

TITLE The Effect of Teacher Leader Certification Academy (TLCA) on Teacher Leaders: Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership

RESEARCHER Wendy M. Kerr
School of Education
Azusa Pacific University
Unpublished doctoral dissertation: December 2015

OBJECTIVE This study examined the effect of a research-based, specifically designed professional development program on teacher leadership practices for teacher leaders in K-12 schools.

METHODOLOGY

The participants in this study consisted of 74 teacher leaders selected from grades K-12 from Riverside, San Bernardino, and Orange Counties, California; an area covering approximately 600 square miles and representing over 30 school districts. The researcher used a non-random, expert convenience sampling to create two groups of participants from a pool of teacher leaders. The experimental group (TLCA) consisted of 42 of the 100 teacher leaders enrolled in the county Teacher Leader Certification Academy. The typical respondent was female (91%), either between the ages of 30-49 (52%) or 50-77 years (48%), teaching elementary grades (42%), holding a master's degree (90%), with 10-18 years in the education profession (51%), and 1-10 years as a teacher leader (72%). The comparison group consisted of 42 teacher leaders representing districts in the same counties. These comparison subjects were randomly selected from a database of 900 Reflective Coaches (mentor teachers) participating in the Center for Teacher Innovation Induction Program. Each TLCA participant completed the Leadership Practices Inventory, as did his or her site administrator (supervisor) and a peer.

KEY FINDINGS

Enable Others to Act was the leadership practice reported to be most frequently used, followed by Model, Challenge and Encourage, and then Inspire. Pre- and post-scores were statistically significant for all five leadership practices, and Wilks's Lambda multivariate tests showed statistical significance in the effect size. The percentage changes ranged between 8.9 percent (Enable) to 20.4 percent (Inspire).

A MANCOVA was conducted to examine significant difference of LPI scores between the experimental and control groups, and, after controlling for grade levels, years of teaching experience, years of teacher leadership, and education level, no statistically significant differences in teacher leadership behaviors were found. The author postulates, "It is important to note that the comparison group scored themselves higher on the overall LPI than the TLCA participants did on the initial LPI. Although speculation, one could ascertain that the possible factors were their lack of understanding of the LPI. It is possible they did not read or comprehend the full extent of the directions, and there is a chance that because they knew they were a comparison group, they wanted their SELF scores higher to impress the researcher" (p. 103).

No significant differences were found in the LPI scores based upon demographic factors (grade levels, years of teaching experience, years of teacher leadership, and education level).

The author concludes:

Imagine the educational profession if schools and districts across the country provided teacher leaders innovative ways to support the growth of their members while maintaining their position in a classroom. This enterprising endeavor would enable school administrators to make systematic changes at the site that not only meet the needs of the students, but also potentially offer ways to facilitate programs at low or no cost to the site budget. This type of change to happen requires a letting go of historical mindsets of the traditional, hierarchal structure in schools and districts, and embracing an ever-widening world of leadership roles within the educational setting by training and developing all teacher leaders (pp 116-117).