Equity-Based Teacher Leaders Facilitating Change within an Urban Professional Development School

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Abstract: The purpose of this article is to describe our collective efforts to support inservice teacher learning for equity within the Professional Development School partnership at Hope Elementary. The authors consist of two university faculty members (Jacobs, Burns), a doctoral student who co-teaches coursework at Hope (Haraf), Hope's instructional coach (Bellas), and two teachers/members of the teacher leader academy (Perrone, Holt). This article provides details about our work and implications for others hoping to support teacher learning around equity.

KEYWORDS: equity-based teaching; professional development; Professional Development School

NAPDS NINE ESSENTIALS ADDRESSED:
1. A comprehensive mission that is broader in its outreach and scope than the mission of any partner and that furthers the education profession and its responsibility to advance equity within schools and, by potential extension, the broader community;
3. Ongoing and reciprocal professional development for all participants guided by need;

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Within the teacher education literature, there are calls to facilitate the development of teachers who are culturally responsive (Villegas & Lucas, 2002), socially just (Cochran-Smith, 2004), and equity-oriented (Gorski, Davis, & Reiter, 2012). There is a need to develop teachers who understand equity as PK-12 students continue to face disparities, bias, and marginalization related to culture, race, language, gender, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status within our nation's schools. Gorski (2017) describes equity as "a fair or equitable distribution of access and opportunity" thus involving a commitment to justice (p.19). Urban school contexts are often highlighted as spaces where conversations around equity need to take place due to systemic challenges such as fewer resources, scripted curriculum, teacher turnover, and transience (Gorski, 2017; Milner, 2012). Professional Development Schools (PDSs), with a rich history of successful collaboration, can serve as potential vehicles for collective efforts to transform low-performing, high-needs urban schools (Rutter, 2011).

From the beginning, calls for PDSs included an emphasis on equity (Holmes, 1990; NAPDS, 2008; NCATE, 2001) as an outcome of the collaboration between PK-12 schools and universities. For example, the 2001 NCATE PDS standards articulated that "PDS partnerships are committed to providing equitable learning opportunities for all, and to preparing teaching candidates and faculty to meet the needs of diverse student populations" (NCATE, 2001, p.1). In addition, Essential One of the NAPDS Nine Essentials explained that PDSs should have, "A comprehensive mission that is broader in its outreach and scope than the mission of any partner and that furthers the education profession and its responsibility to advance equity within schools and, by potential extension, the broader community" (NAPDS, 2008). While some contexts have been able to amplify these social justice goals in their PDSs (e.g. Zenkov, Corrigan, Beebe, & Sell, 2013), widespread attention to equity within the PDS literature is lacking (Breault & Lack, 2009).

The research on equity and PDSs as well as teacher education often broadly focuses on teacher candidates (Beardsley & Teitel, 2004; Cochran-Smith, 2004; McDonald, 2007; Taylor & Sobel, 2003). There is a lack of empirically-based research on facilitating inservice teacher's understanding of equity in the context of a PDS. This absence is problematic as we know mentor teachers are extremely influential in teacher candidate development (AACTE, 2018; Ellis, Alonzo, & Nguyen, 2020; Izadinia, 2015; Rozelle & Wilson, 2012; Wilson, Floden, & Ferrini-Mundy, 2001). If teacher candidates are to develop in their understanding of equity, they will need mentor teachers who are also committed to this work. Therefore, supporting the learning of inservice teachers within a PDS around equity is key to the learning of teacher candidates and PK-12 students (Polly, Reinke, & Putman, 2019; Zenkov et al., 2013). The purpose of this article is to describe our collective efforts to support inservice teacher learning for equity within the PDS at Hope Elementary. The authors consist of two university faculty members (Jacobs, Burns), a doctoral student who co-teaches coursework at Hope (Haraf), Hope's instructional coach (Bellas), and two teachers/members of the teacher leader academy (Perrone, Holt).

Hope Elementary PDS

Hope Elementary is a PDS between the Colossal School District (pseudonym) and Urban Research University (pseudonym) in the southeastern United States. Within this urban Title 1 school, 97% of students are on free and reduced lunch and the student population is predominantly students of color. Many students are shelter insecure and ten percent qualify as homeless. The student population changes daily; some years, the number of students is just over 800 and other years, there are over 1000 students in this PK-5 building. There are over 100 staff members, approximately sixty of which are instructional staff. A unique feature of Hope Elementary is that it is a community partnership school, so there are several community partners that have made a twenty-five year commitment to Hope. These partners include Colossal School District, Urban Research University, two health care providers, two community organizations, and a local religious organization. Colossal School District is one of the largest school districts in the United States; it serves over 200,000 PK-12 students every year and has nearly 150 instructional sites.

Urban Research University is a research-intensive university that is located within five miles of Hope Elementary PDS. The College of Education serves over 2,000 students a year. There are three pathways to teacher certification for approximately 200 students in elementary education. Hope serves as one of the sites for teacher certification, hosting between 12-18 teacher candidates per year for a two-year period.

Hope has won several awards for its robust PDS design, which uses a five building block approach: (1) Teacher Preparation; (2) Teacher Learning; (3) Teacher Leadership Development; (4) School Administrator Learning; and (5) Teacher Education Learning and Preparation. In addition to preparing teachers, Hope also works intensely with a few of URU's College of Education faculty and doctoral students to support teacher leadership development through the Hope Teacher Leader Academy (TLA). The TLA is an innovative, clinically-centered approach to differentiating teacher professional learning and transformation graduate coursework. The Hope TLA was designed specifically with the intention of supporting the renewal of Hope as a turnaround elementary school, which is a state designation for schools that are considered "underperforming" on state standardized assessments for two consecutive years.

In the TLA, teachers earn advanced credentials in courses co-taught by university faculty, doctoral students, and a Hope instructional coach onsite at the school. One of those credentials is a twelve credit, four course graduate certificate in teacher leadership. This graduate certificate means that teacher leaders can: (1) systematically study their own teaching practice by using essential data literacy skills, (2) effectively coach their peers and teacher candidates to improve student learning, (3) skillfully facilitate job-embedded professional learning to improve instructional practice, and (4) intentionally develop a lens of equity in themselves and others. Once teacher leaders have earned this graduate certificate, they can apply those 12 graduate credits to a master's (MA) or an educational specialist (EdS) degree in elementary education. Participants who have graduated with any of those credentials may leave the program, or they can choose to stay in the TLA and earn professional development credit from the school district for their participation. The issues and challenges at Hope truly become the curriculum for graduate coursework that takes the form of job-embedded professional learning. The Hope TLA began in 2013 and has covered yearly goals such as: building school community and culture,

developing professional learning communities, deepening professional practice as teachers and leaders, integrating technology into instruction, and integrating culturally responsive pedagogy.

This article will describe the emphasis within Hope's TLA connected to culturally responsive pedagogy and equity-based teacher leadership. In this paper we will 1) introduce a framework and theoretical underpinnings for equity-based teacher leadership development, 2) describe the curriculum and pedagogy to support teacher leader learning, and 3) provide recommendations about facilitating a focus on equity in PDSs.

The Development of Equity-Based Teacher Leaders

A key aim of the Hope TLA is to develop equity-based teacher leaders (TLs) who can serve as both school-based teacher educators for teacher candidates and teacher leaders for their peers in the PDS. Equity-based TLs work actively to "*recognize, respond to*, and *redress* conditions that deny some students access to educational and other opportunities enjoyed by their peers" (Gorksi, 2017, p. 6). Figure one depicts our model of how equity-based TLs develop both a leadership and equity lens in the Hope TLA.
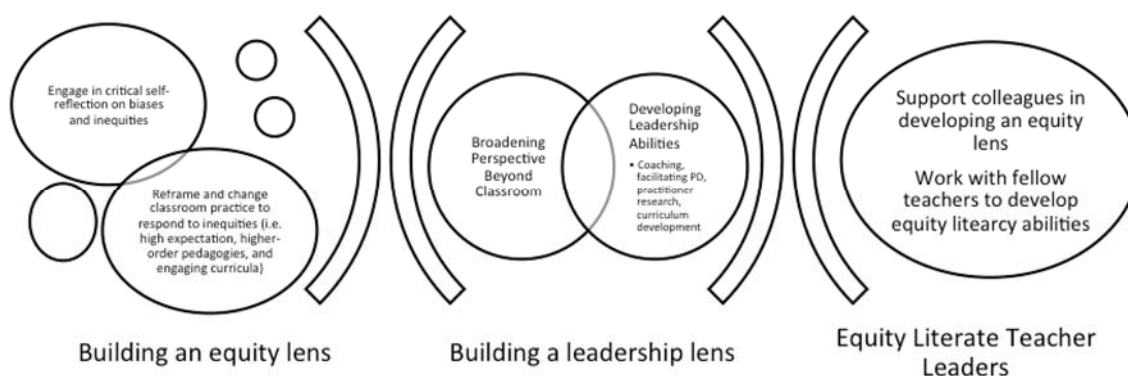

Figure 1. A framework for equity-based teacher leadership (adapted Jacobs & Crowell, 2018)

Fostering a *leadership lens* involves the TLs broadening their perspective beyond their own classroom. This broadening is not to minimize what happens within the classroom or to suggest that teacher leadership cannot happen in this space; however, an expanded lens/perspective helps teacher leaders better understand schoolwide systems, understand the origins of challenges, and begin to influence others within the school. Additionally, equity-based TLs grow in their leadership abilities by learning skills such as instructional coaching, facilitating professional development, engaging in practitioner research, etc.

In addition to gaining a leadership lens, equity-based teacher leaders also develop an *equity lens*. Developing this equity lens involves TLs engaging in critical self-reflection and consciousness-raising about their own beliefs and biases. Teacher leaders need to understand how their experiences and beliefs influence how they view and interpret the world. Building an equity lens also includes critical reflection on teaching. Teacher leaders' beliefs and biases can have real consequences for students (Gay, 2018; Irvine, 2003). They need both conceptual and practical tools to promote equity (Grossman, McDonald, Hammerness, & Ronfeldt,

2008). Conceptual tools include understanding frameworks and theories (i.e. deficit thinking, culturally responsive thinking, microaggressions, etc.) as well as philosophical views (i.e. purposes of schooling) that guide their decisions about teaching and learning. Practical tools include strategies to promote equity in their work with students, such as critical literacy practices, utilizing a funds of knowledge approach to bring student experiences within the curriculum, etc.

Teacher leaders simultaneously develop and use both their leadership and equity lenses together to become *equity-based leaders* who can support their colleagues in developing an equity lens as well as promote change and reform within their schools to foster equity for students and families (Jacobs & Crowell, 2018). Equity-based teacher leadership becomes praxis as TLs engage in a continuous process of critical reflection and action (Freire, 2018). Equity-based TLs learn the unique leadership skills needed to support their colleagues in developing an equity lens as well as the conceptual and practical tools to become equity-literate (Gorksi, 2017).

The Curriculum and Pedagogy for Developing Equity-Based Teacher Leaders

At Hope Elementary, we started working five years ago to enact the curriculum and pedagogy to develop the TLs' leadership lens. Subsequently over the past two years, there has been an explicit equity focus. In the first year we emphasized building the TLs' equity lens by focusing on culturally responsive pedagogy. In the second year we supported TLs in their continued learning about equity with the added element of how to facilitate their colleagues' learning about equity-based teaching.

Year One: Supporting the Learning of Teacher Leaders around Equity

The first year of working with Hope around equity focused on TLs learning about culturally responsive teaching as an entry point to building an equity lens and equitable teaching practices. Culturally responsive teaching is defined as "using the cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of ethnically diverse students as conduits for teaching them more effectively" (Gay, 2018, p. 106). Culturally responsive teachers: 1) have affirming views of students from diverse backgrounds, 2) have the commitment and skills to act as an agent of change, 3) have constructivist views of learning, 4) are learners of their students, and 5) engage in culturally responsive teaching practices (Villegas & Lucas, 2002). The curriculum for the year emerged from the challenges that Hope faced in supporting the achievement of a diverse student population who experienced many challenges connected to poverty. Amanda, the instructional coach at Hope, shared the purpose behind year one's work:

> Because learning about equity is complex, it is not as easy to hand a teacher a book with strategies and tell them to try one in their class. An educator must first build their knowledge on the subject and begin to make changes and choices in their teaching. Two years ago in TLA, we knew we had to first engage the teacher leaders in the learning. For one entire year, they participated in coursework with the goal of helping them make conscious changes and decisions in their mindsets and instructional practices. (Reflection)

Therefore, the first year became about building the TLs' knowledge and understanding about equity with a specific focus on culturally responsive teaching.

Table 1 outlines the guiding questions, readings, and activities from year one. This clinically-centered curriculum was not prescriptive or laid out from the beginning of the year. The curriculum emerged collaboratively and responsively as the planning team focused on the TLs' growth and the needs of the school.

Table 1
Year One Curriculum

Guiding Questions	● What is culture? What is my culture? ● What is the connection between culture and teaching? ● How are my teaching beliefs influenced by culture? ● What is culturally responsive pedagogy? ● What are the cultures of my students? ● What is the role of bias in learning about culture? ● What is the connection between culture, privilege, and equity?
Key Readings	● *For White Folks Who Teach in the Hood* (Emdin, 2016) ● The Culturally Responsive Teacher (Villegas & Lucas, 2007) ● Not Time for Stories, Case 5.2 (Gorski & Pothini, 2013) ● Culturally Responsive Classroom Management (Weinstein, Curran, & Tomlinson-Clarke, 2003) ● Students as Curriculum (Sleeter & Carmona, 2017) ● Prejudice and Discrimination (Chapter) (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017) ● Choice of content-based culturally responsive pedagogy article
Key Activities	● Readiness assessments ● "I believe" worksheet ● Paseo - Circles of Identity ● Sharing a cultural artifact ● Culture iceberg and culture cake ● Dimensions of culture website; culture compass tool ● Privilege walks ● Writing up a case connected to a cultural dilemma ● Jigsaw reading of content culturally responsive teaching articles ● Culturally Responsive Instruction Observation Tool (CRIOP): Reading, Coding, and Exploring ● Curriculum action plans

As can be seen in the guiding questions (Table 1), the year began with the TLs' examination of their personal culture and beliefs. They engaged in activities such as sharing a cultural artifact, creating 'circles of identity', and a privilege walk. From there, the TLs spent time learning about their students' cultures and beliefs. The TLs developed an action plan where they set goals for

learning about their students. The TLs also reflected on the impact of cultural incongruence between teachers and students. Finally, the TLs began to investigate culturally responsive practices in their classrooms. We provided TLs with the Culturally Responsive Instruction Observation Protocol (CRIOP) (Powell, Chambers Cantrell, & Malo-Juvera, 2016) as a way to promote a vision of culturally responsive teaching in relation to various dimensions (i.e. assessment, discourse, pedagogy and instructional practices, family collaboration, multiple perspectives, etc.). Teacher leaders engaged in self-evaluation and reflection around different elements of the CRIOP. Additionally, in order to move toward a greater focus on curriculum and instruction, we created a resource site of practitioner articles on culturally responsive teaching in various content areas. Readings focused on topics such as culture, culturally responsive teaching, cultural capital, and making cultural connections to specific content areas.

Snapshot into Teacher Leader Learning

Year one included many opportunities for TLs to engage in critical self-reflection. For example, Francesca (author), a TL and fifth grade classroom teacher, reflected on how engaging in the privilege walk prompted critical self-reflection. In part one of the privilege walk, participants stepped forward and back in connection to traditional views of privilege (i.e. had many books in the house, parents went to college, etc.), while part 2 aligned with tenets of community cultural wealth or non-dominant capital (i.e. speaking multiple languages and hearing stories from grandparents, etc.) (Yosso, 2005). She shared:

> Growing up I never felt like I was different than my peers for my culture- but looking back, that was because of my understanding of my culture. It was surreal for me and made me truly reflect on my background. Growing up as a first generation American, with a father who immigrated from Italy- who has no higher than a 4th grade education, I never experienced anything that would maybe relate to my father's experiences. My mother grew up at a disadvantage as well- using government assistance for food and welfare for housing. I grew up seeing my parents hustle, and when we did the privilege walk I never thought "wow, I can't believe my parents didn't do this for me…". (Reflection)

In this quote, Francesca reflects upon how engaging in this activity prompted her to reflect on the meaning of culture, but also to see the connection between culture and privilege. Other TLs reflected, "What is my culture? I have trouble defining what exactly my culture is compared to interests. I learned that others feel the same way." Another shared, "The way I grew up was not very culturally diverse. I grew up in a white middle class school and community. However, the church I went to was very diverse. This makes me realize I need to be very conscious of researching and understanding cultures." Critical self-reflection became embedded in the experiences of the TLs in year one. Francesca took this experience from TLA to her elementary classroom. She explained:

> I ended up using a form of the privilege walk in my classroom with questions I altered to be more appropriate for 5th graders. This exercise allowed me to build the CULTURAL community in my classroom- the awareness for one another's culture. (Reflection)

While Francesca made the link between her learning and working with her students, some of the other TLs felt challenged in this area. As an instructional team, we knew the importance of

having time for the TLs to critically self-reflect on their identity and beliefs; however, soon the TLs began to seem antsy wanting more time learning about taking action in their classroom.

Starting in November we provided the TLs with several articles about culturally responsive teaching. From there, the TLs each created an action plan (see Figure 2) to achieve a goal related to culturally responsive teaching within their classroom.

Action Plan			
Action Steps: *What needs to be done?*	**Timeline:** *When will it get done?*	**Resources:** *What resources do you have and will you need to achieve your goal?*	**Potential Barriers:** *Are there individuals that may resist? What other obstacles may impede moving forward?*

Figure 2. Teacher leader culturally responsive action plan.

A majority of the TLs focused their action plans on Villegas and Lucas' (2007) culturally responsive tenet of "Learning about Students' Lives". Teacher leaders set up lunch bunches, morning meetings, and class surveys focused on asking students questions about their culture. Many of their questions revolved around traditions, relationships with their family, roles within their house, beliefs, etc. One TL shared that her goals were: 1) Get to know students on a deeper level, 2) Organize this knowledge for lesson planning, and 3) Create lesson plans integrating culture. Some of the TLs worked with their students to better define the term culture. Another TL set up dialogue circles where students had an opportunity to bring in a cultural artifact.

The TLs reflected that at times gaining information about their students' culture beyond the surface level was challenging. For example, one TL who created a survey shared:

So I started with this student assessment of classroom culture. It was a total bomb! I think for their age/grade level it was too much for them. There were too many options for them to respond to. Some of the kids didn't really know how to answer, It was too vague. So I sat down and did some more research to find the right kind of survey. This time it was so much better. This one focused on my students at school and their teacher. But, it still did not dig deep enough. So I am doing one more. I took the both of them and was able to learn more about each student as an individual. This one has about their family and focuses on what they do outside of school.

Even with the challenges, TLs described how students loved sharing about their cultures and these discussions not only led to connections between the TLs and students, but also to connections between students.

Only a few TLs focused their action plans on changing instruction. For example, one TL involved her students' voices in instruction by having students design an activity for a math lesson. Francesca described the action she took with her fifth-grade teammate (another TL):

We taught two specific lessons-one on gender bias, and one on students who have disabilities. These lessons impacted our classrooms because I had a student at the time who is on the Autism spectrum. With the student's (and parents) permission I found articles on autism and changemakers in the world who are also on the spectrum. This was because I had overheard students in other classes talking about the student with autism. I wanted to make sure that my students were educated on characteristics of people on the

autism spectrum/what it is- in order to be able to take action when they heard others talking. This was such an incredible experience. When I asked a student what the message the author of the article was trying to send one student wrote "don't judge others- we are all human". When someone not from our class asked another student, what autism was… they responded with "it doesn't mean that _____ isn't smart, it just means their brain takes a different path to understanding"- so it worked.

Francesca also described a unit connected to gender bias:

When we learned about gender bias we had a debate on if girl scouts and boy scouts should be inclusive or if they should continue to be segregated. This was because we wanted to make sure that the boys in class understood that girls could do anything boys can- and to be accepting of however a student wants to identify.

In both of these cases Francesca was able to take what she was learning in TLA and make connections to her teaching.

The year ended by sharing a visual of our scope and sequence for the first year. The visual included topics, readings, and activities we engaged in. This reflective activity served as a bridge into the TLs' new role as leading their colleagues within professional development during year two.

Year Two: TLs Supporting Colleagues through Professional Development

As seen in the guiding questions (Table 2), in the second year, we spent time helping TLs continue to build their equity lens as well as analyze issues related to equity and professional development (PD).

Table 2
Year Two Curriculum

Guiding Questions/ Topics	● What is privilege? How do people get it? How have privilege and discrimination manifested in my life and my students' lives? ● What are our biases, and what implications do these have for us as teachers? ● How can teacher leaders facilitate professional development for teachers about equity and culturally responsive teaching? ● What are micro and macro aggressions? What implications do these have for teaching? ● How do we reframe the deficit thinking about students and families? ● How do we recognize, respond to, and redress issues of inequity?
Key Readings	● The Myth of the Culture of Poverty (Gorski, 2008) ● The Red Shoe (Webb, 2000) ● Rethinking agendas: Social reproduction and resistance (Hinchey, 2010) ● Understanding Unconscious Bias and Unintentional Racism (Moule, 2009) ● PD That Makes a Difference (Patton, Parker, & Tannenhill, 2015) ● "Tom" Vignette from Danielson book (Danielson, 2006)

	● Micro and Macro Aggressions (Lindsey et al., 2018, p. 110 - 114) ● The Teacher of Adults (Galbraith, 2004) ● Understanding Privilege through Ableism (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017) ● Excerpts from "Oppression and Power" (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017) ● Taco Night (Gorski, 2011) ● Avoiding the Holiday 'Balance Traps' (Teaching Tolerance, 2009). ● Equity Literacy for All (Gorski & Swalwell, 2015). ● Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack (McIntosh, 1988) ● Willing to Be Disturbed (Wheatley, 2002)
Key Activities	● Bias picture sort (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017) ● Case study "Multicultural Fair" (Gorski & Pothini, 2013) ● Culturally Responsive Instruction Observation Tool (CRIOP): Reading, Coding, and Exploring ● Critical Friends Groups with PD dilemma discussion ● "This is Us" video clip: micro/macro aggressions ● Videos about teachers' controversial Halloween costumes ● Harvard Implicit Bias Tests ● Privilege and social identities portrait ● Exploration of 'invisible knapsacks' of privilege (self and school) ● Exploration of *Teaching Tolerance* lesson plans ● "Back to the Future" protocol - developing a long-term vision

We continued to help build the TLs' equity lens by moving from a focus on culture to including additional equity topics (i.e. privilege, micro/macro aggressions, deficit thinking, etc.). We began to emphasize bringing the equity and leadership lenses together as the TLA members planned and enacted professional development focused on equity with their colleagues throughout the school. Therefore, we also reviewed topics such as adult development, tenets of high-quality professional development, etc. We continued to engage TLs in various self-reflective activities. For example, we explored the concept of privilege after reading McIntosh's (1988) article about the Invisible Knapsack of white privilege. The TLs divided into small groups to read and discuss various lists of invisible privileges (i.e. race, socioeconomic status, immigration status, religion, etc.). From there, the TLs created a list of invisible privileges at Hope Elementary, or Hope's Invisible Knapsack, followed by a discussion of marginalization as a result of Hope's structures, norms, and expectations. We also brought in discussions of current events. For example, we read an article about a group of teachers who dressed up in stereotypical Mexican "costumes" for Halloween, as well as teachers who dressed up as the Mexican border wall.

In order to provide an opportunity to bring together the equity and leadership lenses, the TLs began the second year by dividing into groups based on the CRIOP (See Table 3). The TLs chose a group aligned with their interests. Each group would be responsible for leading PD about their area of focus. From the beginning, these PD groups were created as inquiry communities guided by a question developed by the TLs.

Table 3
Teacher Led Professional Development Topics

Topic	Inquiry Wondering
Multiple Perspectives	In what ways can teachers create a culturally-centered environment for students that celebrates multiple perspectives and ideas?
Classroom Caring and Teacher Dispositions	How do we establish a classroom of respect and rapport with one another?
Classroom Climate and Physical Environment	How can we create a positive learning environment where all individuals are valued and respected?
Family Collaboration	How can we develop partnerships with our parents to support their children as learners?
Curriculum and Planned Experiences	How can I integrate culturally responsive learning experiences into the curriculum?
Pedagogy and instructional practices	How can we build on students' cultural backgrounds/ knowledge to develop instruction relevant to students' lives?
Assessment Practices	How do we include student voice in assessments?
Discourse and Instructional Conversations	How do we use students' home language and culture through a variety of discourse techniques to implement equitable teaching?

Each group created a 2-minute video "advertisement" that was shared with the entire school at a September faculty meeting. The faculty members then self-selected the PD group they wanted to join.

Throughout the year, TLs led their PD groups once a month for a total eight sessions. Each session was approximately one hour. The TLs had autonomy in planning each of the PD sessions. For each session, the TLs: 1) wrote a lesson plan, 2) designed an exit ticket to collect data about their PD participant learning, 3) analyzed exit ticket data, and 4) wrote a reflection focused on their PD members' learning (see Table 4). The goal with the PD was to be responsive to teacher needs and use the data to plan subsequent PD sessions.

Table 4

Teacher Leader PD Reflection Questions

1. Look at the data you gathered. Analyze that data. What evidence-based claim(s) can you make about your PD session (and give the evidence from the exit tickets) about your ability to meet your objective for that planning session?
2. Did you meet the objectives you planned for? Why or why not? How do you know?
3. What values, beliefs, or assumptions could you identify that teachers held as they were learning and participating in your PD session?
4. What do you want to remember to include in your PD plans for the future based on what you learned today?

Two members of the instructional team provided feedback on the TLs' plans each month. Feedback included comments connected to: having TLs clarify their rationale for inclusion of an activity, asking for explanations about how the topic built upon the previous PD, encouraging TLs to plan discussion questions, etc.

Within the TLA sessions, we supported the TLs' planning for PD. At an early session, we reread an article from a previous year about the core features of high-quality professional development (Patton, Parker, & Tannenhill, 2015). We also modeled a way to develop norms focused on building bridges between the group's goal and possible barriers. After engaging in these activities, the TLs collectively agreed that during their first PD session they would implement a community builder of their choice and develop norms. We also started off the year having the TLs engage in a modified "Back to the Future " protocol (schoolreforminitiative.com) to envision where they hoped their PD group would be in terms of their learning in May. This exercise helped TLs engage in backwards planning about where they would want their PD to begin. In addition, we set up a resource site on Google Drive. This site included all the readings and activities we utilized during the first year of our work on equity. During our TLA meetings, the TLs had opportunities to reflect on their PD progress. We set aside time for Critical Friends' Groups (CFGs), where TLs could bring problems of practice from their PD group to gain support, as well as time for the TLs to collaboratively plan.

Snapshot into the Teacher Led Professional Development

It was quite evident in the teacher leaders' PD lesson plans and in our observation notes of the PD sessions that the TLs' professional development responded to teachers' needs and included opportunities for collaborative, active, and dialogic learning (Parker et al, 2015). In order to provide the reader with a description of this PD, we will describe the work of the Family Collaboration PD group. Two of the teacher leaders (TLs) led this PD group made up of three primary teachers, a special area teacher, and an ESOL resource teacher. The group selected the

inquiry question, "How can we develop culturally appropriate partnerships with our Hope families to help them support their children as learners?", to guide their work.

Like the other PD groups, the Family Collaboration group began by collaboratively creating norms. The agreed upon norms included: 1) Challenge ideas NOT people, 2) Limit sidebar conversations, 3) Be prepared to participate, and 4) Take risks. The TLs began each meeting by having the group engage in a community builder that not only helped build community and relationships among the group, but connected to the session topic. From there, the group would engage in a short reading to gain more information about the topic. Then the TLs helped make connections to practice in their school context. Figure 3 illustrates the process this Family Collaboration group followed.

Figure 3. Process for teacher-led professional development in Family Collaboration PD group.

We will share descriptions of several PD sessions in order to gain insight into how the TLs prompted teacher learning around equity through the process in Figure 3.

In session three, the TLs focused on the concept of culture. Following their pattern, the community builder included each participant sharing a cultural artifact. The TLs also continued the discussion of bias and how this connects to beliefs by reading an article, *"The Myth of the Culture of Poverty"* (Gorski, 20008). The TLs selected this article because they wanted the group to realize:

> It is not just language that can create barriers between school and home but also socio-economic issues can create barriers as well. We learned that it is not always true that families are not interested in their child's learning journey, some work multiple jobs while others may not feel comfortable in the school environment. (Reflection 10/16)

The TLs hoped that by reading the article it would "empower our participants and enable them to think outside the box when it comes to our Hope Families." The TLs explained that both of these experiences (artifact sharing and article) prompted the group members to share more personal information about themselves. The TLs reflected, "It was also eye opening to hear them talk about their culture and share a glimpse of what is important to them including some of the struggles they may have faced." Finally, the group discussed turnout for conference night and disaggregated their class data to look for patterns such as "girls vs. boys, ELL vs. non-ELL, on level and above level vs. below level academic achievement." The group's homework was to utilize a template to track communication with parents (written, face to face, or phone). The participants were also to focus on whether the communication was positive or negative.

In the fourth session, the TLs extended the discussion around culture to include cultural clashes or incongruence between teachers and families. They began by having the teachers explore their own beliefs with a cultural self-assessment with likert-style questions such as, "I am comfortable talking about my culture and ethnicity" and "I know the effect that my culture and ethnicity may have on the people in my work setting." Then the group read an article entitled "*Indian Father's Plea*" (Lake, 1990). The TLs shared that the goal of the reading was for "participants to understand that the students in our classrooms are not empty vessels for us to fill, but bring their ideas and knowledge from their culture with them into the classroom. Just like the parents who we need to value and involve in the education process." After reading the article the group began to connect the concepts to family collaboration thinking about the question, "Can you think about a time when a cultural difference might have created a conflict?" One participant spoke about how teachers can be "close-minded or unaware of teaching a diverse group of learners" and that a relationship that is framed as a "personality clash" can really be a "culture clash". One participant explained, "It is a common saying that 'they don't know anything' when speaking of non-English speaking students, easily forgetting what the child brings to the table." The group continued to track their parent communication. In future sessions, this group worked together to create a new school-wide family survey that could be given out at the beginning of the year.

This snapshot into the Family Collaboration group represents the work of many of the PD groups. The TLs were thoughtful in their ability to plan PD across a whole year. As in the Family Collaboration group, there were often opportunities for participants to critically reflect on themselves as well as reflect on data and their students. Of course, each PD group differed in their ability to make change, but all worked to support the learning of their colleagues. When looking across all the TLs' PD plans, we saw explicit connections to the topics, readings, and activities from year one. In essence, the TLs were able to see a model of PD focused on equity by being participants themselves within our work in year one. However, we did not see a replication of the year one TLA within the PD groups. While the TLs used the Google Drive resource site as a starting point, they all made individual decisions about what topics to address, the order of those topics based on participant needs, and selection of readings and activities to support the learning of that topic. While this PD became a major focus, we did not stop facilitating TL learning around equity within our TL course sessions as they were continuing along their never-ending journey toward equity literacy. Engaging in the real-life work of planning and enacting PD around equity supported their development as equity-based teacher leaders.

Recommendations for Facilitating a Focus on Equity in PDSs

In this paper we have outlined the two years we spent working with TLs at Hope Elementary to support their development as equity-based teacher leaders. Year one supported the development of the TLs' equity lenses while year two provided the opportunity to bring the two lenses together as the TLs led PD on equity and culturally responsive teaching. Looking across what we have learned in the past two years, we provide recommendations for facilitating a focus on equity within PDSs. Parallels existed between what we found in our own learning about supporting TL learning with what TLs learned about supporting their colleagues' learning.

Creating a Safe Learning Environment

A hallmark of PDSs is the deep relationships and community of learning built between stakeholders (NAPDS, 2008). However, when shifting the focus to equity, PDSs may need to reevaluate their environment. For example, while many of the TLs came into the two years knowing each other, we knew these relationships had not involved engaging in conversations about topics such as race, power, privilege, sexual orientation, bias, etc. Therefore, we continued to build a trusting environment where TLs could feel comfortable having critical conversations. During each TLA session, the TLs would lead a community building activity. In addition, each year we created norms. Interestingly, the TLs also saw the importance of creating a safe environment for learning as a key aim of their PD work. For example, TL Maureen shared:

> We, as a group, were able to build a community of trust and respect. I learned how important icebreakers are to build that trust and rapport. We really got to know one another and learned to be more open. It made the PD more relaxed and it led to meaningful discussions and interactions. For example, in the beginning, I did not know most of the participants. Some were new to the school and some I had never worked with before. However, once we started the PD group we were able to form a bond. This helped make the group more accountable for the activities. It also opened the door for us to brainstorm ideas about the topics and for us to dig deeper into culturally responsive teaching.

PDS partners need to have frank conversations about the norms for equity conversations in order to promote dialogue between school-based teacher educators, university-based teacher educators, and teacher candidates. Creating the context for these conversations can help to strengthen all aspects of teaching and learning within the PDS.

Emphasizing Critical Consciousness and the Self

PK-12 student learning is at the center of PDSs (NAPDS, 2008; Teitel, 2010); however, when there is a focus on equity within a PDS, there must be a continual focus on the self as a vehicle to focus on students. Developing sociocultural consciousness involves understanding how one's beliefs, thinking, and way of being is influenced by race, ethnicity, social class, language, etc. (Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Throughout the readings as well as activities, we always reflected on how the concepts connected to TLs personally. Through this focus on self, consciousness can develop where TLs "achieve a deepening awareness of the social realities which shape their lives and discover their own capacities to recreate them" (Darder, Baltodano, & Torres, 2017, p. 14). Developing this understanding of self was key in their ability to take the concepts and apply them to the PK-12 students. Knowing one's own values was key to helping

TLs interpret how their reactions to students and practice in the classroom could be influenced by culture and positionality. We also saw the TLs begin with this same focus as they facilitated learning in their PD groups. For example, the Multiple Perspectives PD group reflected:

> Although we are not at the core of our PD topic (multiple perspectives) we feel as if we need to first lay foundations in order to uncover participants' own perspectives/biases and be comfortable identifying them BEFORE we can have them analyze and include student perspectives in lessons. We want participants to be able to keep in mind all students and educating the whole child when bringing in their perspectives to the lesson; however, we feel that if participants aren't aware of their own deep perspectives this would not come to fruition. (Reflection)

While it may be enticing to move toward equity practices in classrooms, stakeholders in PDSs first need to reflect on who they are so they can begin to reflect upon how their beliefs and experiences influence their teaching practices.

Praxis at the Center

Equity cannot just be written into the mission of a PDS, but it must occur throughout the actions of the PDS. While the focus on self was so important to learning about equity and cultural responsiveness, reflection also must lead to praxis. The term praxis refers to "reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it" (Freire, 2018, p. 51). In the TLA, this included instituting an action plan assignment as well as having the TLs engage in readings about integrating culturally responsive teaching into specific content areas. We also utilized the CRIOP framework because it gave specific examples of what culturally responsive instruction looked like in the classroom. We also had to push the TLs to bring their work within the PD groups toward greater praxis. We observed deep, reflective conversations that involved questioning, but not acting upon the status quo. For example, the Assessment PD group questioned a writing prompt that privileged certain students in the county over Hope students. In another PD group, after learning about cultural communication styles, the teachers questioned a school norm that established "eye contact" as a communication expectation. Conversations in the TLA moved to how the PD groups could push some of these points to action.

Praxis also means PDSs need to bring this equity lens or consciousness to all aspects of their work. PDSs must consider questions such as: Is the PDS recruiting a diverse group of teacher candidates (i.e. candidates of color)? Are the various PDS sites providing teacher candidates with opportunities to work in diverse contexts? Is the PDS being conscious of the representation of mentor teachers of color? Are the structures, policies, and practices within the PDS promoting equity? For example, are teacher candidates' extensive hours in the school making it impossible to work, resulting in their own food and shelter insecurity?

Approaching Learning with an Inquiry Mindset

A key tenet of PDSs is engaging in inquiry to promote data-driven reflection and continually improve practice (NCATE, 2001; Yendol-Hoppey & Franco, 2014). As an instructional team, we had to use data to be responsive to the TLs' needs. A key aspect of our pedagogy was to systematically collect data through notes, TL assignments, and exit tickets as a way to make data-informed decisions. Even though we planned week-to-week based on the data we gathered, at times we had to turn in a new direction based on the data we collected. For

example, we had not originally thought of introducing the action plan or CRIOP framework so early in November; however, the TLs wanted more support moving equity and culturally responsive teaching to their classrooms, so we had to adjust to meet their needs. Additionally, in year one, Hope was under intense pressure to achieve a higher school grade or face being taken over by an outside entity. Therefore, at times, the TLs would come to TLA extremely stressed. One TLA, we put our plans on hold to provide the TLs an opportunity to discuss and emotionally process a state visit that had occurred that day.

We saw this same type of responsiveness in the TLs within their own PD groups. The TLs made decisions based on the needs of their participants. At times this included adapting their plans or making decisions to spend more time on a topic because participants needed time for deeper discussion. For example, one TL shared, "The more we get to know about our participants, the more we can tailor our sessions around them" (Reflection). In addition, the TLs took an inquiry approach to leading their PD group. The TLs' PD groups were structured around an inquiry question, and the TLs facilitated sessions as collaborative learning rather than by positioning themselves as equity experts who were teaching their peers.

Closing Thoughts

The work of TLs at the grassroots level can make a difference in the lives and success of students (Nieto, 2007) by working inside and beyond their own classroom (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009). Rodriguez, Mantle-Bromley, Bailey, and Paccione (2003) share, "If change for underserved students is to occur, teachers who are committed to issues of equity must become active leaders in their schools" (p.229). PDSs serve as contexts to support the learning of PK-12 students, teachers, teacher candidates, and university faculty. In this paper, we focused on the learning of TLs and the greater staff of Hope Elementary. However, as we speak, we are beginning to include a more explicit focus on equity within the undergraduate teacher preparation curriculum. We are hopeful that by starting with inservice teachers at Hope we will have created a foundation to foster teacher candidate learning for equity. By having knowledge of equity, teachers can now serve as mentors who can model equity-based practices and explicitly support teacher candidate learning around equity.

By sharing the story of the Hope Elementary PDS, we hope that our story will inspire others to understand how to they can harness the power of universities and K-12 schools to empower teacher leaders who can serve as catalysts for change across the continuum of teacher learning (preservice, induction, and beyond) and more importantly make a difference in the lives of PK-12 students.

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Appendix A

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