Centring Equity and Social Justice in Teacher Leadership

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Abstract

In the past ten years, "new" approaches to teacher leadership have emphasized collective leadership, school improvement, school organization, curriculum and instruction, and leadership organized around important functions. In this article, equity and social justice are offered as two ideals around which teacher leadership should be conceptualized and carried out. The Teacher Leadership for Equity and Justice Framework (TLEJ) is offered as one approach to the integration of theory, research, and practice for the initial preparation and professional development of all teachers, including those working with students from diverse backgrounds. In addition to a discussion of the two constructs upon which this framework is built, each TLEJ element will be articulated in detail, and suggestions will be provided for ways in which school administrators can work to ensure the success of teachers' efforts.

Introduction

Traditionally, formal preparation for positions of leadership in education have ignored issues and concerns for social justice (Marshall, 2004). Few scholars have offered pragmatic approaches for developing educational leaders committed to social justice and equity (Brown, 2004, p.79) and most of these are focused on formal school administrators. Though it cannot be denied that administrators are critical to school improvement,

principals alone cannot provide all of the leadership necessary to sustain change (Donaldson, 2001). Further, leadership towards the realization of equity and social justice in schools is not something that administrators can engineer in isolation of the stakeholders whose lives and livelihoods depend, not only on the improvement of schools, but also on the reform of educational systems.

This article will offer one attempt to integrate theory, research, and practice within a framework relevant to the conceptual and practical challenges of teacher leadership in schools. Specifically, it will suggest that in addition to the traditional roles associated with teacher leadership, centring issues of equity and social justice can have a substantial benefit for school improvement and the personal and academic development of students. In an effort to provide a backdrop for the discussion to follow, this article will begin with a brief discussion of various forms of teacher leadership. It will then present two related constructs upon which the framework is built. Next, each element of the framework will be articulated in detail before concluding with ways to ensure the success of teachers' efforts.

Forms of Teacher Leadership

The idea of teacher leadership dates back to the early 1900s when progressive educators argued that it would be almost impossible for schools to promote democracy if they were not organized in democratic ways (Weise & Murphy, 1995, cited in Smylie, Conley & Marks, 2002, p. 163). The purpose of teacher leadership then was essentially the same as it is now, that is, to empower teachers. When teachers take on leadership roles they have greater influence on decisions that are relevant to their work, and assume some authority over professional issues at the classroom and school levels (Bacharach, Banberger, Conley & Bauer, 1990; Smylie, 1997; Somech, 2002).

Teacher leadership can be formal, informal, or even unintentional, as some teachers who take on these roles do not consider themselves to be leaders because they associate this concept only with principals or other administrators (see Harris & Drake, 1997). "Informal" leadership takes place outside a teacher's official job responsibilities and can include activities such as sharing expertise and ideas with colleagues, helping them to carry out their classroom duties, volunteering for new projects, or assisting in improvement efforts targeted at the entire school or classroom practice. Teachers also demonstrate informal leadership when they take responsibility for their professional growth and engage in practitioner

research (Leithwood, Jantzi & Steinbach, 1999). "Formal" leadership, on the other hand, describes work that is associated with one's official responsibilities or designated roles. Teachers who serve as department heads, union representatives, or members of a school governance body would be considered as such (Smylie, 1997). The work of mentoring novice teachers into the profession can be both formal, in the case of lead or mentor teachers provided by one's district, or informal, in situations where more experienced teachers take beginners "under their wing" during their initial years in the field.

Among the wide variety of ways in which teachers can lead in their schools, ten activities have been identified as essential to schooling (Barth, 2001, p. 444; Imber & Duke, 1984). Each can be performed by teachers in formal or informal roles, and even those who do not consider themselves to be leaders can contribute to the decision-making implied in these processes, which include:

- choosing textbooks and instructional materials
- shaping the curriculum
- setting standards for student behaviour
- deciding which students are tracked into special classes
- designing staff development and in-service programs
- setting promotions and retention policies
- deciding school budgets
- evaluating teacher performance
- selecting new teachers, and
- selecting new administrators

Teacher Leaders as Agents for Equity and Social Justice

In the past ten years, new approaches to teacher leadership have emphasized the importance of collective leadership, school improvement, (that is, efforts aimed at school-wide change and the development of important aspects of school organization, curriculum and instruction), and leadership organized around important functions, not simply around people and positions (Smylie et al., 2002). These approaches have provided opportunities for teachers to lead as researchers, members of self-managed teams, and mentors. In this article, I argue that in addition to demonstrating leadership through these means, teachers can also lead by serving as agents for equity and social justice. In this role, concerns for both distributive and symbolic injustice are placed front and centre as teachers use equity-based approaches to meet the needs of diverse learners and to build on the strengths of students and colleagues. These teachers serve as catalysts for

change, and problematize existing practices and reform proposals—not for the purpose of becoming more efficient at doing more of the same, but for imagining and constructing new institutional possibilities (Goldfarb & Grinberg, 2002, p. 162).

Teachers in these roles strive for a form of "communal leadership" (Foster, 1986) that is shared amongst individuals, where followers assume leadership and leaders, in turn, become followers. In short, effective leaders provide opportunities for other leaders to emerge, and through this process leadership becomes a shared and communal process. Without losing sight of the importance of student achievement, teacher leaders who are agents for equity and social justice work to identify and address all aspects of student growth and development, and are responsive to social change, cultural practices, and the ways in which power works to privilege some and marginalize others.

Related Frameworks

The Teacher Leadership for Equity and Justice Framework (TLEJ) to be presented later in the article draws on work of other scholars who are interested in exploring ways to apply inclusive and antiracist pedagogy to educational administration and teacher professional development. Towards this end, it is informed by James Ryan's work (2003, 2006), which provides a way to think about the broadening of the notion of leadership beyond administration, and encourages us to think about inclusion in global terms. The TLEJ Framework also builds on collaborative work between the author, George Dei, and Jasmin Zine (Dei, James, Karumanchery, James-Wilson & Zine, 2000; Dei, James-Wilson, & Zine 2002) in an attempt to apply antiracist principles to the work of teacher leadership.

Inclusive Leadership

Inclusive leadership is a concept that James Ryan (2003, 2006) has developed in his work over the past ten years. It is concerned with including students, teachers, and parents in decision-making, and focuses on efforts to recognize, critique, and change global exclusionary processes (such as racism and sexism) that exist in schools and in the wider community. Leadership is viewed as a collective process, where communal action is emphasized and leadership practices involve and provide opportunities for all stakeholders to be represented equitability and consistently (Ryan, 2003, pp. 58–59). Educational leaders who work within an inclusive leadership framework give serious consideration to goals that target wider social issues and global change. Through their attention to, and concern for,

injustice and the misuse of power on an international scale, administrators work through their positions to help ensure that marginalized communities receive fair, equitable, and inclusive treatment in schools and beyond (Ryan, 2003).

There are four elements of the inclusive leadership construct that are inherent in the framework to follow. In both instances, *leadership is conceptualized as a distributed, communal, and equitable process.* The *development of a critical consciousness,* which enables practitioners to explore the taken-for-granted aspects of school and community life that work against inclusion and the life chances of students and everyone in the community, is also key to both approaches. Administrators who work towards inclusive leadership *promote dialogue* that is open and equitable. This ability is also valued in the TLEJ Framework, as it is viewed as one of the ways to create learning communities that are both democratic and empowering for teacher leaders.

An inclusive leadership approach encourages school administrators to engage in decision-making and policy processes in which the larger community is involved when considering the best ways to introduce and implement sound strategies that will ensure the success of inclusive practices. When applied to the work of teacher leadership, this involves the development of skills and abilities that allow teachers to participate in *shared decision-making* and the development of school-based policies that help to ensure equity for all students.

Critical Integrative Approach to Inclusive Schooling

The critical integrative approach to inclusive schooling (Dei et al., 2002) builds on the philosophical foundations of critical approaches to diversity such as critical multiculturalism (see Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1998), critical pedagogy (see Giroux, 1988), and antiracism education (see Dei, 1996; Lee, 1985). However, it extends the focus on power, difference, and social identity, and recognizes these as fundamental to the critical rethinking of the ways in which education must be implemented in a pluralistic society so that equitable social and educational outcomes are achieved. It also expands the notion of antiracism education by addressing the need for multiple centres of knowledge to be represented in schools.

Like the inclusive leadership framework, the critical integrative approach to inclusive schooling contests the marginalization of minority voices, experiences, and histories, and challenges the devaluation of these by insisting they be included in the curriculum. It also argues that the knowledge of families and community workers can empower students to

achieve both academically and socially. Within this approach there is a deep recognition that the degree to which a given community can assert its agency is dependent upon their understanding of the importance of collectively produced knowledge embedded in local cultural histories, daily human experiences, and social interactions.

There are four basic learning objectives in this approach for both the teacher and the learner and, ideally, each individual should participate in both of these roles. These objectives are intrinsically linked—the ability to achieve one ultimately depends on the acquisition of the others. The first learning objective of *integrating multiple centres of knowledge* into the traditional knowledge base of schools requires the creation of a "more plural centre" within the traditional curriculum. The paradigm of "multiple centres" represents a process of making room for other ways of knowing and understanding the world. This involves the integration of traditionally marginalized knowledges and histories as an integral part of the school curriculum, rather than as "add-ons." A critical integrative approach uses diversity as a starting point for knowledge integration, and stresses the examination and interrogation of the socially constructed concepts of race, religion, ability, ethnicity, gender, social class, language, and sexuality as fundamental to the teaching and learning process.

The learning objective of *recognition and respect for difference* involves the ability to acknowledge the differences in others and to understand the ways in which each of us is positioned vis-à-vis those differences. It requires teachers and schools to recognize the inherent differences and multiple identities that students bring with them to school based on race, ethnicity, social class, gender, religion, ability, and sexuality, and to incorporate practices that account for the total lived experiences of children and youth, and both affirm and inspire all learners.

The *effecting social and educational change* learning objective views the struggle for equity, access, and social justice as work that requires an examination of power, representation, and the distribution of resources. This involves a critique of the status quo and the development of an understanding of how it is used to maintain inequalities. Finally, in order to achieve the *youth and community empowerment* objective, teachers and schools must be able to engage with families and the wider community in ways that are productive, respectful, and understanding of differences of opinion, perspectives, and ways of making sense of the world. Within the critical integrative framework of inclusive schooling, the notion of empowerment is one that is reciprocal and dialogic. It also challenges the notion of "giving power" when referring to human interaction, arguing

instead that there must always be sense of agency on the part of those "being empowered."

The Teacher Leadership for Equity and Justice Framework

School change is the result of teachers, school administrators, families, students, and community stakeholders working together in different ways to make the most of the resources and expertise available to them (Leithwood et al., 1999; Ryan, 2003, 2006). Within the Teacher Leadership for Equity and Justice Framework, the primary goal of teacher leadership is achieved when teachers work collectively with colleagues, school and district level administrators, families, students, and community stakeholders to establish the conditions necessary to ensure equity and justice in and through education. Each of the outcomes below describes the ways in which teacher leaders make a contribution to this collective work. The elements of the framework include:

1. Effecting social and educational change through rejection of the status quo.
2. Responding to the sociocultural, economic, and political context of schooling through the management of resources, policy development, and collaborative decision-making.
3. Fostering an inclusive school culture through interpersonal communication and democratic participation.
4. Supporting educators to respond to diversity through practices that are inclusive and antiracist.
5. Empowering communities through the engagement of families and stakeholders.
6. Influencing school improvement and the implementation of school reform through the integration of theory, practice, and scholarship.

These elements are meant to be dynamic, as they not only suggest what teacher leaders "should do," but also provide a way to think about the ways through which their goals might be achieved. These elements are also interrelated and overlapping as will become evident in the explication to follow.

1. Effecting Social and Educational Change Through Rejection of the Status Quo

The status quo in many schools is characterized by large numbers of students who experience negative treatment and inequitable learning opportunities on a daily basis (Brown, 2004, p. 81; see also Alexander,

Entwisle, & Olsen, 2001; Delpit, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Ortiz, 1997; Scheurich & Laible, 1999). Alarming numbers of students are underachieving or dropping out of school, and a disproportional number of minoritized students are labelled as behavioural problems or placed in low-level academic programs. Further, research suggests that some schools actually impede their students' ability to be successful (see Darling-Hammond, 1997; Gibson & Ogbu, 1991; Nieto, 1999). Deficit thinking, or a "blaming the victim" approach, has been advanced as the most viable explanation for the underachievement of students from nondominant groups (Bishop, 2001; Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Ryan, 1971; Valencia, 1997), where "based on socially constructed and stereotypical images, educators may unknowingly, and with the best of intentions, allocate blame for poor school performance to children from minoritized groups based on generalizations, labels and misguided assumptions" (Shields, 2004, p. 111). In the status quo, differences are often treated as deficits, and students and families are pathologized for sociohistorical and structural injustices.

Teachers who lead are constantly faced with pressures to maintain the status quo (Little, 1995), making this first objective one that requires diligence and persistence. In order to influence social and educational change, teacher leaders need to be able to recognize the status quo, and to have a vision of the change they are working towards and an unwavering commitment to its realization. Towards this end, teachers need to acknowledge the ways in which representation and the distribution of resources privilege some and marginalize others, and to be able to examine the ways in which power is wielded in educational settings. They also need to understand the role of education in the maintenance of social inequities, and be cognizant of the ways in which they are implicated within the structures of dominance and marginality (Dei et al., 2002, p. 17).

Developing a vision for change begins with a critique of the unquestioned practices and underlying assumptions that impede equity and encourage symbolic and distributive injustice in schools. This ability requires not simply the skills to be critical (including, the ability to ascertain implicit truth claims and to scrutinize the evidence of logic). Instead, this type of a criticism requires a "critical consciousness" (Brown, 2004, p. 88). Unlike those for whom critique is only an intellectual exercise, teachers who possess a critical consciousness are able to act in support of their views and convictions and are willing to follow through on their positions and commitments (Ryan, 2006). Together with co-collaborators, teacher leaders develop a vision and core beliefs for their schools and

communicate these to others in the community. They also spearhead the work to identify, clarify, and address any barriers that might undermine their efforts.

2. Responding to the Sociocultural, Economic, and Political Context of Schooling Through the Management of Resources, Policy Development, and Collaborative Decision-Making

This objective is concerned with the teacher leaders' ability to understand the social, cultural, and political context within which they work, and to realize that the things that happen in schools are often the consequences of collective forms of action, long-standing traditions, and cultures or wider social patterns (Ryan, 2003, p. 54). Teacher leaders need to understand how resources are allocated to their schools and, through the use of equity-based approaches, help to ensure that the students with the greatest need receive the resources they require to be successful. Because what they are given is often insufficient, these practitioners also need to be enterprising and able to generate or identify additional sources of funding for their schools.

Teacher leaders who are agents for equity and justice work to ensure that norms and unstated rules of their schools are codified and explicit. Likewise, "common knowledge" amongst teachers is discussed, challenged if necessary, and used to inform school-based policies, teaching practices, and working arrangements that are in the best interest of all learners. In addition to developing policy, teacher leaders need to understand educational policy and reform at the school, board or district, provincial or state, and federal levels. Not only is this knowledge critical to their ability to make informed decisions, but also it is necessary to enable them to respond proactively to the impact of these policies on their work with students, colleagues, and families.

Smylie (1997) suggests that a teacher's willingness to participate in decision-making processes is related to the nature of the issue, the degree to which his or her interests are affected, and his or her willingness to take risks that are associated with assuming responsibility. Teacher leaders working for equity and social justice believe it is their responsibility to become involved in decisions related to equity issues and to put the interest of students and families before their own. They are willing to take risks to achieve results. Through their work with others and their own professional development, teacher leaders work to enhance their ability to use problem-solving approaches, consider options, predict possible consequences, and take action for which they accept accountability. They are also able to

devise and participate in decision-making processes that position them to respond effectively to the unexpected and to provide assistance with ongoing issues that arise.

3. Fostering an Inclusive School Culture Through Interpersonal Communication and Democratic Participation

Teacher leaders are often in situations where the school culture may have to be altered to accommodate their new roles (Wasley, 1991). In some cases, they may even need to work to reculture the school, which Thompson, David, Caruthers, and Gregg (2003, p. 329) suggest can only happen as a result of educators reflecting upon, evaluating, and expanding their own mental models regarding the education of young people and their willingness to unlearn complex beliefs and assumptions that underline behaviour. Teacher leaders who are agents for equity and social justice are able to influence their colleagues in ways that encourage them to internalize inclusive and equity-based approaches to teaching and learning, where the values and objectives of anti-racist pedagogy are shared by all involved in the schooling process and where these ideals inform and affect practice in settings in which every educator accepts responsibility for the intellectual and personal development of students.

MacKinnon (2000) suggests that educators who are able to be agents for equity care about "the quality of relationships among all those who constitute 'the school' and the nature of the school circumstances in which children learn" (p. 7). Teacher leaders need to be able to recognize and appreciate the influence of the school environment on the learning experience, on opportunities for professional growth, and on the well-being of students and teachers. More important, they need to be able to model respectful ways to interact with and engage families, and be willing to share strategies for involving all families as equal partners in the education of their children with colleagues and administrators. Finally, teacher leaders who are agents for equity and social justice encourage their colleagues and the wider community to think of schools as communities of agents—not as an organization of members—and to see students not as "individual products being processed through the system, certified according to their achievement test scores," but as participants in a democracy where, along with their families and teachers, they have the opportunities to take on leadership roles and change their communities for the better (Foster, 1986).

Teachers construct others as leaders based on their interactions with them (Spillane, Hallett & Diamond, 2003). Unfortunately, as Barth (2001)

argues, "many teachers seem to lack the personal, interpersonal and group skills essential to the successful exercise of leadership." Moreover, what he refers to as the "hallmarks of collegiality," including talking about practice, sharing craft knowledge, and observing one another engaged in practice, are simply absent (p. 446). Though all teachers need to possess excellent interpersonal and communication skills in order to address the inevitable conflict and uncertainty involved in schools (Blase & Blase, 1999, 2000), teacher leaders who are agents for equity and social justice must also be able to extend interaction into building relationships. Burbules' (1993) "communicative virtues" begin to suggest the types of skills and behaviours teacher leaders need to develop, including: tolerance, patience, openness to give and receive criticism, a willingness to admit mistakes, a desire to reinterpret concerns in a way that makes them comprehensive to others, self-restraint, a willingness and ability to listen thoughtfully and attentively, and a willingness to re-examine their presuppositions and to compare them with others. When working with colleagues, teacher leaders also need to be open, authentic, and honest (Short & Greer, 1997).

4. Supporting Educators to Respond to Diversity Through Practices that are Inclusive and Antiracist

Teacher leaders need to understand and value the complexity of schools where students with different abilities, sexual orientations, religious beliefs, and a variety of racial, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds come to learn and build relationships with others. In their positions as leaders, they need to be able to take on the role of cultural workers who act as brokers and bridges across diverse groups and competing agendas in order to prepare students for a multicultural and pluralistic world. The ability to recognize and respect differences is a prerequisite for working in this manner.

Teacher leaders who are agents for equity and justice need to help ensure that teaching and leadership practices affirm and account for the total lived experiences of students (Dei et al., 2002). Towards this end, they provide support to other educators through professional development that is organized locally and provides them with knowledge that is relevant and useful in their context (Goldman, Dunlap & Conley, 1993; Short & Greer, 1997). Demonstration, peer observation, coaching, mentoring, and descriptive and collective inquiry are just some of the strategies they use to increase the capacity of others to: treat all people fairly and with respect and dignity; use a variety of authentic assessment strategies that provide extensive and varied information about student performance; integrate

multiple centres of knowledge in the development of curriculum, including community, spiritual, and indigenous (Dei et al., 2002); develop effective learning strategies for teaching English language learners and students with disabilities; address homophobic, racist, and sexist behaviours in students and colleagues; reach out to families that are disengaged; and involve community stakeholders as resources in the teaching and learning process.

As teacher leaders work to help their colleagues and school administrators become more effective in responding to issues related to the diversity of their student population, they also need to be willing to work in diverse teams, including groups that include people who do not think in the ways they do or share their educational or political points of view. These arrangements become the sites within which leaders hone their ability to draw on the strengths of diversity and encourage diverse thought and action.

5. Empowering Communities Through the Engagement of Families and Stakeholders

Teacher leaders need to be able to evaluate issues, identify biases, understand multiple perspectives, and synthesize information in order to be able to empower others. They also need to be willing to engage in power-sharing that recognizes the individual dignity and collective worth of those participating and provides a space for everyone to be heard (Dei, 1996). The relationship between teachers and families—particularly those from marginalized groups—is inherently unequal because of their social positions. Because of the institutional power teachers possess, some families are unlikely to question their actions or authority and almost revere them because of norms in their cultural communities. In order to help families feel empowered, teacher leaders need to actively facilitate the process (James-Wilson, 2003).

Here again, democratic participation and communal leadership can be two effective strategies for the engagement of families. For example, teacher leaders need to be able to help all families better understand summative and formative assessments of their children's progress, the learning standards against which their children will be measured, how to support their achievement of these standards, and how to confront assessment practices they believe are biased or inappropriate. Families also need to have strategies for identifying allies within bureaucratic school systems and for leveraging the power of these individuals—and their own power as families—in the service of their children. Having made these

recommendations, however, it is important to realize that involving families in democratic participation and decision-making cannot be accomplished "simply by issuing an invitation and holding an open meeting; it often requires teaching people how to participate, making them feel comfortable, and empowering them to feel competent and capable" (Shields, 2004, p. 124). In short, creating conditions that support empowerment requires engagement and the building of skills and self-esteem (Dei et al., 2002, p. 18).

Goldfarb & Grinberg (2002) argue that leadership for social justice must provide opportunities for authentic participation, where schools work to provide spaces and resources for the community to determine its own destiny and where "practicing professionals have the responsibility to facilitate, advise, and consult, but not to impose" (p. 170). Though all teachers need to develop an understanding of family cultures and an awareness of how they are distanced from school in order to interact thoughtfully with them (Henry, 1996), teacher leaders who are agents for equity and social justice also have to develop a better understanding of themselves—including their prejudices, preconceptions, and biases, and how these work together to inform their beliefs about, and reactions to, families. The sense of agency is enhanced through the building of self-esteem and self-confidence. These characteristics, which help to develop the capacity for political engagement, should be developed based on some knowledge of both the individual and group identities of the families with which teachers are collaborating (Dei et al., 2002). All teachers need to believe that families can be effective partners in any enterprise concerning their children (Carreiro, 1989), and be able to treat them as equal partners and advocates for their children.

6. Influencing School Improvement and the Implementation of School Reform Through the Integration of Theory, Practice, and Scholarship

Teacher leaders need to be excellent practitioners because other teachers value colleagues who are masterful, and tend to be comfortable assigning leadership roles to peers who demonstrate expertise in the classroom (Spillane et al., 2003). In this framework, excellence is characterized by reflective practice that is shaped by theory—be it formal, informal, tacit, or expressed. Theory provides a framework for making decisions, critiquing practice, and formulating problem-solving approaches as teachers encounter the inevitable problems associated with collaboration, rejecting the status quo and ensuring equity in public schools.

All teacher leaders need to be capable of increasing the academic achievement of their students though the use of curriculum and instructional and assessment strategies that are effective and aligned with established learning standards. Leaders who are agents for equity and social justice, however, are also able to support student learning through curriculum and instructional approaches that are innovative and engaging, and attend to the physical, emotional, social, and spiritual dimensions of the learner. Within this framework, antiracist education, inclusive and antiracist pedagogy, and culturally relevant and differentiated instruction are promoted as some of the most effective ways to ensure equity for all students.

Lieberman and Miller (2004) suggest "when leadership has scholarship at its foundation, it is more about expertise, credibility and influence than it is about power, authority and control" (p. 29). Teacher leaders who are scholars influence their colleagues as they study practice collaboratively, read and discuss the work of other researchers, and make their own work available to others for the purpose of discussion and critique so that practices can be adopted and adapted by others. When understood within this framework, "scholarship is characterized by the necessity of making one's work public in some form, being amenable to having it critiqued and passing it on to others so that they can build on it" (p. 29).

Developing the Capacity of School Administrators to Support Teacher Leadership

School improvement initiatives cannot succeed without the support of principals (Barth, 2001), and the importance of developing administrators' capacities to support teacher leadership should not be overlooked. One should not assume that those working at the district or school levels are expert at providing the types of structures and supports teacher leaders need (Smylie et al., 2002, p. 183). The literature suggests that in order for teacher leadership to be effective, teachers and administrators must be prepared to share power and commit to the new arrangements (Blase & Blase, 1997, 1999; Bredeson, 1989; Epp & MacNeil, 1997). Though school administrators are not always willing to share their legal power with teachers, especially if they feel hindered by the authority and responsibility that accompanies their position, or if they believe they will inevitably have to answer for others if things go wrong (Blase & Blase, 1997, 1999; Bolin, 1989; Bredeson; Kirby, 1992; Wallace, 2001), they must be willing to surrender some of their authority to others. Likewise, they need to be able to shift their orientation from decision-makers to facilitators (Blase & Blase, 1997, 1999; Epp & MacNeil; Glickman, Allen, & Lunsford 1994;

Short & Greer, 1997), and when possible, principals and vice-principals should work to put into place decision-making arrangements that give teachers real power (Duke, Showers, & Imber, 1980; Short & Greer). An inclusive approach to leadership lends itself well to the development of these skills.

If teacher leadership is to be institutionalized, schedules that provide the extra time for participation in leadership activities need to be established, and ongoing professional development must be implemented (Blase & Blase, 1999; Short & Greer, 1997). School administrators have a role to play as they are also uniquely positioned to gain support from their districts to formalize the opportunities teachers have for leadership and to create mechanisms for the provision of adequate time and resources (Blase & Blase, 1997; Bredeson, 1989; Short & Greer). In order to avoid the problem of role ambiguity, school administrators need to understand the new roles that result from teacher leadership and be able to explain them to others (Bredeson). These roles should be clearly specified, but not overly constraining (Leithwood et al., 1999). Moreover, administrators should be in a position to help teacher leaders define the parameters of their work, set and clarify their goals, provide incentives, and help to formulate the ways in which teacher leaders will be held accountable (Bauer & Bogotch, 2001; Smylie & Hart, 1999). With their sense of the "bigger picture," administrators should be able to help teacher leaders focus their work on the broader organizational objectives of the school, and actively work to link teacher research to school-wide improvement planning and decision-making (Smylie et al., 2002).

Conclusion

The Teacher Leadership for Equity and Justice Framework presented in this paper is the latest iteration of an evolving construct (James-Wilson, 2003, 2005). It has changed significantly over the past two years, and is likely to change again based on the findings of research designed to examine the influence of this model on the ability of teachers to ensure equity through leadership in schools and within communities. These studies are being conducted with pre- and in-service teachers who are part of the Urban Teaching and Leadership Program (UTL) at the Warner Graduate School of Education and Human Development, one of five professional schools at the University of Rochester. The mission of the Warner School is to prepare practitioners and researchers who are leaders and agents of change; to generate and disseminate knowledge leading to new understandings of education and human development; and to collaborate across disciplines,

professions, and constituencies to promote change that can significantly improve education and support positive human development. The school's work is informed by a number of underlying beliefs, including the notion that the work of improving education involves the pursuit of social justice.

Lieberman and Miller (2004) argue that teacher leaders learn on the job, through experiences and practice, and by trial and error, and that this learning is context-dependent. Though I do not disagree with this perspective, it should not negate the fact that there are skills and knowledge that teachers can learn before they are assigned to a school building, and that professional preparation through university-based programs can reduce the degree to which they rely on "trial and error" to develop their craft. The UTL Program was designed to be one such program as it provides a comprehensive approach to recruiting, preparing, and providing professional development for present and future leaders in the Rochester City School District (RCSD). Through the use of the TLEJ Framework, the program combines the use of theory, practice, and activism to help urban educators develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions required to become effective educators, advocates for students and their families, and agents for equity and social justice.

Preparing teachers who understand leadership as more than the purview of the principal, the product of individual actions, or a talent bestowed on few is critical if schools are to make the most of the expertise in their buildings. More important, developing a teaching force that believes teachers, administrators, families, and communities working together can counteract inequity and injustice on a school-wide, district-wide and nation-wide level may be the most effective way to initiate and sustain school improvement and school reform.

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