leading your team in peer observations and feedback cycles?** | **1** | | |
| | **2** | 1 | 2 |
| | **3** | 2 | |
| | **4** | 2 | 3 |
| | **5** | | |
| **How competent/ confident do you feel in leading your team to make data-driven instructional shifts?** | **1** | | |
| | **2** | | 1 |
| | **3** | 1 | 2 |
| | **4** | 4 | 1 |
| | **5** | | 1 |
| **How competent/ confident do you feel navigating team formation dynamics?** | **1** | | |
| | **2** | 1 | |
| | **3** | 3 | 1 |
| | **4** | 1 | 3 |
| | **5** | | 1 |
| **How competent/ confident do you feel holding your team accountable for student outcomes?** | **1** | | |
| | **2** | | |
| | **3** | 1 | 3 |
| | **4** | 3 | 2 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **5** | 1 | |
| **How competent/ confident do you feel facilitating difficult conversations and conflict in your team?** | **1** | | |
| | **2** | 1 | |
| | **3** | 4 | 1 |
| | **4** | | 4 |
| | **5** | | |

Interestingly, in the Leadership Competencies Self-Assessment (Appendix A) teacher leaders indicated substantial growth in several domains of their leadership. Four of five TLs indicated growth in their reflective practice and interpersonal effectiveness. In regards to her reflective practice, one teacher leader reported, "I've learned to reflect on what effective PD looks like for me and analyze what made it effective. Thinking about what kinds of activities were most useful to me helped me decide how we should structure our PLC time. I've also learned that we are strongest when everyone feels they can contribute ideas." All surveyed TLs reported moving from developing to performing in personal effectiveness. All TLs also reported growth of at least one domain in communication and group processes. TLs reported no growth in the domain of continuing learning and education and only three of five TLs reported growth in the domain of adult learning. Despite the lower ratings in the adult learning domain, several teacher leaders reported sentiments similar to the Kinder TL who said, "I feel like I have a really strong understanding of how to set up a PLC structurally and organizationally over the course of a year. I also learned how to take a lot of the lift off of myself, and evenly distribute that weight to my team." The 2nd grade TL remarked, "I learned that each team member needs something different

in a meeting and that preparing different options of adult learning is helpful. For example one person loves reading articles while someone else doesn't find it helpful. Having the option of different resources would have been helpful in all of my meetings." Although the research participants often commented on their growth in leading adult learning and their increased ownership of the role of being a facilitator of professional learning for their teams, the findings of this action research indicate that seeing themselves as facilitators was a new and challenging aspect of the teacher leader role and that the complexities of planning and delivering meaningful adult learning experiences require more growth than could be achieved within the time frame of the intervention period.

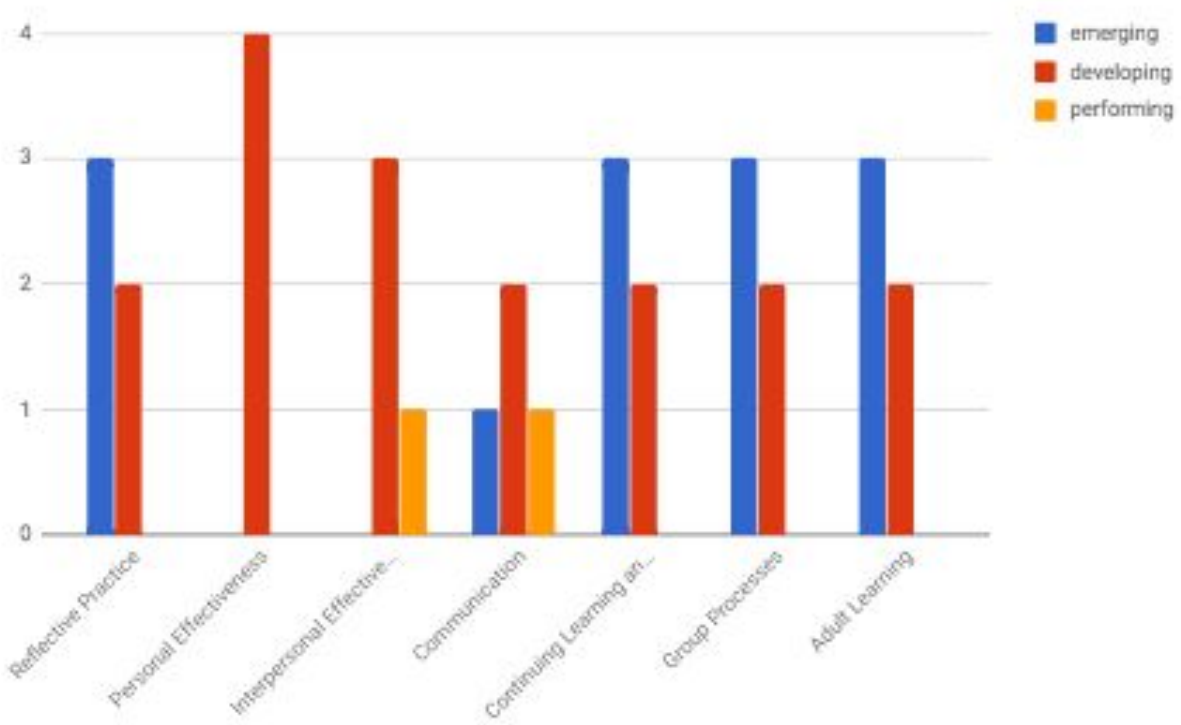


Figure 2. Leadership Competencies Ratinge Pre-Intervention N=5

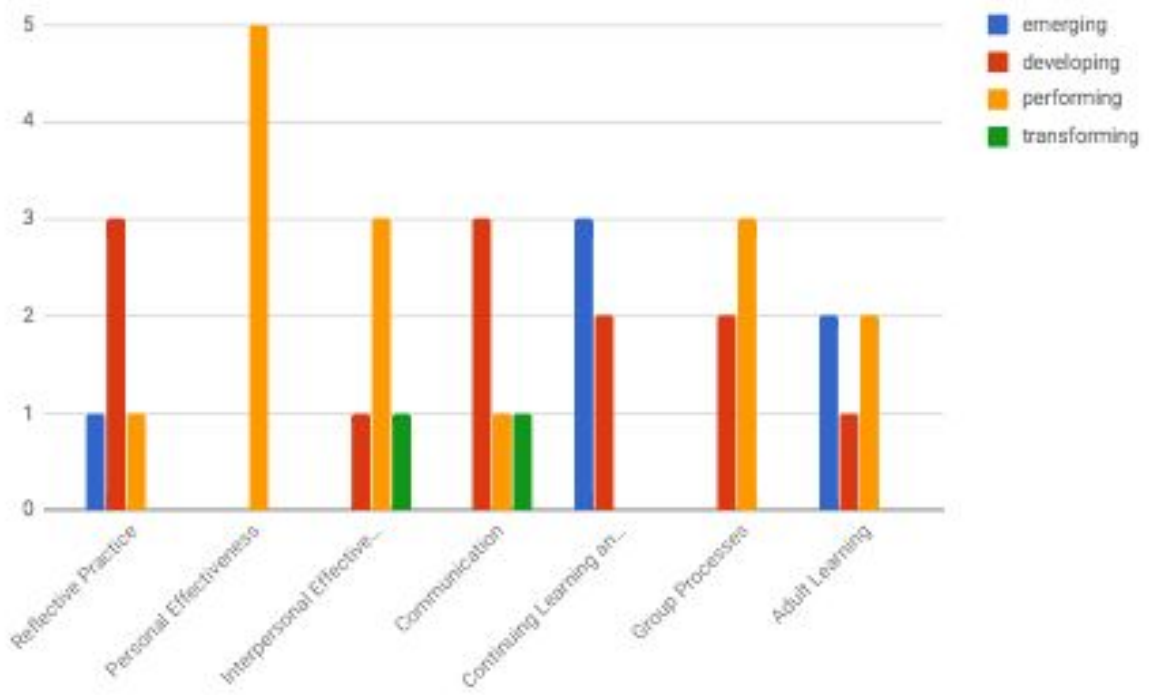


Figure 3. Leadership Competencies Ratings Post-Intervention N=5

***How does the understanding of the role of teacher leaders shift as a result of participating in leadership development?***

All research participants reported a shift in the understanding of their role following the intervention period. Several general trends emerged in teacher leaders descriptions of how their understanding of the role changed. First TLs reported a shift from viewing their primary responsibility as sharing information from school administration to leading collaborative learning. One TL described her understanding of the role prior to the intervention as "mostly as a liaison between admin and my team. I would update my grade level team with decisions that had already

been made by admin." Another echoed this sentiment, " As grade level chair, I saw myself as a voice for my team in leadership decisions and a someone who communicated information from admin." After the intervention, TLs reported an increased sense of ownership for leading the learning of their teams. Several TLs referenced facilitation of PLCs as a key responsibility of their work. One TL wrote "my role is to now guide my team in an inquiry cycle around student outcomes around language development with ELL students." Another reported, "My impact has a teacher leader has changed in that I have an understanding of how to structure and map out a cycle of inquiry. I also learned different protocols to analyze data." One of the more experienced TLs described her role as "it is still my job to keep my team focused on our goals and get out of the way and let others take leadership often. Now, much of my role centers around leading a PLC, which is something coaches often did in the past." Another TL also indicated an increased focus on building the capacity of her team, "I also feel it is is my job to facilitate others taking leadership and to keep the team focused on our goals."

Interestingly, teacher leaders also reported an evolving understanding of the role of the Instructional Leadership Team in supporting their leadership development. The kinder TL remarked, "I feel like ILT now is more about coaching me to become more of a coach in my role as chair. We've done a lot of work around plcs and best practices in our own classrooms. It is pushing me as an educator to think more critically about my role as both a teacher and team lead." Another teacher leader wrote, " ILT is a place where teachers across grade levels can engage in an inquiry process to better understand student needs, ways to help students succeed, and develop best practices for increased student success."

These comments indicate that substantial progress was made in mediating one of the significant challenges to teacher leadership--unclear roles and responsibilities-- and that teacher leaders now view themselves as active drivers of professional learning.

### *Do PLC meetings show increased evidence of design for adult learning as a result of targeted professional development through ILT?*

Both the TL perception data and performance data reveal evidence of improved PLC meetings as a result of the interventions introduced through this action research. Teacher leaders report a shift in how they facilitated PLC meetings--moving away from a more directive approach to one that intentionally sought to develop their colleagues collaborative practice and build their instructional capacity. Reflecting on her growth this year, the Kinder TL wrote, " I have learned how to structure a really impactful PLC meeting. I have also learned how to lift a lot of the load off myself and distribute tasks and ownership to my team." The 3rd grade TL also described learning to lead PLCs that supported adult learning: " I think teachers took more ownership and became more invested as time went on. It felt less like me asking questions and leading the discussion to more of everyone contributing and sharing their experiences. Having newer teachers step up and share was a highlight for me, too. [I learned that] teachers get the most out of a PLC when they are actively thinking or doing something during our meetings. Whether it's planning open-ended questions or watching videos of student talk, teachers get more out of the PLC when they are active participants in the PLC."

When teacher leaders were given the PLC assessment (Appendix D) prior to the intervention period several expressed surprise about the indicators of effective PLCs and that their role should

focus on supporting the professional learning of their teachers. In an informal discussion about the PLC Assessment tool, all but 1 TL indicated that many of the indicators of effective PLCs were not currently present in their meetings. Prior to the intervention period, most TLs indicated some uncertainty about their ability to lead effective PLCs. The PLC assessment completed by TLs at the end of the intervention period, however, indicates that most PLCs had begun to exhibit the indicators of effective PLCs. The three TLs that completed both pre and post intervention PLC assessments indicate significant growth in many indicators of PLC effectiveness. The Culture of Collaboration was the strongest domain for PLCs at Success Elementary School. Another strength TLs also reported in their PLCs was engag[ing] in cycles of inquiry that use evidence of student learning and teacher practice. Both of these were major foci of the action research interventions.

Table 5. PLC Effectiveness Ratings (Scale =1 to 5)

| | | 2nd grade | | | 3rd grade | | | Specials | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Part I. Ensuring that Students Learn** | **Post Intervention Average** | Pre | Post | Change | Pre | Post | Change | Pre | Post | Change |
| We work with colleagues on our team to build shared knowledge for planning and delivering quality/equitable, CCSS/NGSS-based instruction and implementing effective Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) strategies. | 3.00 | 2 | 1 | -1 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 2 |
| We define what all students must know and be able to do as a result of each unit of instruction and at the end of each course or grade level. | 3.33 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 5 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| We define the criteria by which we will judge the quality of student work, and we practice applying those criteria until we can do so consistently. | 3.17 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 1 |
| We design instruction using at least 1 equity-focused framework, such as Integrated ELD; Culturally Responsive Teaching; Inclusion accommodations | 2.33 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 3 | 2 | -1 |

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| & modifications (Universal Design for Learning). | | | | | | | | | | |
| We implement common acceleration strategies (as part of the school's MTSS) that guarantee each student will receive additional time and support if he or she experiences difficulty. | 2.00 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| We implement strategies to extend and enrich the learning of students who have mastered the essential knowledge and skills | 2.33 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| We continually work together to design and implement common policies and procedures for homework, grading, classroom climate, and discipline. | 3.17 | 5 | 4 | -1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 2 |
| **Part II. Culture of Collaboration** | | | | | | | | | | |
| Our PLC leader is a member of a school leadership team that aligns the PLC priorities with school (SPSA) priorities and functions to support PLC leaders with planning and capacity-building.. | 3.83 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 0 | 3 | 4 | 1 |
| Our PLC has developed and adheres to team norms/protocols re: facilitation, team processes, and outcomes/next steps for each meeting. | 3.83 | 3 | 5 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 0 | 2 | 4 | 2 |
| Our PLC has a regular meeting schedule (at least twice a month) that ensures the continuity and quality of our work and enables us to reach the year's expected PLC outcomes. | 4.33 | 5 | 5 | 0 | 4 | 4 | 0 | 3 | 5 | 2 |
| Our PLC draws on adult Social-Emotional Learning standards to support our planning and inquiry together. | 2.83 | 1 | 5 | 4 | 2 | 1 | -1 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| Our PLC ensures that our work together pays attention to "above the green line" areas (structure, pattern, process) and "below the green line" areas (relationship, identity, information). | 3.17 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 1 |
| **Part III. Focus on Results** | | | | | | | | | | |
| Our team has identified SMARTE goals that align with our school goals. | 3.50 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 3 |
| We use common formative assessments to (a) identify students who need | 3.33 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 2 |

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| additional time and support; (b) discover strengths and weaknesses in our teaching; and (c) help measure our team's progress toward its goals. | | | | | | | | | | |
| Each teacher has information regarding the performance of his or her students—individually and by sub-group—on common formative assessments and key summative assessments (e.g., OUSD benchmarks, and SBAC). | 3.50 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 5 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| We analyze student data by race/ethnicity, gender, class, and language proficiency. | 2.33 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| We share evidence of our teaching and implementation of MTSS and provide each other feedback on the quality of our work. | 2.67 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 2 |
| We engage in cycles of inquiry using evidence of student learning and teacher practice. | 3.67 | 1 | 5 | 4 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 3 |

Data gathered from TL's self-assessment on the Indicators of Effective Facilitation Checklist (Appendix E) and Facilitator Type (Appendix D) also indicate an improvement in teacher leaders' facilitation of adult learning. In the domain of Prepare Intentionally all six TLs report that they prepare all materials, 5 of 6 report that they identify learning targets goals for each meeting and pace meetings appropriately for adult learning. TLs also reported that identify critical input was an indicator they were rarely implementing, with only 2 of 6 reporting regular usage in their meetings. Establish team was by far the strongest domain for teacher leaders, with all six indicating that they regularly build rapport, create conditions for community building and affirm what each member brings to the table. Teacher leaders indicated that fostering a culture of accountability was an area of growth in their facilitative practice, with less than half of TLs reporting regular usage of four of the six indicators. In the domain of build capacity and activate

leadership, TLs report mixed success, with most regularly transferring ownership of learning to the team and asking questions to prompt the team to go deeper and almost none providing opportunities for team members to practice new skills or reflect on their personal growth. Finally, TLs also reported that the domain of modeling personal leadership was a facilitative strength at the end of the intervention period.

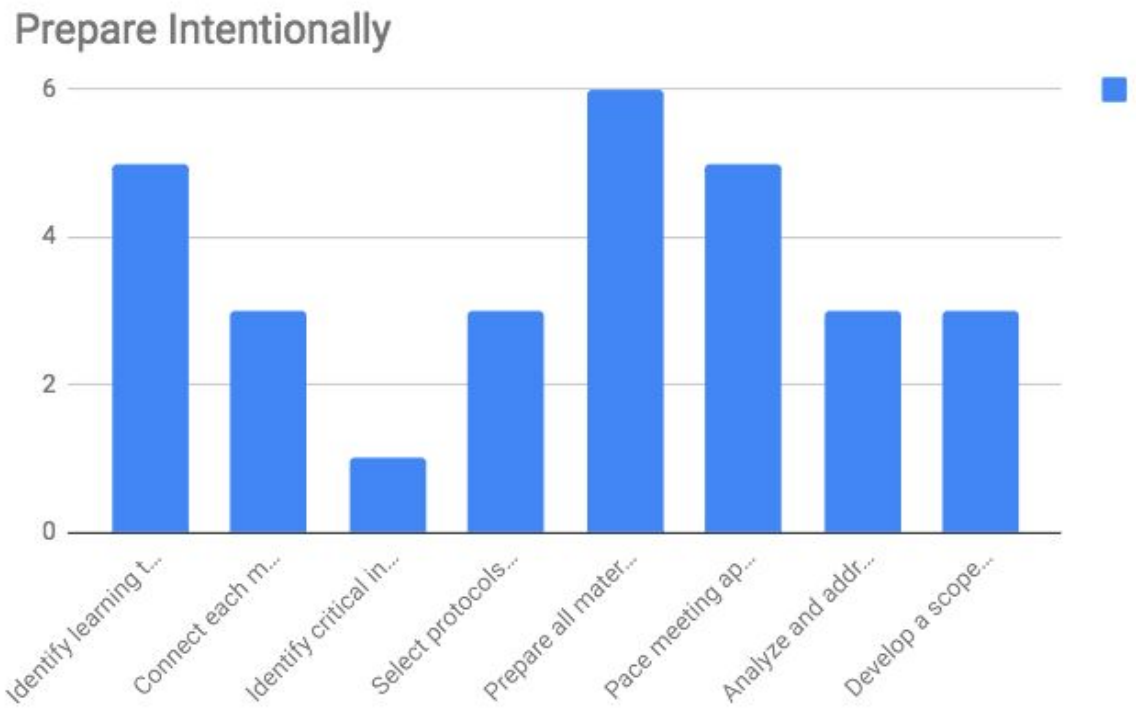


Figure 3. TL Self-Assessment of Effective Facilitation Behaviors: Prepare Intentionally

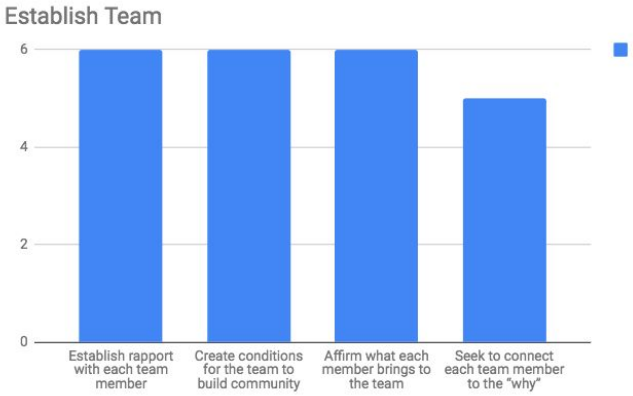


Figure 4. TL Self-Assessment of Effective Facilitation Behaviors: Establish Team


Figure 5. TL Self-Assessment of Effective Facilitation Behaviors: Culture of Accountability

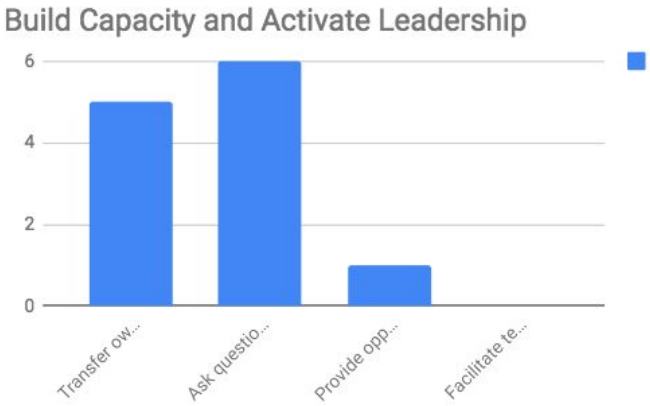


Figure 6. TL Self-Assessment of Effective Facilitation Behaviors: Build Capacity

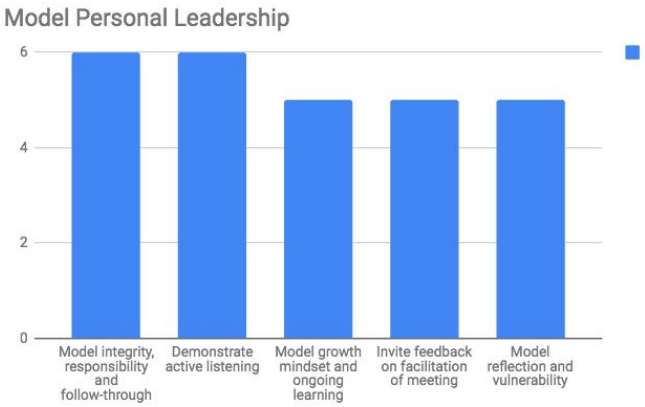


Figure 7. TL Self-Assessment of Effective Facilitation Behaviors: Personal Leadership

Scored observations of PLC video using the Indicators of Effective facilitation checklist, however reveal a much more complicated understanding of the effectiveness of PLCs. While there was an increase in the number of observed indicators from the baseline, this increase was quite small and inconsistent from meeting to meeting. In some cases, there was disagreement between how TLs

perceived their facilitative practice and what was observed. For instance, all TLs indicated that they regularly invite feedback on the facilitation of the meeting, however in watching nearly 10 hours of PLC videos, the was only observed once. Another interesting difference occurred with the fostering a culture of accountability domain, TLs reported indicators from this domain occurring least often, however at least one indicator was observed in all videos. The largest growth across the three observed teacher leaders was in the prepare intentionally domain. There was also a small increase in the number of indicators observed in the build capacity and activate leadership domain. These domains were targeted by the intervention, so these results, coupled with TL perception data indicate that the intervention had some impact on shifting the research participant's leadership practice. The domains of establish team, foster culture of accountability and model personal leadership remained relatively unchanged. There are several factors that may have contributed to this--first, it can be difficult to observe these indicators in every meeting. Second, teacher leaders may have already established a strong team and demonstrated personal leadership prior to the intervention and therefore did not feel the need to focus on these domains as heavily in later meetings. Lastly TLs consistently reported that they found holding teammates accountable to be one of the more daunting aspects of their role, the data from the video observations highlight TLs continued struggle with this domain.

Table 6: Number of Effective Facilitation Indicators Observed in PLC Video Observations

| | | **Prepare Intentionally** | **Establish Team** | **Foster Culture of Accountability** | **Build Capacity** | **Model leadership** | **Total Indicators Observed** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1st grade | Baseline | 2 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | **7** |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 0 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 3 | **11** |
| | 2 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | **12** |
| | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | **11** |
| 2nd grade | Baseline | 2 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 2 | **8** |
| | 1 | 5 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 3 | **15** |
| | 2 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 3 | **15** |
| | 3 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 2 | **12** |
| 3rd grade | Baseline | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | **9** |
| | 1 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | **12** |
| | 2 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | **10** |
| | 3 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 3 | **13** |

The following excerpts from the 2nd grade TL's PLC meeting, highlights some of the changes to facilitation that were observed during the intervention cycle:

*TL: Our goal is to look at the next few lessons--first let's look at the questions that are already in there. If you have the agenda--I have some questions at the bottom-- when you're looking, the first thing we're looking at is what questions are in there? What could we expand to make student have more of a conversation than just checks for understandings. Are there things we could take out or change? So do we want to look at one lesson altogether or each person take one?*

*Teachers : Altogether*

*TL: Ok so the next lesson is 5.*

*T1: the daily learning target is...(reads it to the team)*

*TL: ok let's read it and highlight places where students do get to talk*

*All teachers read and highlight lessons*

*TL: so what kinds of questions do they have already? what kind of talking being asked to do?*

*T3: a lot of the questions are short response. there's one right answer or--*

*T2: it like where can you find this? Right here.*

*T3: Yeh. like what is a watermelon? A melon with water.*

*TL: so there's a lot of short answer responses, how could we create an opportunity for kids to have a deeper conversation?*

*T2: we could rephrase those questions*

*T1: for some of the ones that are like: what does watermelon mean, we could make it more open-ended, like pick one of the bolded words, talk to your partner about what you think it means?*

*TL: is there another way to do that though? I still feel like there's only one way students can answer.*

*The team continues to grapple with crafting a question they believe will deepen student conversation and understanding of the learning target.*

In this excerpt, several indicators of effective facilitation are apparent. The TL has planned an agenda with elements of adult learning needs in mind--the team is asked to engage in work that is relevant and timely, that work is clearly connected to the PLCs larger focus (student talk) and the participants are engaged in a process of collaborative productive struggle. The TL acts as a guide--asking probing questions and being careful to keep the ownership of the work on her team, as a result her team engages in authentic practice and maintains a laser-focus on instruction .

Perhaps the most important results of this action research are that teacher leaders report an increased understanding of their role in leading professional learning and view their learning this year as an investment towards increased effectiveness in the future. The 5th grade TL summed it up nicely when she remarked, " As a result of our work together in ILT this year, I have learned how the focus of a PLC at our site must shift from logistics to refining/ developing instructional practices. I appreciated the opportunity to learn about how to do so through a structured way. It was a rocky start, and at times, the process felt forced, but I'm realizing the intention/ purpose behind certain protocols, and am excited to apply the knowledge I learned from this ILT to my team's work next year."

### *What intervention do TLs find most impactful for developing facilitation skills?*

Teacher leaders' response to which interventions they found most impactful for supporting their development were mixed and indicate the need for diverse offerings to meet the learning needs of adults. No single intervention was viewed as very impactful by all research participants. The highest rated intervention was reading and discussing articles, which 5 of 6 TLs found impactful or very impactful. Interestingly, TLs were split in their ratings of the effectiveness of all other interventions. One TL wrote, "Getting readings on effective PLC structures was most helpful. It was not as helpful to submit videos and receive feedback nor was it helpful to do role-plays or consultancies during ILT time. I would have rather spent the time looking at exemplar classrooms or analyzing student work across the grades to look for trends and patterns." While another TL commented, "Feedback on video made me think about ways I can better engage one of my team

members." And yet another opinion, "Agenda planning time and role play helped me prepare." One TL "loved watching someone else run a PLC" while another "enjoyed discussions about how to navigate peer observations" and yet another found the Indicators of Effective Facilitation (Appendix ) to be a " useful guide." Several TLs advocated for more support with "roadmapping of the agenda and ways to collect data" and "spending time to revisit the cycle of inquiry throughout the process and towards the end of the year."

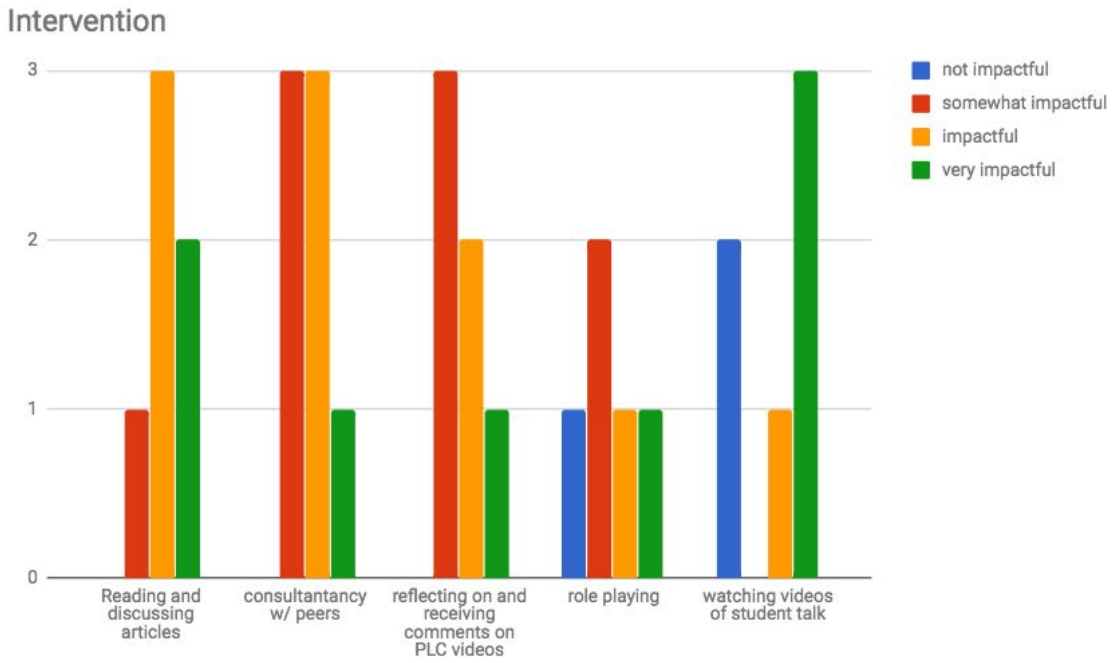


Figure 8. TL Ratings of Interventions

### *How do participants view the effectiveness of their PLCs?*

Teacher participants' perception of the effectiveness of PLCs offers a critical perspective in evaluating the impact of the interventions in this action research. Interestingly, there appeared to be a significant difference in how teachers perceived their TL's facilitation vs. how much they valued the focus of the PLC--academic discourse. One teacher wrote, " Our facilitator did a great job running with the given PLC focus but the fact that we were told what our goals were and what our PLC needed to be about made it very challenging for any of our teammates to get on board." Another teacher expressed similar sentiments, "the level of work we did and "goal setting" we were told to do did make some impact on our students capacity to talk and respond to one another, however we did not need the spend that much time in "PLC" focusing on it." The majority of teacher participants indicated that their PLC impacted their own professional growth and practice only sometimes. Teachers' experiences varied widely however, with one commenting, "one of the ways PLC helped my practice was by just giving me the time to actually focus on this [academic discourse.] It would have been easy to not focus on that because of everything else we are juggling, " while another teacher lamented, "this was by far one of the least effective PLCs I've been a part of (partially because the length, partially because the broad scope, and mostly because it was too much time commitment)." Despite the mixed feelings about the value of the PLC focus, many teacher participants indicated that the impact of several key indicators of effective facilitation was substantial, notably referring to a roadmap, considering student data, engaging the team in reflection, and accepting feedback. One teacher participant wrote, "I truly appreciated my facilitator's questions, flexibility, and awareness of her team and our needs. She

always led the meeting with thoughtful questions and valued our input and ideas." Interestingly some of this data contradicts what was observed in PLC videos and reported by the TLs themselves. Teacher participants' responses indicated a continued need to focus on building content knowledge and transferring ownership to the team.

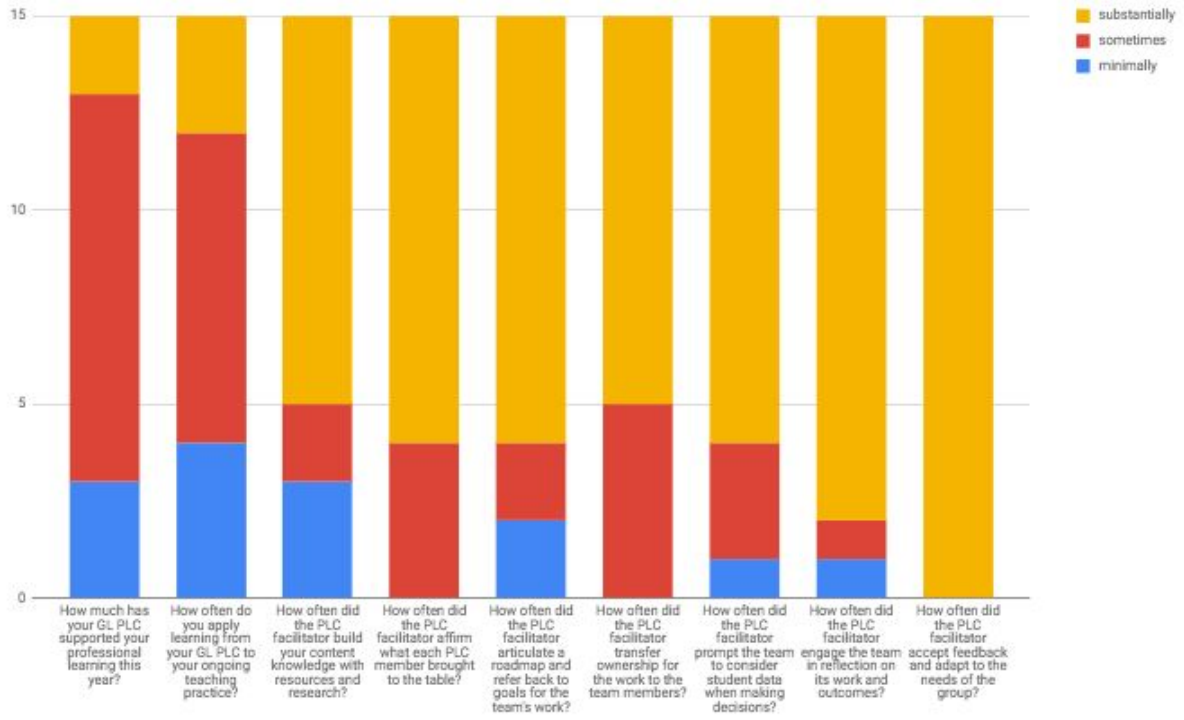


Figure 9. Teacher Participant Perception of PLC Effectiveness

Nearly two-thirds of teacher participants indicated that the observed growth in their team lead's facilitation skills over the course of the intervention period. One teacher even commented, " I felt like TL took more ownership of her position and leadership role towards the end of the year. She was great at finding research to share with us. She also was great at backwards planning the year based on the goals we set for ourselves. She really thought about what we needed to cover each week to reach our goals. She also helped us reflect throughout the year on our goals and how we

were doing." In contrast, a teacher from a different grade level team, remarked " I wonder if the PLC facilitator received adequate training or support to run a totally effective PLC. Our PLC this year felt very forced. The first few weeks did feel like they resulted in lots of ideas and I had lots of strategies to use with my students, however, after a few meetings about academic discussion, we didn't really feel like we needed to talk about it more, but the expectation of the school was that we had to. I felt like we ran out of ideas fairly quickly and meetings became less useful."

During the intervention period, when ILT learning was focused on improving facilitation of PLCs, Teacher leaders were prompted to consider the question: "Could your team continue this work without you?" as a way to illustrate the importance of building the capacity of and transferring ownership to their colleagues. The ILT decided that another indicator of PLC effectiveness would be whether teachers felt prepared to continue the work in the absence of their team leader. Survey results, indicate that 60% of teacher participants did feel efficacious in their ability to continue to the work of the PLC following the intervention period.

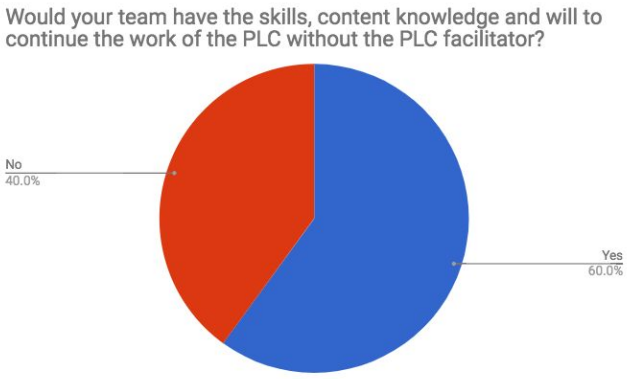


Figure 10. Teacher Participant Efficacy

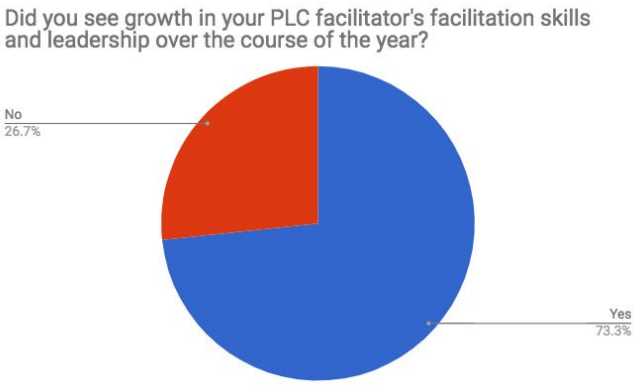


Figure 11. Teacher Participant Perception of TL Growth

***How does student talk change as a result of an increased focus on facilitation in PLCs?***

***Does the effectiveness of the TL's own practice impact that of their team?***

A secondary question investigated by this action research is what impact did the interventions have on student learning and teacher effectiveness. While teacher effectiveness and student learning were not measured directly by this action research, there are some indicators that improved facilitation of adult learning on academic discourse had a positive impact on both teachers and students.

Looking at teacher evaluation scores offers an intriguing data point on the impact of PLCs on instructional growth at Success Elementary School. Teachers are evaluated on the TNTP rubric twice yearly. Historically, academic ownership, is the domain that is least proficient across the school. In order to score proficient or skillful in this domain, there must be substantial evidence that students are able to engage in rich academic discourse and that the teacher consistently keeps the cognitive load on students. If PLCs were effective in moving academic discourse, a change in academic ownership scores would be expected. Indeed this appears to have happened. Twenty teachers out of twenty seven (or 74%) showed and increase in academic ownership scores, six showed no change and only one teacher showed a decrease in scores following the intervention period. In addition, five teachers' evaluation ratings for the academic ownership domain moved form developing (2.7-3.6) to proficient (3.7-4.6).

Another interesting trend revealed by this data is that when teacher leaders academic ownership scores increased, in most cases, their teammates scores also increased. The opposite seems to be true as well, when a teacher leader did not demonstrate growth in academic ownership, fewer teachers on their team made growth, as is evidenced in the 2nd grade team's scores. Teacher leaders appeared to have as much impact on moving instructional practice for the academic ownership domain as did the school's literacy coach. The ELA team's PLC (highlighted in pink below) was facilitated by an experienced literacy coach and made gains comparable to their colleagues in PLCs facilitated by teacher leaders with far less experience.

Table 7. Academic Ownership Evaluation Scores Pre and Post Intervention

| | Pre | Post |
|---|---|---|
| Kinder TL | 3 | 4 |
| Teacher A | 2.7 | 3.3 |
| Teacher B | 2.7 | 2 |
| | | |
| 1st TL | 3.7 | 4.3 |
| Teacher D | 2 | 2.5 |
| Teacher E | 2.3 | 3.7 |
| Teacher F | 2.7 | 3.7 |
| | | |
| 2nd TL | 2.3 | 2.3 |
| Teacher G | 2.7 | 2.7 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Teacher H | 2 | 2.7 |
| Teacher I | 2.3 | 3 |
| Teacher J | 2.3 | 2.3 |
| | | |
| 3rd TL | 2.7 | 3.3 |
| Teacher K | 3 | 3.3 |
| Teacher L | 3 | 3.5 |
| Teacher M | 3 | 3.3 |
| Teacher N | 3.7 | 4 |
| | | |
| 5th TL | 4 | 4 |
| Teacher O | 3.3 | 3.7 |
| Teacher P | 3.3 | 4 |
| | | |
| Specials TL | 2.3 | 3 |
| Teacher Q | 2.7 | 3 |
| Teacher R | 1.3 | 1.3 |
| | | |
| ELA 1 | 2.7 | 3.3 |
| ELA 2 | 4 | 4 |
| ELA 3 | 2.7 | 3.3 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| ELA 4 | 1.7 | 2 |

Although causation cannot be assumed, and many factors contributed, student achievement data at Success Elementary school also showed significant growth during the time period when ILT, PLCs and all grade level teams were focused on academic discourse. Kindergarten, 1st and 3rd grade made substantial progress in the number of students on-track to 3rd grade reading proficiency. Interestingly, the only grade level that did not show growth on this indicator was 2nd grade, the same grade level where fewer teachers made growth in the TNTP evaluation domain of academic ownership.

Table 8. On-track to 3rd Grade Reading Proficiency 16/17 to 17/18 SY

| Grade Level | Metric | 16-17%OnTrack | 17-18%OnTrack |
|---|---|---|---|
| K | K-3rd DRA On Track | 42.9% | 69.0% |
| 1st | | 49.6% | 60.0% |
| 2nd | | 62.8% | 58.8% |
| 3rd | | 43.1% | 53.7% |

SBAC data for both ELA and Math in grades 3, 4, and 5 also showed significant growth. These grade levels focused on deepening student talk in their PLCs during the course of this action research. When asked to reflect on the value of the interventions delivered through ILT and the effectiveness of PLCs, one teacher leader wrote, “Our data in all subject areas is higher than ever,

and student talk is a HUGE part of that! ” while another reported that the biggest success of the PLC she led was “the growth in students made in math content, [their] confidence in carrying academic conversations with their peers, and students ownership over math talk. “

Table 10. 3rd-5th Grade SBAC Distance from Met 16/17 to 17/18 SY

| School Year | Metric | Distance from Met |
|---|---|---|
| 2016-17 | ELA: Average Distance from Met | -84 |
| 2017-18 | ELA: Average Distance from Met | -63 |
| 2016-17 | Math: Average Distance from Met | -69 |
| 2017-18 | Math: Average Distance from Met | -46 |

## Implications and Conclusions

This action research began with the questions: how does targeted leadership development for teacher leaders, through ILT, impact their sense of efficacy and the effectiveness of their facilitation of professional learning for their teams? The findings of this action research suggest that intentional investment in the leadership development of teacher leaders can have significant impact on their ability to lead effective professional learning for their peers, which can in turn impact instructional practice and student outcomes. The findings of this action research, however, also highlight the complex and multi-layered natured of building systems of distributed leadership as a driver of school transformation and underscore the need for a comprehensive, multi-year approach to shifting the culture of teaching and learning.

Several conclusions can be drawn from the findings of this action research:

### The Importance of Communicating the Vision for Distributed Leadership and the Role of Teacher Leaders

The feedback from teacher participants revealed a disconnect between how teachers experienced their PLCs and the impact the PLCs had on their growth and student learning. This suggests, partially that teacher participants may not have been aligned with of the vision of distributed leadership or aware of the reasoning that informed the ILT's decision to focus on student talk for the duration of the school year. Although teacher leaders were engaged in data informed decision-making with the principal that led to the focus on academic discourse, this process was not made transparent to all teachers. Research indicates that the principal must be strategic in

engaging teachers in a shared vision for professional learning, “As communicators, principals also provide teachers opportunities to foster meaningful dialogue around professional development. In these dialogues principals give voice to teacher autonomy and professional decision-making in ways that build collective leadership capacity in the school to strengthen teacher learning and classroom practices” (Bredeson, Paul V. 2006.) The missed opportunity to engage all teachers in a vision for professional learning through PLCs resulted in some dissatisfaction with the experience. The literature indicates that this is a common mistake made by school administrators that can have a detrimental impact on the buy-in among teachers. “While PLCs, which provide regular opportunities for groups of teachers to work together on improving practice, theoretically present many possibilities for improving teacher and student learning, the on-the-ground experience of participants engaged in PLCs often does not live up to these ideals, particularly if the professional learning model is imposed top-down” (Charner-Laird, Ippolito, & Dobbs 2016.) Another complicating factor in teacher participants’ perception of their autonomy in this action research was the practice of filming PLCs for the purposes of data collection. Several participants remarked that filming impacted their trust in the PLCs and school administration. One teacher participant wrote, “ I wish that PLCs were not filmed, because we were able to accomplish more and be more vulnerable with each other about our data and places where we wanted to grow when the cameras were not rolling.” An important next step for Success Elementary school, and in any initiative to strengthen teacher leadership, is to engage and invest all teachers in a shared vision for professional learning and to ensure that teachers have input in deciding where professional learning should be focused.

**Principals and School Administration Need To Play a Key Role in Supporting TL's work**

Another important conclusion of this action research is that teacher leaders need consistent and ongoing support and development of leadership competencies, and principals should play a key role in this work. One TL wrote, " I think a principal should be a resource for the ILT member and also have check-ins to support in PLC planning and questions that may come up. A principal should also support with team dynamics when things come up." Several teacher leaders advocated for needing additional support in navigating team dynamics, " I think admin in general needs to support the grade level chairs a little more with difficult conversations with teams." Another theme in TL feedback was the need for more support with the technical aspects of leading collaborative inquiry, one TL reflected that "having more coaching around roadmapping of the agenda and ways to collect data" would have made her leadership development more impactful Other TL indicated a desire for more partnership with the principal, one wrote, "principals should be guides and teammates during cycles of inquiry." The literature echos the importance of the partnership between principals and teacher leaders in supporting teams: "It is of increasing importance [that principals] support individuals and teams through the change process, as collaborative inquiry requires people to think, reflect, and work together in new ways. Simply providing time for teacher's growth opportunities is not enough" (*Donohoo, Jenni.)*

**Interventions Should be Targeted to Individual Needs**

Another conclusion of this research is that a one-size-fits-all approach to leadership development should be avoided and instead the specific and individual needs of teacher leaders should be considered when designing interventions to support their growth. The findings of this action

research clearly showed that each teacher leader had different preferences for learning modalities and that not all interventions were equally effective. Therefore it is important to both offer a variety of entry points to learning and to engage in a process of continually observing leadership progress, diagnosing needs, and providing continued support to strengthen those areas. One TI suggested, " the leadership team should attend PLCs (not every one, but on a regular schedule) to get a true feel for team dynamics and how the process is going. That observational data can lead to PD for facilitators based on observed issues." Although this action research provided interventions to teacher leaders in a group format through ILT, it was unable to provide consistent and intensive coaching support on an individual basis. Observations of PLC videos as well as teacher leader comments indicate that more individualized coaching was needed to truly support the accelerated growth of the research participants leadership competencies. A possible area for future study is whether support provided through 1:1 coaching by principals, tailored to the specific challenges encountered by each teacher leader would have a larger impact of the effectiveness of the teacher leader in shifting team culture, creating more buy-in with teacher participants, and ultimately improving outcomes for students.

**Establishing a Practice of Effective Facilitation Requires Continued Calibration**

Another key take-away from this action research is that deepening the facilitation practice of teacher leaders requires on-going calibration on what effective facilitation looks like in action. The findings of this action research indicates that there was a disconnect between how TLs perceived their facilitation, what was experienced by teacher participants and what was observed in PLC meetings. This may very well have been the result of a lack of calibration across the school on what strong adult learning should involve. The Indicators of Effective Facilitation Checklist

(Appendix E) provided some opportunities to norm around effective facilitation but many of the indicators were abstract, difficult to observe and open to multiple interpretations. Increased emphasis on defining and qualifying effective facilitation is a clear next step for Success Elementary. Another interesting question that surfaced during this action research is why few of the facilitative moves that were modeled in ILT and school-wide professional development by school administration were adopted by teacher leaders. This also occurred with materials selected to build content knowledge, though TLs were provided anchor texts in almost every session, they very rarely brought them to their teacher teams for review and discussion. This begs the question whether teacher participants are adopting behaviors that are modeled for them by teacher leaders. The lack of transference of modeling, is an interesting dynamic that should be investigated through future research.

This action research produced some promising results in the development of teacher leadership competencies, instructional practices of teams, and student outcomes. It also magnified some areas for continued focus, including rallying all teachers around a shared vision for professional learning, individualizing leadership development supports, calibrating on effective facilitation and investigating whether modeling is an effective strategy for adult learning. The interventions implemented in this action research laid the foundations for what will be an ongoing process of creating a culture of distributive leadership at Success Elementary School. It is clear that teacher leaders play an indispensable role in transforming the instructional culture of a school and that partnership with school administration is vital to their success and the success of their teams.

**Works Cited**

Boyd-Dimock, V & McGree, K M. (1995). Leading Change From The Classroom: Teachers As Leaders. Issues ...about Change Volume 4, Number 4. Retrieved from: http://www.sedl.org/change/issues/issues44.html.

Bredesen, P V. (2006) The school principal's role in teacher professional development. Journal of In-Service Education Volume 26, 2000 - Issue 2 Pages 385-401.

Buchanan, J. (2012). Improving the Quality of Teaching and Learning: A Teacher-as-learner-centered Approach', International Journal Of Learning, 18, 10, pp. 345-35.

Charner-Laird, M, Ippolito, J & DOBBS, C. (2016). The Roles of Teacher Leaders in Guiding PLCs Focused on Disciplinary Literacy. Journal Of School Leadership, 26, 6, pp. 975-1001.

Childs-Bowen, D., Moller, G., & Scrivner, J. (2000). Principals: leaders of leaders. *NASSP Bulletin*, *84*(616), 27-34.

Claudet, J. (2014). Nurturing Distributed Leadership Environments in Schools: Creative Strategies for Increasing Community Engagement and Energizing School Turnaround Efforts. Open Journal of Leadership, 3, 39-52.

Cooper, K., Stanulis, R., Brondyk, S., Hamilton, E., Macaluso, M., & Meier, J. (2016). The teacher leadership process: Attempting change within embedded systems. Journal Of Educational Change, 17, 1, pp. 85-113.

Derrington, M.L. & Angelle, P. S. (2013). Teacher Leadership and Collective Efficacy: Connections and Links. International Journal of Teacher Leadership Volume 4, Number 1.

Donohoo, J. (2013). Collaborative Inquiry for Educators: a Facilitator's Guide to School Improvement. Thousand Oaks, California: Corwin, A SAGE Company, Print.

Drago-Severson, E. (2006). Learning-Oriented Leadership. Independent School, 65, 4, pp. 58-65.

Dufour, Richard. (2004) What is a Professional Learning Community?. Schools as Learning Communities, May 2004 Volume 61 Number 8 Pages 6-11.

Fairman, M & Jackson, T. (2016) Believing in Miracles and the Value of Cohesiveness. School Administrator, Vol. 73, Issue 2.

Gordon, S., Jacobs, J., & Solis, R. (2014). Top 10 Learning Needs for Teacher Leaders. Journal Of Staff Development, 35, 6, pp. 48-52.

Hanuscin, D. L., Rebello, C. M., & Sinha, S. (2012). Supporting the development of science teacher

leaders: Where do we begin? Science Educator, 21(1), 12-18.

Harris, A. (2002) Improving schools through teacher leadership. Education Journal, 59, p. 22,

Hawley, Willis D., Valli, Linda. (1998) Guide to the National Partnership for Excellence and Accountability in Teaching (NPEAT). ERIC Clearinghouse on Teaching and Teacher Education Washington DC.

Heins, E. (2017). Our leaders, Ourselves. California Educator October/ November 2017 volume 22, Issue 2.

Hirsh, S. (2011). Encourage teachers to step up to leadership roles. Journal Of Staff Development, 32, 3, p. 76.

Jacobs, J., Gordon, S., & Solis, R. (2016). Critical Issues in Teacher Leadership. Journal Of School Leadership, 26, 3, pp. 374-406.

James-Wilson, S., & Hancock, M. (2011). 5 stages on the path to equity. Journal Of Staff Development, 32, 3, pp. 26-30.

Katzenmeyer, M. & Moller, G. (2009). Awakening the sleeping giant. Helping teachers develop as leaders. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Killion, J. (2017). Critical questions remain unanswered in research on teacher leadership. Learning Professional, 38, 4, pp. 22-25.

Kingsley, J. (2012). Investing in teacher leaders. Leadership, 41, 3, pp. 24-26.

Kurt, T. (2016,).A Model to Explain Teacher Leadership: The Effects of Distributed Leadership Model, Organizational Learning and Teachers' Sense of Self- Efficacy on Teacher Leadership. Education & Science / Egitim Ve Bilim, 41, 183, pp. 1-28.

Lee Bae, C., Hayes, K., O'Connor, D., Seitz, J., & Distefano, R. (2016). The Diverse Faces of Teacher Leadership A Typology and Survey Tool. Journal Of School Leadership, 26, 6, pp. 905-937.

Little, J. W. (2006). Professional community and professional development in the learning-centered school. National Education Association. Retrieved from www.nea.org.

MacDonald, E. (2011). When nice won't suffice. Journal Of Staff Development, 32, 3, pp. 45-51.

Macias, A. (2017). Teacher-Led Professional Development: A Proposal for a Bottom-Up Structure Approach. International Journal Of Teacher Leadership, 8, 1, pp. 76-91.

Mack Trapanese, E. (2017). Helping Teachers Become Leaders, Education Digest, 83, 3, pp. 37-39.

Mangin, M., & Stoelinga, S. (2011). Peer? Expert?. Journal Of Staff Development, 32, 3, pp. 48-51.

McLaughlin, M. W. & Talbert J.E., (2010). Professional learning communities: Building blocks for school culture and student learning. Voices in Urban Education (VUE), Spring.

Moller, G., Childs-Bowen, D., & Scrivner, J. (2001). Teachers of the year speak out: Tapping into teacher leadership. Greensboro, NC: SouthEastern Regional Vision for Education.

Payne, C. M. (2008). So much reform, so little change: The persistence of failure in urban schools. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.

Sergiovanni, T. J. (2005). Strengthening the heartbeat: Leading and learning together in schools. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Spillane, J. (2006). Distributed leadership volume 4 of Jossey–Bass Leadership Library in Education. Wiley. University of Michigan.

Spillane, J (2005). Distributed Leadership, The Educational Forum, 69:2, 143-150.

Stegall, D, & Linton, J. (2012) Teachers in the lead. Phi Delta Kappan, 93, 7, pp. 62-65.

Stein, K., Macaluso, M., & Stanulis, R. (2016). The Interplay Between Principal Leadership and Teacher Leader Efficacy. Journal Of School Leadership, 26, 6, pp. 1002-1032.

Storey, A. a. (2004). The problem of distributed leadership in schools. *School Leadership & Management*, *24*(3), 249-265.

Szczesiul, S. & Huizenga, J. (2015). Bridging Structure and Agency: Exploring the Role of Teacher Leadership in Teacher Collaboration. Journal Of School Leadership, 25, 2, pp. 368-410.

Talbert J.E. (2010) Professional Learning Communities at the Crossroads: How Systems Hinder or Engender Change. In: Hargreaves A., Lieberman A., Fullan M., Hopkins D. (eds) Second International Handbook of Educational Change. Springer International Handbooks of Education, vol 23. Springer, Dordrecht

The Teacher Leadership Competencies, ©2014 Center for Teaching Quality, National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, and the National Education Association.

Wilson, A. (2016). From Professional Practice to Practical Leader: Teacher Leadership in Professional Learning Communities. International Journal Of Teacher Leadership, 7, 2, pp. 45-62.

# Appendix A. Leadership Competencies Self-Assessment

| COMPETENCY | Emerging | Developing | Performing | Transforming |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Reflective Practice | Mindful and deeply aware of who he or she is as a teacher leader, and aware of areas of possible growth into further leadership<br>Models strong, reflective instructional and leadership practice, and engages in a mindful search for opportunities to grow in and out of the classroom<br>Understands the role of data and reflective analysis in practice | Helps to create conditions that encourage reflection among peers, administrators, and other staff members<br>Makes strategic plans that are informed by data and reflective analysis | Encourages a broad and diverse range of stakeholders to reflect deeply on their roles and responsibilities within instruction, policy, the association, or other elements of teaching and leading<br>Engages in the development and implementation of strategies and policies that encourage reflection, leading to refinement and growth<br>Aids others in understanding and using data and reflective analysis to drive practice, policy, and organizational decisions | Helps systems to function with a culture of mindful and meaningful reflection<br>Leads the development and implementation of large-scale instructional, policy, and organizational ideas that incorporate reflection and refinement<br>Leads the collection and analysis of data, and supports cultural shifts that incorporate the cycle of reflection and refinement as a regular, consistent, and intentional practice |
| Personal Effectiveness | Understands his or her own personal strengths, leadership style, and passions; and sees the role these play in developing trust and credibility with peers<br>Explores opportunities for teacher leadership, accepting the possibility of adversity | Capitalizes on his or her own strengths, leadership style, and passions; and engages in ethical practice, developing trust and credibility with others<br>Takes on teacher leadership roles and responds to adversity with resiliency and humility | Adapts in ways that build trust and credibility to support lifelong learning in self and others<br>Balances the roles and duties of teacher leadership with other professional responsibilities, including, when applicable, meaningful work with students<br>Models resiliency and humility in adverse situations | Defines new learning based on individual strengths, styles, and leadership passions; nurturing credible and trusting communities of lifelong learners<br>Designs new models of teacher leadership, and supports others in responding to adversity with resiliency and humility<br>Engages in strategic, vision-aligned risk-taking to achieve wide, lofty, and meaningful goals |
| Interpersonal Effectiveness | Becomes familiar with the skills needed to support colleagues<br>Demonstrates a personal vision for the profession, association, and/or education policy | Seeks opportunities to become more effective in supporting colleagues in ways that build trust<br>Builds critical relationships intended to promote action based on shared vision, deeply rooted in the needs of students | Serves as a support for others, effectively communicating and engendering trust, with empathy, warmth, and humility<br>Encourages and inspires others to take action grounded in shared vision for the benefit of students | Fosters others' development in interpersonal effectiveness and articulates ways to support others in effectively communicating<br>Facilitates others in building and embracing vision that spans boundaries while remaining student-centered |

# Appendix A. Leadership Competencies Self-Assessment

| COMPETENCY | Emerging | Developing | Performing | Transforming |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Communication | Sees the needs and challenges to student growth, successful teaching and learning, and systemic effectiveness, and feels ready and able to address them<br>Crafts engaging and thoughtful messages that inspire others | Articulates the message that informed, meaningful student-centered goals are worth striving for and what mindful approaches to policy, the association, and instruction may look like<br>Shares a carefully crafted message in ways that will spur others to pursue positive change | Defines, differentiates, and effectively delivers messaging to advance systemic change<br>Engenders great passion and understanding for the vision of the teacher leader through skillful use of messaging and consistency of focus | Influences other teacher leaders and builds their capacity to communicate and advocate effectively with stakeholders at all levels<br>Successfully navigates communication within diverse and sometimes adversarial power structures |
| Continuing Learning and Education | Creates meaningful professional learning goals, and finds resources to meet those goals<br>Reads scholarly journals and other publications and shares experiences in various venues, such as personal blogs or social media profiles<br>Stays abreast of relevant issues and developments in instruction, policy, and/or the association | Participates in learning opportunities outside of familiar contexts, including additional higher education and/or advanced professional learning to meet goals<br>Reads and/or contributes, formally or informally, to conversations around education, and engages in existing research actively by sharing with colleagues and applying new ideas to his or her own practice<br>Attends events such as association conferences and/or policy forums to learn about the issues being tackled in those realms | Designs learning opportunities for self and others around shared professional learning goals, including both job-embedded professional development and outside activities<br>Participates in research projects, seeks publication in scholarly journals, and/or finds new media venues for teacher leaders' voices<br>Leads sessions at conferences and events addressing instruction, the association, and/or policy | Crafts and leads continuing education programs for fellow teacher leaders, including higher education courses, large-scale professional development opportunities, leadership and advocacy professional learning<br>Presents his or her own research at major events and conferences, regularly contributes to scholarly publications, and/or designs new ways for fellow teacher leaders to reach and teach a wide audience<br>Organizes learning events for his or her association and/or for policymakers and other stakeholders, and brings other teacher leaders in as presenters. |
| Group Processes | Actively participates in group meetings, events, and learning opportunities, and understands the roles of these opportunities in teacher leadership<br>Engages in work with others with a spirit of open-mindedness and respect for diversity | Understands the fundamentals of leading group dynamics, collaborating and navigating difficult situations, while honoring diversity of opinion and varying strengths and styles | Skillfully manages group dynamics, collaborates, and guides groups through challenges, controversy, conflicts, and adversity, while applying an understanding of diversity and what that diversity contributes to group work | Creates new groups and leads existing groups, offering solutions to challenges and actively engaging diverse opinions and experiences in producing solutions and desired outcomes |

| COMPETENCY | Emerging | Developing | Performing | Transforming |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Adult Learning | Understands the differences in the ways in which adults learn and grow professionally, respecting their expertise and valuing the direct impact adult learning has on student success | Builds on awareness of adult learning to better understand how to impact colleagues and address their diverse needs, tapping their areas of expertise and experience to enhance personal and group growth | Leads learning activities to enhance the practice of others at various levels of leadership by implementing adult learning strategies, tapping into peers' diverse areas of expertise | Designs and implements new learning opportunities for adults, respecting where they are in their personal practice, while focusing on extending personal and collective growth<br>Develops learning experiences that are extendable and replicable across diverse contexts and communities |

Appendix B. TL Post-Intervention Role Survey

## EOY Teacher Leader Questionnaire

Your email address (**smyers@efcps.net**) will be recorded when you submit this form. Not **smyers**? Sign out

* Required

1. *

2. **How has your impact as a teacher leader changed/ evolved as a result of our work together in ILT.** *

3. **How efficacious do you feel in being able to improve student academic outcomes across your grade level?** *
Mark only one oval.

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| not efficacious | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | very efficacious. Yes! |

4. **How competent/ confident do you feel in planning team meetings focused on instruction?** *
Mark only one oval.

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Not competent/ confident | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | Very competent/ confident. Yes. |

5. **How competent/ confident do you feel leading your team in developing a focused inquiry question?** *
Mark only one oval.

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Not competent/ confident | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | Yes. |

## Appendix B. TL Post-Intervention Role Survey

6. **How competent/ confident do you feel in leading your team to develop common look-fors and standards of excellence?** *
Mark only one oval.

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Not competent/ confident | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | Very competent/ confident |

7. **How competent/ confident do you feel in leading your team in analyzing student work?** *
Mark only one oval.

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Not competent/ confident | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | Very competent/ confident |

8. **How competent/ confident do you feel in leading your team in peer observations and feedback cycles?** *
Mark only one oval.

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Not competent/ confident | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | Very competent/ confident |

9. **How competent/ confident do you feel in leading your team to make data-driven instructional shifts?** *
Mark only one oval.

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Not competent/ confident | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | Very competent/ confident |

10. **How competent/ confident do you feel navigating team formation dynamics?** *
Mark only one oval.

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Not competent/ confident | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | Very competent/ confident |

11. **How competent/ confident do you feel holding your team accountable for student outcomes?** *
Mark only one oval.

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Not competent/ confident | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | Very competent/ confident |

# Appendix B. TL Post-Intervention Role Survey

12. **How competent/ confident do you feel facilitating difficult conversations and conflict in your team?** *
Mark only one oval.

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Not competent/ confident | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | Very competent/ confident |

13. **Rate how comfortable you felt sharing ideas, being vulnerable about your practice and asking questions in ILT.** *
Mark only one oval.

◯ not at all comfortable (I rarely shared ideas, spoke about my practice or asked questions)

◯ somewhat comfortable (I sometimes shared ideas and/or aspects of my practice or asked questions but I sometimes held back)

◯ very comfortable ( I almost always felt supported to share freely. I almost always felt safe to be a learner.)

14. **In your opinion, what role should a principal/ leadership team play in supporting ILT, PLCs and teacher leadership in general?** *

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

☐ Send me a copy of my responses.

Appendix C. Pre-Intervention TL Role Survey

## Teacher Leader Questionnaire

Your email address (**smyers@efcps.net**) will be recorded when you submit this form. Not **smyers**? Sign out

* Required

1. **Name** *

2. **Describe how you saw your role as grade level chair BEFORE we began our work together in ILT.** *

3. **How, if at all, has your understanding of your role changed since we began?** *

4. **How efficacious do you feel in being able to improve student academic outcomes across your grade level?** *

   Mark only one oval.

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| not efficacious | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | very efficacious |

5. **Why did you want to be grade level chair?** *

Appendix C. Pre-Intervention TL Role Survey

6. **How competent/ confident do you feel in planning team meetings focused on instruction?** *
Mark only one oval.

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Not competent/ confident | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | Very competent/ confident |

7. **How competent/ confident do you feel leading your team in developing a focused inquiry question?** *
Mark only one oval.

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Not competent/ confident | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | Very competent/ confident |

8. **How competent/ confident do you feel in leading your team to develop common look-fors and standards of excellence?** *
Mark only one oval.

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Not competent/ confident | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | Very competent/ confident |

9. **How competent/ confident do you feel in leading your team in analyzing student work?** *
Mark only one oval.

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Not competent/ confident | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | Very competent/ confident |

10. **How competent/ confident do you feel in leading your team in peer observations and feedback cycles?** *
Mark only one oval.

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Not competent/ confident | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | Very competent/ confident |

11. **How competent/ confident do you feel in leading your team to make data-driven instructional shifts?** *
Mark only one oval.

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Not competent/ confident | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | Very competent/ confident |

# Appendix C. Pre-Intervention TL Role Survey

12. **How competent/ confident do you feel navigating team formation dynamics?** *
Mark only one oval.

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Not competent/ confident | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | Very competent/ confident |

13. **How competent/ confident do you feel holding your team accountable for student outcomes?** *
Mark only one oval.

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Not competent/ confident | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | Very competent/ confident |

14. **How competent/ confident do you feel facilitating difficult conversations and conflict in your team?** *
Mark only one oval.

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Not competent/ confident | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | Very competent/ confident |

15. **BEFORE our work in ILT how much professional development have you received in facilitating adult learning?** *
Mark only one oval.

- ◯ None/ Almost none
- ◯ Some. 1 or 2 sessions.
- ◯ A substantial amount

16. **BEFORE our work in ILT how much professional development have you received in leading Collaborative Inquiry?** *
Mark only one oval.

- ◯ None. Almost none
- ◯ Some. 1 or 2 sessions.
- ◯ A substantial amount

17. **BEFORE our work in ILT how much professional development have you received in managing team dynamics and having difficult conversations with colleagues?** *
Mark only one oval.

- ◯ None. Almost none.
- ◯ Some. 1 or 2 sessions.
- ◯ A substantial amount.

18. **BEFORE our work in ILT how much professional development have you received in leading data driven instruction cycles?** *
Mark only one oval.

- ◯ None. Almost none.
- ◯ Some. 1 or 2 sessions.
- ◯ A substantial amount

Appendix D: Indicators of Effective Facilitation

**Facilitate Regular PLCs focused on school-wide instructional initiative**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Prepare Intentionally** | ● Identify learning targets and goals for each meeting<br>● Connect each meeting to the larger roadmap or cycle of inquiry<br>● Identify critical input to deepen content knowledge<br>● Select protocols to support team's learning<br>● Prepare all materials<br>● Pace meeting appropriately to move work and support adult learning<br>● Analyze and address the skill/will gaps of team members<br>● Develop a scope and sequence of PLC focus and learning over time |
| **Establish Team** | ● Establish rapport with each team member<br>● Create conditions for the team to build community<br>● Affirm what each member brings to the team<br>● Seek to connect each team member to the "why" |
| **Foster Culture of Accountability** | ● Hold a consistent focus on instruction<br>● Regularly analyze student data<br>● Monitor each member's follow-through on next steps<br>● Routinely invite team to assess their learning and progress towards goals<br>● Establish norms for addressing implementation dips and lack of follow through<br>● Monitor for equity of voice and invite everyone into the conversation |
| **Build Capacity and Activate Leadership** | ● Transfer ownership of learning to the team<br>● Ask questions to prompt team to go deeper<br>● Provide opportunities for team members to practice new skills<br>● Facilitate team member's reflection on personal growth |
| **Model Personal Leadership** | ● Model integrity, responsibility and follow-through<br>● Demonstrate active listening<br>● Model growth mindset and ongoing learning<br>● Invite feedback on facilitation of meeting<br>● Model reflection and vulnerability |

# Appendix E. PLC Self-Assessment

SES is committed to supporting high levels of learning for every student, ensuring that students are prepared for success in college, career, and citizenship. We have embraced the development of professional learning communities to support our collective work toward achievement, equity, and accountability.

This rubric is for teachers to support the development of teacher teams as a professional learning community. The processes described below enable us to address the following questions: What do we want each student to learn? How will we know when they are learning it? How will we respond when they don't learn it? How will we respond when they already know it?

| | |
|---|---|
| **Beginning** | We have not yet begun to address this issue. |
| **Emerging** | We are talking about this, and developing plans, but have taken no significant action to make it a reality. |
| **Developing** | We have begun to do this, and support is growing, but changes remain fragile; some staff approach the task with a sense of compliance. |
| **Sustaining** | We are consistently doing this; most staff are committed and feel it is an important factor in our collective efforts to improve the school. |
| **Refining** | This practice is deeply embedded in our culture; we regularly review, adjust, and realign this work. |

| **Part I. Ensuring that Students Learn**<br>We acknowledge that the fundamental purpose of our school is to help each student achieve high levels of learning, and therefore we are willing to examine and improve our practices in light of their impact on learning. | |
|---|---|
| **Element** | |
| a. We work with colleagues on our team to build shared knowledge for planning and delivering quality/equitable, CCSS/NGSS-based instruction and implementing effective Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) strategies. | ○ ○ ○ ○ ○<br>1 2 3 4 5 |
| b. We define what all students must know and be able to do as a result of each unit of instruction and at the end of each course or grade level. | ○ ○ ○ ○ ○<br>1 2 3 4 5 |
| c. We define the criteria by which we will judge the quality of student work, and we practice applying those criteria until we can do so consistently. | ○ ○ ○ ○ ○<br>1 2 3 4 5 |
| d. We design instruction using at least 1 equity-focused framework, such as Integrated ELD; Culturally Responsive Teaching; Inclusion accommodations & modifications (Universal Design for Learning). | ○ ○ ○ ○ ○<br>1 2 3 4 5 |
| e. We implement common acceleration strategies (as part of the school's MTSS) that guarantee each student will receive additional time and support if he or she experiences difficulty. | ○ ○ ○ ○ ○<br>1 2 3 4 5 |
| f. We implement strategies to extend and enrich the learning of students who have mastered the essential knowledge and skills | ○ ○ ○ ○ ○<br>1 2 3 4 5 |
| g. We continually work together to design and implement common policies and procedures for homework, grading, classroom climate, and discipline. | ○ ○ ○ ○ ○<br>1 2 3 4 5 |

| **Part II. Culture of Collaboration**<br>We are committed to working together to achieve our collective purpose of learning for all students. We cultivate a collaborative learning culture through the development of a high-performing team. | |
|---|---|
| **Element** | |
| a. Our PLC leader is a member of a school leadership team that aligns the PLC priorities with school (SPSA) priorities and functions to support PLC leaders with planning and capacity-building.. | ○ ○ ○ ○ ○<br>1 2 3 4 5 |
| b. Our PLC has developed and adheres to team norms/protocols re: facilitation, team processes, and outcomes/next steps for each meeting. | ○ ○ ○ ○ ○<br>1 2 3 4 5 |
| c. Our PLC has a regular meeting schedule (at least twice a month) that ensures the continuity and quality of our work and enables us to reach the year's expected PLC outcomes. | ○ ○ ○ ○ ○<br>1 2 3 4 5 |
| d. Our PLC draws on adult Social-Emotional Learning standards to support our planning and inquiry together. | ○ ○ ○ ○ ○<br>1 2 3 4 5 |
| e. Our PLC ensures that our work together pays attention to "above the green line" areas (structure, pattern, process) and "below the green line" areas (relationship, identity, information). | ○ ○ ○ ○ ○<br>1 2 3 4 5 |

| **Part III. Focus on Results**<br>We assess our effectiveness on the basis of results rather than intentions. We engage in cycles of inquiry using evidence of student learning and teacher practice, to promote our continuous improvement. | |
|---|---|
| **Element** | |
| a. Our team has identified SMARTE goals that align with our school goals. | ○ ○ ○ ○ ○<br>1 2 3 4 5 |
| b. We use common formative assessments to (a) identify students who need additional time and support; (b) discover strengths and weaknesses in our teaching; and (c) help measure our team's progress toward its goals. | ○ ○ ○ ○ ○<br>1 2 3 4 5 |
| c. Each teacher has information regarding the performance of his or her students—individually and by sub-group—on common formative assessments and key summative assessments (e.g., OUSD benchmarks, and SBAC). | ○ ○ ○ ○ ○<br>1 2 3 4 5 |
| d. We analyze student data by race/ethnicity, gender, class, and language proficiency. | ○ ○ ○ ○ ○<br>1 2 3 4 5 |
| e. We share evidence of our teaching and implementation of MTSS and provide each other feedback on the quality of our work. | ○ ○ ○ ○ ○<br>1 2 3 4 5 |
| f. We engage in cycles of inquiry using evidence of student learning and teacher practice. | ○ ○ ○ ○ ○<br>1 2 3 4 5 |

Appendix F. PLC Participant Survey

# PLC Facilitation Survey--Specials

Please rate how your GL PLC has supported your professional learning. Your feedback is appreciated and will support ongoing development of teacher leadership at Achieve.

Your email address (**smyers@efcps.net**) will be recorded when you submit this form. Not **smyers**? Sign out

## Overall Impact of GL PLC

1. **How much has your GL PLC supported your professional learning this year?**
   **Mark only one oval.**

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| minimally | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | substaintially |

2. **How often do you apply learning from your GL PLC to your ongoing teaching practice?**
   **Mark only one oval.**

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| rarely | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | often |

## Effectiveness of PLC Facilitation

3. **How often did the PLC facilitator build your content knowledge with resources and research?**
   **Mark only one oval.**

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| rarely | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | often |

4. **How often did the PLC facilitator affirm what each PLC member brought to the table?**
   **Mark only one oval.**

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| rarely | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | often |

5. **How often did the PLC facilitator articulate a roadmap and refer back to goals for the team's work?**
Mark only one oval.

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| rarely | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | often |

6. **How often did the PLC facilitator transfer ownership for the work to the team members?**
Mark only one oval.

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| rarely | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | often |

7. **How often did the PLC facilitator prompt the team to consider student data when making decisions?**
Mark only one oval.

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| rarely | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | often |

8. **How often did the PLC facilitator engage the team in reflection on its work and outcomes?**
Mark only one oval.

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| rarely | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | often |

9. **How often did the PLC facilitator accept feedback and adapt to the needs of the group?**
Mark only one oval.

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| rarely | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | often |

10. **Would your team have the skills, content knowledge and will to continue the work of the PLC without the PLC facilitator?**
Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

11. **Did you see growth in your PLC facilitator's facilitation skills and leadership over the course of the year?**
Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

Appendix G. TNTP Academic Ownership Domain

## ACADEMIC OWNERSHIP

Are all students responsible for doing the thinking in this classroom?

| 1. INEFFECTIVE (Yr 1: Enter'ng) | 2. EMERGING | 3. DEVELOPING | 4. PROFICIENT | 5. SKILLFUL |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Students complete very l'ttle of the cognitive work during the lesson, such as reading, writing, discussion, analysis, computation, or problem solving; the teacher completes all or almost all of the cognitive work.<br><br>Very few or no students provide meaningful oral or written evidence to support their thinking.<br><br>Students respond negatively to their peers' thinking, ideas, or answers.<br><br>No students or very few students try hard to complete challenging academic work or answer questions. | Students complete some of the cognitive work during the lesson, such as reading, writing, discussion, analysis, computation, or problem solving, but the teacher or a very small number of students complete most of the cognitive work.<br><br>Some students provide meaningful oral or written evidence to support their thinking.<br><br>Students do not respond to their peers' thinking, ideas, or answers, or do not provide feedback.<br><br>Some students try hard to complete challenging academic work and answer questions. | Most students complete an appropriately challenging amount of the cognitive work during the lesson, such as reading, writing, discussion, analysis, computation, or problem solving, given the focus of the lesson the teacher completes some of the cogn't've work (,e.: expands on student responses) that students could own.<br><br>Most students prov'de mean'ngful oral or wr'tten ev'dence to support the'r th'nk'ng.<br><br>Students respond to the'r peers' th'nk'ng, 'deas or answers, and prov'de feedback to the'r classmates.<br><br>Most students try hard to complete academ'c work and answer quest'ons, even 't the work 's challeng'ng. | All or almost all students complete an appropriately challenging amount of the cognitive work during the lesson, such as reading, writing, discussion, analysis, computation, or problem solving, given the focus of the lesson. The teacher rarely finishes any of the cognitive work that students could own.<br><br>All or almost all students provide meaningful oral or written evidence to support their thinking.<br><br>Students respond to and build on their peers' thinking, ideas or answers.<br><br>Students routinely provide constructive feedback to their classmates and respond productively when a peer answers a question incorrectly or when they do not agree w'th the response.<br><br>All or almost all students consistently try hard to complete academ'c work and answer quest'ons, even 't the work 's challeng'ng. | *All descriptors for Level 4 are met, and at least one of the following types of evidence is demonstrated:*<br><br>Students synthesize diverse perspectives or points of view during the lesson.<br><br>Students independently show enthusiasm and interest in taking on advanced or more challenging content. |