Recent Conference Presentations


Publications

Vector, 48(2), 63-68.

Leadership Experiences

2011 – 2012 Minerva Foundation Women Leadership Program
2009 – 2010 Surrey School District Leadership Academy
2007 – Present Surrey School District Math Department Head

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

ORAL EXAMINATION
SHARON WING YAN LAU

FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION
EdD

Tuesday, September 11, 2012
SFU Surrey, Room 4040 at 1:00 PM

EXAMINING COMMITTEE

Chair: Dr. Geoff Madoc-Jones
Senior Supervisor: Dr. Sharon Bailin
Co-Supervisor: Dr. Fred Renihan
Member: Dr. Dan Laitsch
Internal Examiner: Dr. Bruce Beairsto
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School of Education
University of Northern British Columbia
LEARNING ABOUT TEACHER LEADERSHIP THROUGH THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER LEADERS

ABSTRACT

As more researchers have studied the benefits of treating schools and learning as complex systems, educators have taken this to a more practical level by encouraging leadership capacity at the grassroots level. On the whole, teacher leadership is used as both a corrective strategy and an empowerment tool to improve our schools.

In British Columbia, Canada, the concept of teacher leadership is gaining increased attention; however, its practical application is less well understood. While recent literature has pointed to the value of looking at the distributed and paradoxical frameworks of teacher leadership, very little research to date can provide empirical evidence on the impact that these ideas have on teachers. In particular, it is not clear how different facets of teacher leadership experiences influence teachers’ beliefs, understandings, and emotions, and how these shape emergent practices of leadership.

In this study, eight teacher leaders in a large urban school district in British Columbia participated in one-on-one interviews in an effort to add to our understanding of teacher leadership based on these teachers’ lived experiences. The research data was presented as eight vignettes revealing i) what teachers derived from their lived experiences in shaping their role as leaders of teacher-led initiatives, and ii) how teachers’ lived experiences in school initiatives (re)defined their future role as leaders. The participants drew from the personal, professional, cultural, socio-political, and structural dimensions of the work environment and spoke about common themes in their leadership experiences. Furthermore, as a group, they demonstrated certain personal and professional attributes that defined their positions as teacher leaders.

The understanding gained from this study enriches our existing views of teacher leadership. By examining this phenomenon through the lens of distributed and paradoxical frameworks, this study brings contribution to the reconceptualization and future development of teacher leadership practices.

Academic Record

2007 Master of Arts, University of British Columbia
2001 Bachelor of Education, University of British Columbia
2000 Bachelor of Science, University of British Columbia

Professional Experience

2001- Present Math Teacher, Surrey School District (Professional commitment: Awards Committee; Professional Learning Community Steering Committee; Professional Development Committee; Commencement Committee; Grade 8 Team; Improving Student Learning Committee; Scholarship Committee; District Numeracy Network; Action Research Group; Sponsor Teacher for SFU and UBC student teachers)
2006 Math Tutor, Solomon Academy
2001 – 2005 Math Tutor, Smartbridge Communications Inc.