The emerging educator as leader and action researcher

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Abstract

The 320 pre-service educators in this inquiry were viewed as emerging classroom teachers who were leading while grappling with new personal experiences which informed and guided each during the pre-service year. The written account evidence supported our resulting inferences, discussion and conclusions and demonstrated the leadership required within pre-service. It was the analysis and synthesis of practicum reflections that illuminated core beliefs, attitudes and needs of emerging action researchers as they developed a professional and personal understanding of leadership, teaching and self.

Keywords: *Action research, leadership, professional development*

Introduction

Our world is changing and there is a need to move with this change and adapt as a society. This is not something educators need to oppose, it is something to embrace, reflect upon and plan for. We need to be progressive and adopt a view of nature as being in flux, as ever changing to enhance our knowledge, to redefine ourselves and rediscover, to keep pace with change (Ryan & Cooper, 2004). The implication for our schools and our pre-service teacher education programs is to confront change and respond accordingly. However, to do this "a new paradigm of the teaching profession is needed -- one that recognizes both the capacity of the profession to provide desperately needed school revitalization and the striking potential of teachers to provide new forms of leadership in schools and communities" (Crowther, Kaagan, Ferguson, & Hann, 2002, p. 3). New teachers, leading

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the charge to confront change must possess knowledge, skills, and dispositions (beliefs) required to assume these fresh forms of leadership and a "pre-service program can either set this process in motion with the appropriate tools, attitudes, and expectations, or it can set the novice up for a dizzying fall from the heights of unchallenged naive idealism" (Russell & McPherson, 2001, p. 8). Therefore, teacher preparation programs must make deliberate attempts to require the analysis of knowledge, skills, and dispositions of teacher leaders, and nurture these traits to ensure that change is embraced by new educators, leaders and our profession.

Admittedly, the growth and analysis of teacher knowledge "begins with what teachers already know and enact in their practices rather than beginning with knowledge that needs to be given to teachers" (Clandinin, 2007, p. 15). To incorporate beginning teachers knowledge requires professors to look into and at the elements of knowledge that student-teachers bring into a program, after all, "teacher knowledge refers to teacher' narrative knowledge, their personal practical knowledge, composed and recomposed over time and in the contexts of personal and professional knowledge landscapes " (Clandinin, 2007, p. 15). This pre-existing knowledge is deeply embedded and often tacit. Frequently this core knowledge surfaces during the intense and unpredictable practice teaching sessions via self-discovery and reflective revelation. These practicum experiences can direct and inform future actions, reflections and revisions hence varied outcomes emerge and need to be discussed.

The practicum is a time of sudden student teacher growth that requires student teachers to effectively face problems and deal with dilemmas in an authoritative manner since a teacher is an authority by virtue of their position and expertise (Peters, 1959). This situation can create tension given that "student teachers are uncomfortable during these early stages because they dislike seeing themselves as authoritative figures" (Boudreau, 1999, p. 458). However, it is not entirely the challenge of being in authority that is unsettling; it is the requirement to do this in another teacher's classroom, over a short period of time (practicum), while being evaluated by mentors that heightens discomfort for these emerging teachers, leaders and role models.

The practicum is a test of physical and mental capacities. It is an immersion in a culture that often puzzles and requires multiple leadership skills. "Teachers hold a central position in the ways that schools operate and in the core functions of teaching and learning, what is new are increased recognition of teacher leadership, visions of expanded teacher leadership roles, and new hope for the contributions these expanded roles might make in improving schools" (York-Barr & Duke, 2004, p.255). This reality has produced a need to study, sort, cultivate and scrutinize the concept of emerging teacher leadership. A natural place to begin is within the training of teachers as they become known as teachers, leaders and action researchers (reflective practitioners)

Mode

Action Research. As a pre-service teacher, if actions do not unfold the way they were imagined and planned or an unexpected behaviour or event transpires you make changes until you are satisfied with the planned outcomes. The pre-service teacher acting as "the action researcher is interested in the improvement of the educational practices in which he/[she] is engaging. He [she] undertakes research in order to find out how to do his job better-action research means research that affects actions "(Corey 1949, p. 509). "Action research combines a substantive act with a research procedure; it is action disciplined by inquiry, a personal attempt at understanding while engaged in a process of improvement and reform" (Hopkins, 1993, p. 44).

> Action research is, therefore, a deliberate way of creating new situations and of telling the story of who we are. Action research consists of deliberate experimental moves into the future, which change us because of what we learn in the process. (Connelly & Clandinin 1988, p. 153)

These definitions and the recursive nature of the teaching practicum are commonplace in most Faculty of Education programs. Each round of practice teaching offers the student teacher a new opportunity to refine outcomes. This recurring teaching practicum within the teacher training program complements action research as student teachers act, reflect and revise recursively. Parsons and Brown (2002) concluded:

> Action research has been found to serve not only as a means of improving teaching . . but also in developing practitioners' flexibility and problem-solving skills . . . and their attitudes to professional development and the process of change . . . . Participation in action research resulted in increased confidence, self, esteem, willingness to embrace research, and liberated creative potential for the educator-turned-action researcher . . . . Action research has been described as a vehicle for improving pre-service . . . [and] has been found to promote a climate of professionalism and scholarship. (p. 6)

Reflection. Making sense of an action in practicum, the perspective taken on the interpretation of events following the action (stance) and related revised teaching decisions in a pre-service program requires deep reflection upon self in relation to others as a means to self-monitor (Schoonmaker, 1998), develop and improve. Students completing a pre-service program complete both *practicum* (student teaching) and *theory classes* that delve into teacher training requisites. Some course activities are particularly well regarded by students that link pre-service teacher's reflections on the role of the teacher, course readings, and observations during students' field experiences (Pryor, Sloan & Amobi, 2007). Links are developed often by the construction of a reflection on paper and the sharing of this written effort in class discussions. It is an essential task that can guide and affect the teaching-learning process as it contextualizes and connects educational theory to praxis (Onwuegbuzie, Witcher, James, & Minor, 2002).

Leadership. At present we see a convergence of old models and new models of leadership (professional learning community) that give way to contemporary images such as the one offered by Fullan (2001) who explains, "there are strong reasons to believe that five components of leadership represent independent but mutual reinforcing forces for positive change" (p. 3). Fullan (2001) suggests an image of a circle with five elements which include: Moral purpose, understanding change, relationship building, knowledge creation and sharing, and coherence making. These five elements guided and informed this study as we read written accounts and looked for evidence of these leadership qualities within the lines of reflective text. We did this because we believed, as do Kouzes and Posner (1995) that,

> leadership is an observable, learnable set of practices. Leadership is not something mystical and ethereal that cannot be understood by ordinary people. Given the opportunity for feedback and practice, those with the desire and persistence to lead—to make a difference—can substantially improve their abilities to do so. (p. 4)

Therefore we believed that the five traits of leadership could be detected in the reflective accounts of evolving teachers. However, it was necessary to further define these terms.

Moral purpose. Moral purpose is about making a "difference in the lives of students . . . . If you don't treat others . . . well and fairly, you will be a leader without followers" (Fullan, 2001, p.13). Hence we looked for evidence of concern for the lives of students and fair treatment.

Understanding change. Knowing that teaching requires strategizing and innovativeness (Fullan, 2001, p. 31) at a pace that is enabling rather than disabling for students.

Relationship building.

Being interested in others and constructing a focused collaborative community of learners is key. "Increasingly, leadership in schools is becoming a shared responsibility . . . . Leaders are considerably more effective if they work with and through people in their enterprise . . . . We have to talk about feelings in public" (Naested, Potvin, & Waldron, 2004, p. 30).

Knowledge creation and sharing

Fullan (2001) explains,

> the process of knowledge creation is no easy task. First tacit knowledge is by definition hard to get at. Second, the process must sort out and yield quality ideas; not all tacit knowledge is useful. Third quality ideas must be retrained, shared, and used throughout the [classroom]. (p.80)

We are looking for evidence of the above as teachers attempted to make their knowledge accessible and shared within their practices.

Coherence making

Refers to the ability to work, sort and contribute to problem-solving and "the most powerful coherence is a function of having worked through the ambiguities and complexities of hard-to-solve problems" (Fullan, 2001, p.116). Therefore we are looking for proof of this in the reflective accounts of pre-service teachers.

Purpose

The purpose of this action research effort was to train pre-service teachers to create written accounts of their leadership actions. Secondly, this act, reflect, and revise mode (action research) enabled and enhanced pre-service teacher's capacity to articulate their practice and improve teaching and leadership. In doing so, identity formation, growth and the expansion of self-understanding was nurtured.

Research Questions

> The following questions served as a guide.
> 1. Using an act, reflect, revise mode (action research) what evidence of leadership can be realized?
> 2. What leadership/teaching actions and reflections will cause revisions and guide growth?

Sample

A purposeful cross-sectional sample (N=320) was selected due to accessibility and convenience. All participants were pre-service teachers (students) who attended Faculty of Education classes. All were enrolled in the Bachelor of Education (BEd) program, a one-year full-time professional program that meets the requirements of the Ontario College of Teachers for teacher certification. All participants had an approved undergraduate degree from an accredited university before enrolment. Participants were enrolled in one of two divisions in the Bachelor of Education program. Participants Included 120 students who were training to become J/I (Junior/Intermediate - Grades 4 to 10) teachers and 200 pre-service students in the I/S (Intermediate/Senior - Grades 7 to 12) levels.

Pre-service students completed recursive rounds of action research during practicum while completing courses in curriculum studies, curriculum methods, and foundations in education. Each year there were three practice teaching sessions for a total of 13 weeks of placement in elementary and secondary schools throughout the province of Ontario, Canada. Throughout the year age ranged from 22 to 57 and there were 217 females and 103 males respectively.

Research Design

This qualitative endeavour required us to supply images of action research that were studied in class and exemplars of written action research accounts from previous year students were used to layout a framework. Our intent was to facilitate the development of leadership skills through reflective

practicum tasks on three separate occasions. We collected over 1000 reflective accounts which were read, sorted into themes, and checked for the act, reflect, and revise elements. The themes, as noted earlier, involved five elements which included: Moral purpose, understanding change, relationship building, knowledge creation/sharing, and coherence making. These beacons of leadership guided and informed this study as we read accounts and looked for evidence line by line.

Each participant enacted an action research effort by noting their actions (ACT), documenting their thoughts and feelings concerning their leadership actions (REFECT) and detailing what they planned to do to next (REVISE). This task (ACT-REFLECT-REVISE) was but one means of collecting evidence and documenting the beginning of a long journey in education.

Results

Of the many (over 1000) reflective written accounts scrutinized 158 (16%) provided evidence of moral purpose (MP), 228 (29%) demonstrated an understanding of change (UC), 542 (54%) mentioned relationship building (RB), 482 (48%) noted knowledge creation and sharing (KCS), and 127 (13%) enacted coherence making (CM). A number of traits were intertwined and common to many reflective accounts; however, we determined the predominant trait via discussion of reflective accounts in class and through rereading.

Moral purpose

Of the 158 (16%) accounts denoting moral purpose we have included one that demonstrates how a pre-service educator has tried to make a difference in the life of a student via fair treatment within an educational milieu.

> My practicum was full of learning experiences – some more pronounced than others. The revisions that I made since October to my management strategies worked out fantastically; especially with my one behavioural student who was having some difficulties in the classroom, but was even more unmanageable in the gymnasium. After careful, personal consideration and discussion with my associate teacher, I decided to approach this situation from a different angle. I began each day by preparing this student for the gym class. I told him exactly what we were going to be doing. I explained what equipment we needed, the warm-up, the drill and the activity I had planned for the gym class that day. After telling him step by step how the class was going to unfold, I told him because it was going to be so busy, I needed help setting up the equipment and making sure the class ran as smoothly as possible. He jumped at the chance and volunteered to help me immediately. (Student,121)

The pre-service teacher's individual and personal consideration motivated the student and the pre-service teacher discovered just how moral purpose and fair treatment can establish pathways and bonds that diminish acting out in this context. Leading by engaging others is not straightforward and

there are a number of possible reactions to the disruptive student, yet using the right approach, a fair one, in this case pays dividends.

Understanding change

Teacher leaders know innately, that teaching and leading requires strategizing and innovativeness (Fullan, 2001, p. 31), at a pace that is enabling rather than disabling for students. The following excerpt, one of 228 (29%) indentified, is the latter portion of a four page reflection upon a teaching practicum. One student-teacher wrote:

> During the debates I had students calm themselves and take a deep breath between each new set of debaters. There were six teams in all for a total of three debates. Those who were not immediately involved sat at the back of the class like an audience. Once the debates were over students did not want to stop discussing and suggesting their ideas and arguments. I asked students to return to their rows and that we would only continue the debate as a class if they could listen, respect each other, and speak one at a time when called on. When they began to get loud and talk over each other I had to raise my voice and say "Quiet" because I wanted to stop them before it got out of control. They were quiet right away. I felt a little embarrassed having to get stern, but I think with such a large group it was necessary to remind them of the behaviour I asked for during the agreement.
>
> I will continue to experiment with group work activities and with motivating students to engage in classroom discussions, especially at the Grade 12 level because the vocalization of ideas and arguments will be expected of them in most Universities. I will try a new debate format and preparation process with the grade 10's when I return in November. This time we will look at two sides of a topic related to WWII. I look forward to challenging them and having them try out new roles and ways of working together and presenting information. (Student, 27)

I believe the key to innovativeness is the intention to experiment, to risk and hope for rewarding teaching and leading within the teaching practicum.

Relationship building

Being interested in others and constructing a focused collaborative community of learners is important. One, of 548 (54%) identified reflected:

> During my first practicum, I spent a lot of time with the students with learning disabilities and behavioural issues. I watched their individual learning styles, recorded problem areas, observed their manners and took note of times when their behaviour was appropriate and times when it was out of control. I worked to establish a rapport with these students and helped integrate them into their new classroom with as much ease as possible. I anticipated these were the students that would challenge me the most when I was in front of the class teaching. I want to be able to diffuse and manage potential disturbances or out- of- control situations as efficiently as I can in order to maximize the effectiveness of my lesson for all the students in the class. I believe each student is an individual and has individual actions, reactions and needs. It is essential for classroom management to have an extensive awareness and knowledge of these aspects with all students, but especially with students who have special needs. (Student 302)

Establishing a rapport is a fundamental element in classroom leadership and we see an instance of that here as the student teacher observed, plotted and worked to establish connectedness in an effort to build a relationship.

Knowledge creation and sharing

Fullan (2001) explains:

> The process of knowledge creation is no easy task. First tacit knowledge is by definition hard to get at. Second, the process must sort out and yield quality ideas; not all tacit knowledge is useful. Third quality ideas must be retrained, shared, and used throughout the [classroom]. (p. 80)

We looked for evidence of the above as teachers attempted to make their knowledge accessible and shared within their practice-teaching. One student explained how the learning is mutual, sudden, and rewarding.

> During my week of actual teaching, I was responsible for the math portion of the afternoons. Prior to my first lesson my AT asked me to work with the group of students that were not present for the first probability lesson and review with them what they had missed. This was definitely the eye opener for me and all the challenges surrounding this individual with Asperger's. As I was working with the students; all of whom were identified, this boy could not maintain his focus. He was scribbling on his page, he was talking aloud commenting on unrelated issues that did not quite make any sense, and he was disrupting the other students and all of this was leading to him not learning my lesson. It was interesting since I have never worked with challenged individuals or children with disabilities; I was not sure how I should respond. At first I politely asked him to refocus and pay attention to the task at hand. I would ask him direct questions to make sure he was not drifting away. At one point, I picked up one of his pens to show him something on his paper and he started panicking because I was using the black pen and it was apparently poisoned. He had another pen in his hand that you could choose which colour to use and he begged me to use that pen instead. To be honest, the whole experience was frustrating. I didn't know how to respond to his odd fits and his disruptive behaviour. That first day I definitely showed signs of impatience and I admit I was not quite prepared to handle this kind of student.

> The next week once my actual teaching began I kept pondering about how I would handle this boy and what tactics I would use to help him learn. My AT informed me that this boy is not stupid; he is in fact quite smart. He is manipulative in the sense that he fully knows what he is doing and has preconceived notions regarding his actions. On that note I was told to be firm with him and not tolerate his episodes. The next week I started teaching probability and it actually went a lot better than I thought. I learned a lot about this boy and how he worked.

> During independent work I found that he demanded a lot of my attention. He would complain that he didn't understand the work and that he was behind. At the beginning I definitely fell for it. I would sit beside him and work through the problems with him. I learned after a few classes that he actually understood the material quite well; he just believed he didn't understand or he just wanted someone to be there with him to assist with the questions so that he didn't have to do the work alone. I needed to stay on task since other students had questions and they couldn't be neglected either. It was difficult trying to adhere to the needs of my students as well

as keep an eye on what his boy was doing. If I didn't come see him for a while he would completely stop doing the work. If I asked him why he stopped he would say he didn't understand. I would claim that he did all the previous questions with no problem and then he would state that it was because I helped him. I eventually told him that yes I was present while he did the question; however I assisted him in no way at all besides reading that question to him. I made sure I was encouraging in telling him that he was doing a great job and was working well and to keep it up. In a supportive tone I told him that he knew what he was doing and I would come and check to see his next question in a few minutes. I would check on him periodically to help him stay on task.

One night I assigned homework and he told me that he would not complete it since he didn't understand. During language period that day I had a talk with him about math and his understanding. I was encouraging and explained to him that he knew what he was doing and to try. I was looking for effort and attempt. The next day he had completed the homework and it felt very rewarding. I also had a quiz that week and he actually did quite well. It felt good to see that he was understanding [sic] the content and actually completing his work. For me this was an example where I felt like I handled the situation well. I do realize that in a real classroom setting when I am my own teacher, I will not have that same amount of time to spend with him one on one. (Student 289)

Coherence making

Coherence making refers to ones ability to facilitate, sort and contribute to problem-solving and "the most powerful coherence is a function of having worked through the ambiguities and complexities of hard-to-solve problems" (Fullan, 2001, p. 116). Therefore we were looking for proof of this in the reflective accounts of pre-service teachers. A non-typical reflective account suggested and noted the steps undertaken to achieve such outcomes. This grade four student teacher/leader supplied this chart.

Act	Reflect	Revise
Remaining silent until the Students are quiet	I felt that this worked sometimes, depending on the day. If they students were in more of an observant mood, then it worked. Otherwise, they didn't care as much, and I had to resort to other management methods.	I would perhaps wait longer next time before giving in when I do this, if they don't catch on right away.
Using a timer to motivate efficiency	This worked as a motivator for the students. Anything that is turned into a competition for them is great, since it gives them something fun to work towards. I.e., beating their time from last time, etc.	This usually worked well, and there isn't much I'd change about this management strategy. Perhaps to incorporate maybe a tangible rewards system after so many successful attempts.
Using peer pressure to gain quietness	This does not always work in this classroom. That is because there are many students with behavioural problems, and	This is not much to change about this, except to not do it. It would work in some classrooms; however, with

	learning disabilities, who see misbehaving almost as a challenge, and entertaining. Therefore, on certain days, they don't care whether they get in trouble or not (even to the extreme of being sent to the principals office).	the dynamics of this class, it is not an effective strategy to use.
Getting students to line up quietly to walk down the hallway	This was a good strategy, in order to get them focused, since otherwise they would not be in the 'zone' to be quiet.	This usually worked fine. However, sometimes they don't really understand its value, so perhaps talk about it in class together, and get them to state why being quiet in the hallways is important.
Ensuring students put up their hand to speak in class	This creates great structure in the classroom. It also creates respect among the peers and the peers to teacher(s).	There is not much to change about this. However, we need to continue focusing on sticking by this rule, since it is not always strictly regarded as important.
Taking my time when speaking, and asking questions, ensuring students are following me	This is important, since the students need time to process information, and construct thoughts. This time allows them the chance to do this. It also allows them to think critically for themselves.	There isn't anything I would change about this strategy. The only thing I would perhaps add is to ask more probing questions to help their thought process.
Flexibility depending on how the day is going (every day is different)	This is critical, since things are changing so much, things are coming up, and students attitudes vary day to day, therefore, being well prepared, and therefore flexible to make changes as the day goes on, is important to help the day go smoothly.	The only thing to keep in mind is to be overly prepared, to be able to make quick changes to the day.
Enforcing the rule that when someone else is speaking, no one else is (whether it is the teacher or another student)	This is very important again, to demonstrate the importance of respect for one another. Half the students got frustrated when it was not silent for them to speak, and the other half didn't care. So a real emphasis on this needs to be continuously focused on.	What I need to change for this strategy is to enforce it stronger. It isn't consistent enough with them, since they take advantage of it sometimes.
Having instructions on the board for when the students come in the classroom in the morning, or following any recess.	This helped students get settled, since it gave them a task to do when they came in, as they were waiting for all their peers to get changed and get seated as well. This way they all had something to do, and no one was sitting around	This seemed to work great, since the students in this class were for the most part fairly needy, and had to have something to keep them on task at all times.

	with nothing to do.	
Getting the students to pick up their own coats, scarves, mittens and hats in the hallway and make sure they are hung up.	This helped them realize that no one was there to pick up after them.	This seemed to work since the students went from having their stuff all over the floors in the hallway, to having 'most' of their stuff hung up.
"Brooksy Bucks", (my associates last name is Brooks) pretend money they can collect when being good. At the end of each week, they were allowed to cash it in for real prizes.	This really helped encourage them since it was to buy prizes they all wanted (i.e., pokemon cards).	I don't think there is anything I'd want to change with this. It was very helpful since they all seemed to really enjoy it.
If they are misbehaving, tell them they will owe me time from their recess. Each check they get beside their name, they get one minute removed from their recess which they own me.	This worked in most cases. However, there are those exceptions of students who enjoy staying in at recess, therefore I am selective who I will use this on.	I am not sure what I can change about this. It seems to work for some of them, since some of the students are off task easily, and it helps put them back on the right path for the time being. I find it to have a temporary effect (in the sense it works differently day to day with different students).

(Student 186)

The student in this case elected to display the task within a chart in order to sort, organize and layout the next steps in problem solving which indicates another element of leadership.

Initially, our purpose was to discover if using an act, reflect, revise mode of action research would produce leadership evidence. Given the above excerpts, we answered this question positively and realized that the reflective process does indeed cause revisions and guide growth within teaching. It is about evolving while enacting praxis (practice) and to do this requires ongoing openness to change. Edwards (2000) states that "teachers who are successful in changing their practices do so through their commitment to change as well as visualizing what that change looks like" (p. 32). This attempt to revise praxis required an inner desire that ultimately amends teaching beliefs, actions and stance.

Discussion

Teachers are generally communal and it is this ability to commune, collaborate and support one another that is indispensable. Naested et al. (2004) suggests:

> We have to make ourselves vulnerable to others . . . Clearly this kind of
> expression of our inner self demonstrates who we really are . . . . leaders
> who inquire effectively into their own values and behaviours become more
> reflective and credible. In effect, they become models for the integrity and

> interpersonal trust needed to explore a host of organization-wide issues . . . In many of today's more enlightened schools, shared leadership is commonly understood in concept and action. Teachers are leaders in a very authentic sense. (p. 31)

As noted herein the classroom leader needs be guided by moral purpose, an understanding of change, an ability to build relationships, and create knowledge while sharing in a coherent manner. No one trait is above the other as it is a linear or curvilinear relationship that can be laid out on paper and to the leader who demonstrates these traits there is a reward.

> Empowerment, also referred to as shared decision-making, is essential to school reform and to the changing demands in a global world. Empowerment translates into teacher leadership and exemplifies a paradigm shift with the decisions made by those working most closely with students rather than those at the top of the pyramid. (Terry, 1999, p. 1)

Teachers who recognize the value of the five noted leadership traits will easily empower both themselves and others we have discovered. Our mode of inquiry leads to empowerment as action research is about connectedness and relationships, hence "without social interaction in human learning, no conceptual learning would be possible" (Sfard, 2003, p. 371). It is important that pre-service teachers have the opportunity to act, reflect upon actions, and then propose revisions especially when taking initial steps in their chosen profession. It is about evolving while enacting praxis (practice) and to do this requires ongoing change which is observed, examined and connected to what was known. Some would argue that it is constructivism in its purest form "grounded in the philosophy of Dewey and the theories of Piaget (1950) and Vygotsky (1978), [since] constructivisim is based on the premise that students learn best when they are able to construct their knowledge, often from hands-on interactions . . ." (Henniger, 2004, p. 258). Our student-teachers are learning, constructing linkages and growing as leaders.

Revealing pre-service educators' educational experiences is essential since it can inspire, prompt and clarify needed behavioral change and it can also expose entrenched or tacit knowledge. This improves a teachers social functioning. The suggestion, for our schools and our pre-service programs, is to confront change and take action. Dewey's concern for social functioning within a society remains engaging today possibly due to the daily dysfunction that reaches us via the media coverage of education and schooling. Pre-service teachers often find fault within the educational system they are plunged into each practicum suggesting it is wanting and that they intend to take a leadership role to make it better.

Our many reflective practice-teaching accounts demonstrated elements of leadership and this is important since:

> Teachers' roles are changing in fundamental and positive ways at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Greater autonomy and an expanded role in educational policy-making has led to 'unprecedented opportunities for today's teachers to extend their leadership roles beyond the classroom.

(Parkay, Hardcastle-Standford, Vaillancourt, & Stephens, 2005, p. 371)

The teachers who complete practicum in this era write about their complex and broad duties which is refreshing since this demonstrates a greater level of democracy and shared power when so much is expected of student-teachers. After all, "teachers' lives are enriched and energized in many ways when they actively pursue leadership opportunities "(Barth, 2001, p. 444). The faculty of education is no longer solely producing teachers; they are supporting the development of leaders.

Conclusion

The evolving action researchers, classroom leaders and teachers are dealing with personal experiences and this informs and steers people in the pre-service year. Our data (written accounts) provided evidence that supports our resulting inferences, discussion and conclusions and demonstrates the leadership within the pre-service classroom during practicum. Yet it is the analysis and synthesis of practicum reflections that illuminates core beliefs, attitudes and needs of emerging action researchers, leaders and teachers. Dewey suggested, "Meanings and purposes of education must be actively constructed by individual persons" (Dewey, 1916, p. 96), and the practicum and theory classes seem to provide this opportunity. Nonetheless, a reproving note:

> Pre-service teachers remain basically unchanged through education programs . . . . In spite of this resilience to educative change, it is argued here that facilitating authentic development of teachers' purposes of education, by changing their holistic beliefs remains a worthwhile task. (Webster, 2004, p. 82)

This cautionary note appears to have merit but may not be applicable to all since the developmental mode of teacher education is often internal, varied and covert. The pre-service experience is about self-analysis and discovery learning however, the requirement to clearly formulate and express ones educational experience via reflection seems understandable and necessary in order to construct well-built internal and external positions. These positions provide fuel for reflective modes which can substantively improve development and leadership.

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