

Preservice Teachers' Perceptions of Teacher Leadership Is It about Compliance or Understanding?

**Carrie Rogers
& Roya Q. Scales**
Western Carolina University

Introduction

Although preparing teachers to be leaders is a common goal of teacher education programs, often “teaching’ and ‘leading’ are located in separate departments” (Mangin & Stoelinga, 2009, p. 56). Recently, however, the assessment of teacher leadership has become important in preservice teacher education. This importance is partially related to the use of the outcomes model of teacher education, in particular, “outcomes as professional performance” (Cochran-Smith, 2001, p. 529). Cochran-Smith defined professional performance as “the intersection of teacher learning, professional practice, and student learning demonstrated in authentic school and classroom tasks” (p. 537). Performances are evaluated by myriad methods, including portfolios or work samples. However, the construction and evaluation of these professional performances is a critical issue in teacher education nationally (Everitt, 2012). In the conversations about the standardization of teacher education programs, there remains tension about what should be the outcomes of teacher education and whether these types of performances can truly capture

Carrie Rogers is an assistant professor of elementary education and Roya Q. Scales is an assistant professor of literacy education, both with the College of Education and Allied Professions at Western Carolina University, Cullowhee, North Carolina. Their e-mail addresses are cbrogers@wcu.edu and rqscases@wcu.edu

the complex character of teaching (Cochran-Smith, 2001; Feuerstein, 2011).

Despite these lingering tensions, the “outcomes” issue in teacher education is currently the driving force in college and university compliance with state and national accreditation (Cochran-Smith, 2001). In 2008, our state board of education declared that a new process that “focuses on outcomes, rather than inputs, eliminates barriers and obstacles that do not ensure quality, and allows greater institutional flexibility based on increased rigor and accountability” would be the model for granting teacher licensure (North Carolina State Board of Education, 2008, para. 1). The Teacher Leader Essays that we examine in this study are a mandated professional performance task required for licensure in our state.

Creating and sustaining teachers as leaders is a common goal of many colleges of education. State and national standards concerned with teaching and teacher education offer language that describes the components of teacher leadership. For example, the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC) standards weave the idea of leadership throughout all the standards prior to its articulation of Standard #10: Leadership and Collaboration: “The teacher seeks appropriate leadership roles and opportunities to take responsibility for student learning, to collaborate with learners, families, colleagues, other school professionals, and community members to ensure learner growth, and to advance the profession” (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2011, p. 19).

As part of our program’s licensure requirements, preservice teachers are required to complete an online portfolio to demonstrate content and pedagogical knowledge as well as teacher leadership. The Teacher Leader Essay component requires preservice teachers to engage in a minimum of 10 hours of leadership activities during their student teaching semester. The directions for this component suggest that preservice teachers develop and engage in activities that focus on community and family relations, collaboration, and professional development (see Appendix A). Our preservice teachers were required to document and reflect on their leadership activities through the use of essays. Other key elements of this requirement included the documentation of their growth and learning during the activities and how their courses and extracurricular activities assisted them with these undertakings of teacher leadership. Hence, this component of their licensure portfolio was a way for preservice teachers to synthesize their undergraduate experience with leadership.

This inquiry into the content of our institution’s first year of Teacher Leader Essays was undertaken to understand what our preservice teach-

ers in elementary and middle grades education perceived as teacher leadership as well as whether a mandated task constrained preservice teachers' experiences and perceptions of teacher leadership. Based on results of this analysis, we offer the notion that engaging in teacher leadership, while a valuable goal for teacher candidates, needs to be reframed in a developmentally appropriate and meaningful way for preservice teachers.

Literature Review

The research on teacher leadership concerns the roles that teachers play in their schools and the larger educational community. York-Barr and Duke (2004) reviewed two decades of research and found that there were three "waves" of thinking about teacher leadership. The first wave was that teachers hold formal roles as managers; the second was that teachers are instructional leaders in curriculum and mentoring; and the third, which emerged at the time of the authors' review, was that teacher leadership is the primary way to reculture schools to improve instruction for enhanced student learning. This third wave has led to the notion of professional learning communities and to aligning teachers' professional goals and actions with school improvement plans.

Since 2004, other researchers have noted the formalization of teachers as instructional leaders, who are driven by the high-stakes reform movement of the past decade (Mangin & Stoelinga, 2009). Theoretical frameworks of teacher leadership are offered by Lieberman and Miller (2004), Sato (2005), and Danielson (2006). Lieberman and Miller presented three roles that teachers can take within their school and profession: *Advocates* concern themselves with student learning; *innovators* are the change agents; and *stewards* are the models of continued improvement of the profession. Similarly, Sato's concept of practical leadership focuses on the school level, with teachers' "deliberative acts" influencing other teachers' instructional practices as a means to enhance students' learning. Further, Danielson's work offers three areas of teacher influence: school-wide, teaching and learning, and communications and community relations.

The need for a leadership component in teacher education is not a new concept. Dewey (1946) argued that, because teachers interact directly with students, they should have a responsibility to guide policies that have an impact on the school. In 1995, the Association of Teacher Educators published their themed yearbook, *Educating Teachers for Leadership and Change*, which connected the reform movement of the times to the need for changes in teacher education (O'Hair & Odell,

1995). The premise was that teacher education should focus on preparing teachers for the expanded role required in these school reforms.

Nearly 20 years later, the call for teacher leadership is being sounded again, as evidenced through the standards of organizations such as the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS). The NBPTS certification is a voluntary, but highly valuable, process through which teachers can pursue national certification for their own professional benefit. The NBPTS (2012) embeds leadership ideas throughout its Proposition 5: Teachers are Members of Learning Communities. Teacher education accreditation programs also promote leadership in their standards. For instance, the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE; 2008) standards document sets a target in Professional and Pedagogical Knowledge and Skills for Teacher Candidates (Initial and Advanced Preparation of Teachers) for teachers to take on leadership roles to help improve teaching and learning.

In most states and many professional organizations, a standard of leadership is common. For example, the International Reading Association's (2010) Standards for the Pre-K and Elementary Classroom Teacher, Standard 6: Professional Learning and Leadership states: "Candidates recognize the importance of, demonstrate, and facilitate professional learning and leadership as a career-long effort and responsibility" (p. 15). Additionally, the National Council for the Social Studies' (2002) National Standards for Social Studies Teachers, Pedagogical Standard 9, states: "Social studies teachers should possess the knowledge, capabilities, and dispositions to foster cross-subject matter collaboration and other positive relationships with school colleagues, and positive associations with parents and others in the larger community to support student learning and well-being" (p. 52). Leadership standards exist in many organizations involved in teacher education. Some address the importance of teacher leadership more directly, while others address it in broad terms open to interpretation (National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, 2000; National Science Teachers Association, 2003).

Although leadership preparation is a concern in teacher education, little attention has been paid to the preparation of preservice classroom teachers for leadership roles. York-Barr and Duke (2004) referenced two studies on preservice education for teacher leadership, and, in the nearly one decade since their review, there have been less than a handful more. Articles on preservice teacher leadership since 2004 are more conceptual than empirical (Bond, 2011; Quinn, Haggard, & Ford, 2006; Turnbull, 2005). These authors of these articles all note the importance of exploring the concept of leadership throughout the undergraduate experience. For instance, Bond (2011) recommends scaffolding the conceptual idea

of leadership in broad ways, as part of the larger university experience, through reflection and participation in service learning and university-sponsored student organizations as ways to prepare preservice teachers to become teacher leaders.

In contrast, Quinn et al. (2006) focus on teacher leadership development, with the first phase of their model embedded in the teacher preparation program. They suggest that the development of leadership skills of preservice teachers should begin by their demonstrating their ability to organize the classroom for effective instruction and content delivery. Sherrill (2011) believes that, to facilitate leadership development, preservice teachers should be paired with cooperating teachers who are teacher leaders. Thus, the teacher leader/cooperating teacher can serve as a role model during the teacher preparation program.

Projects and experiences that help classroom teachers think about leadership roles are the focus of much research on teacher leadership preparation at the graduate level. Turnbull's (2005) focus, in graduate initial licensure programs, is helping teachers to understand leadership through research on the management structure of schools. Taylor, Goeke, Klein, Onore, and Geist's (2011) study of students in a master's-level cohort suggests that an ongoing "cycle of praxis . . . reflection and action, meaning-making and practicing leadership" is necessary to creating teacher leaders (p. 926). Nolan and Palazzolo (2011), in a survey of 330 novice teachers, found that "[a]lthough teachers in the current study were interested in exploring the idea of new teacher leadership, they expressed both support and confusion about it. To many, it was viewed as multidimensional, complex, and potentially threatening" (p. 315).

While leadership has become an important part of preservice teacher education, we cannot neglect what we know about teacher development and the potential influence it has on the leadership capacity of preservice teachers. Researchers have repeatedly found that preservice teachers have self-centered concerns (Fuller, 1969; Fuller & Brown, 1975; Ryan, 1986). For instance, Ryan described a dark fantasy stage in which preservice teachers think that education courses are irrelevant to what they imagine for their own future classrooms. While in this self-centered stage, preservice and novice teachers are more concerned with how competent and in control they appear (Veenman, 1984) than with their students' learning. The literature suggests that additional professional development, beyond a teacher preparation program to promote further development of concepts, including teacher leadership, will be required for these novices (Bond, 2011; Kingsley, 2012; Sherrill, 2011; Smagorinsky, Cook, & Johnson, 2003).

Preservice teachers are still university students who are often told

in their education coursework to “think like a teacher” to apply their in-class learning (theory) to their practice rather than, for example, to focus on maintaining a certain grade point average. Throughout our teacher preparation program, preservice teachers engage in projects that require them to connect theory to practice. Projects include creating lesson and unit plans as well as analyzing student data as a means to plan appropriate instruction. While these tasks help to reinforce “thinking like a teacher,” because theory must be connected with practice to complete them, the preservice teachers continue to have rewards (e.g., grades) in mind. Notably, the tasks that they encounter as part of their coursework and other requirements (e.g., the Teacher Leader Essay) result in certain rewards (i.e., grades, graduation, and licensure), the pursuit of which places the preservice teachers back in the role of student. Thus, the Teacher Leader Essay may result in preservice teachers’ negotiating the task as students, who are concerned more with fulfilling requirements than with embracing the challenge (Doyle, 1983) of being a teacher leader.

Methods

To help examine the Teacher Leader Essays, we recruited four undergraduate co-researchers. The undergraduate co-researchers were juniors who would be engaging in the leadership activities the following year. We purposefully chose juniors because we wanted preservice teachers who were admitted to the teacher education program and who held a vested interest in improving the Teacher Leader Essay requirements. Through a small grant from the university, we were able to compensate our co-researchers for their time on this project. It is important to note that five of the six research team members did not have the directions (see Appendix A) or rubric (see Appendix B) for the Teacher Leader Essay requirement. Only one of the faculty members had that insider knowledge. Once all of the data had been coded, the directions and rubric were shared with the larger research group in the final meeting.

In this qualitative study, we used a systematic grounded theory design (Charmaz, 2006; Creswell, 2005; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). We coded leadership essays from all 62 preservice teachers at the paragraph level (Charmaz, 2006; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In this coding process, we found that the preservice teachers, on average, developed and engaged in two separate activities, which varied from developing afterschool clubs to coordinating parent events and resulted in a total of 124 activities. The type and number of activities are presented in Table 1.

During open coding, we first identified categories from the leadership

essays, with subcategories to add detail and depth to the larger categories. After independently reading 10 essays and determining possible codes, the six-member research team, consisting of four undergraduate and two faculty members, met to discuss possible codes, shared the reasons for those codes based on evidence from the data, and began to develop core categories: *leadership*, *tone*, *resources*, *role*, and *activity*. These core categories stood out because each essay focused on the activities as ways of being a teacher leader. In the essays, the preservice teachers described their role in the activities, identified resources that helped them with their leadership skills, and approached the activities in their writing in a positive, negative, or neutral tone. As a group, we decided that using spreadsheets was the best way to organize and display the data. The participant number was recorded along the left-hand side, and the core categories were arranged along the top of the spreadsheet. The core categories (*leadership*, *tone*, *resources*, *role*, and *activity*) were then compared with the results of the analysis of a second group of essays to determine whether the codes needed refining or expanding.

Subcategories were added as needed to clarify the core categories (Charmaz, 2006; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Subcategories for the leadership category included the level of leadership. We defined the levels of leadership as *witness*, *participation*, and *ownership*. The tone category was refined so that researchers looked for evidence of positive, negative, or neutral tones. Subcategories for the role category were *student*, *teacher/professional*, *student teacher*, and *growth*. Subcategories for the activity category were *who*, *what*, *why*, and *the context*. Table 2 presents the categories and subcategories used during the coding process.

Table 1
Type and Number of Activities

Event	Subtype	Individual Activities (n)	Total (n)
Afterschool/out-of-school	School dances/events	14	52
	Afterschool clubs	17	
	Fundraisers	9	
	Field trips	12	
In-school/classroom	Meetings, committees	32	45
	Classroom events	13	
Parent-oriented	Parent events (combined conference and PTO nights)	27	27
Total			124

The research team discussed the coding process in depth and cited evidence from the data that supported our agreed-upon codes. We were in complete agreement in regard to the codes and practiced coding until everyone felt confident to code independently. With the refined codes, the researchers analyzed the remaining essays independently, compared their findings in dyads, and then brought their findings back to the larger group for axial coding (Charmaz, 2006; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). We used axial coding to determine how the categories were related and perhaps influenced other categories (Charmaz, 2006; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). For example, we noticed that there was a relationship between the leadership (witness, participation, or ownership) category and the activity (who, what, why, context) category. This led to a return to the data for a deeper analysis of the leadership category. We went back to the essays for a closer examination of the preservice teachers' definitions of leadership in their own words. One of the faculty researchers selected 14 of the exemplars recommended by the undergraduate researchers to more closely examine those preservice teachers' definitions of leadership and/or teacher leadership. That researcher then borrowed a technique from quantitative research methodology and used a random number generator to select 14 other essays (Creswell, 2005). The second faculty researcher completely agreed with the closer examination and findings. This deeper analysis resulted in expanding the leadership category to

Table 2
Categories and Subcategories

Category	Subcategory (Level of Leadership)
Leadership	Witness Participation Ownership
Tone	Positive Negative Neutral
Resources	None
Role	Student Teacher/professional Student teacher Growth
Activity	Who What Why The context

include the preservice definitions as evidence of the assigned codes. The faculty researchers then returned to the original data and added this information to the leadership category.

Finally, we are in the process of using selective coding (Charmaz, 2006; Strauss & Corbin, 1998) to create the basis for a theoretical model for preservice teachers' perceptions of leadership in teaching and how their course work prepares them for leadership. As more data are collected and coded, saturation will occur (Charmaz, 2006; Strauss & Corbin, 1998), and then the theoretical model will gain strength.

Findings and Discussion

The question that drove this inquiry was: What do these essays tell us about how our preservice teachers perceive teacher leadership? Our findings suggest that our teacher candidates engage in tasks across a continuum from the classroom to the community. The type of task and teacher candidates' perceptions of teacher leadership are shaped by the context of their student teaching placement and the preservice teachers' own developmental stage in becoming a teacher.

These results are from the first year of a longitudinal research project of preservice teachers' perceptions of teacher leadership. We found that the preservice teachers engaged in activities primarily at the classroom and school level and that the majority of the activities were of a participatory nature. Thus, leadership in teaching was perceived by the preservice teachers as being active in the classroom and/or at the school level. In 39 of the 62 essays, preservice teachers used such language as, "I participated in conferences" and "I attended" various meetings and events at the school, while the remaining essays contained language related to planning or working. The most important finding, however, may be that these activities were not explicitly connected with instructional practice and student learning, which are two hallmarks of outcome-based assessments.

Categories of Activities

The majority of the activities/tasks were participation in afterschool clubs or events such as field trips and dances. Table 2 displays the number and type of individual activities found in the 62 essays. The "afterschool/out of school" category consisted of preservice teachers' coaching teams or assisting with science clubs as well as one preservice teacher's redesigning an afterschool tutoring program. The activities in the category of "school-wide events (non-PTO)" ranged from assisting with the awards ceremony and school talent shows to organizing the Veteran's

Day program for the community. Field trips ranged from completely creating and arranging (such as trips to local farms) by the preservice teacher to teacher candidates' being a "chaperone" for an annual field trip. The next largest category was "in the school/classroom," which included participation in grade-level meetings, IEP development, and school-wide committees such as the School Improvement Team. The final category was "events for parents," such as conferences or Parent/Teacher Organization (PTO) curriculum nights. The parent-oriented events were predominantly conferences, with the preservice teacher's role's ranging from observer to co-teacher. Curriculum nights for parents were similar. A few preservice teachers created all of the materials and activities for the event, usually along with another teacher candidate, while others "helped out" and met and worked with parents.

Categories of Leadership

Ownership. The 124 activities were nearly evenly split over the leadership categories of ownership, participant, and witness. We closely examined the relationship between the leadership category and the activities in the 28 selected essays to get a better sense of what these categories mean. For example, preservice teachers whose activities were coded as "ownership" had some originality or vision to their activities or had provided the organization needed to accomplish the task. One preservice teacher who organized a coat drive summed up the transition from participant to ownership:

I didn't feel like I was a true leader at first, as I generally just sat in the meetings and listened to the other teachers. However, with time, I became more comfortable with my environment and wasn't afraid to speak up and say how I felt or what I thought about certain subjects. I wanted my colleagues to know they could trust and rely on me for anything and that if they needed me to take charge of something, that I wasn't afraid to do it.

Another example of ownership is that of the preservice teacher who organized a school-wide food drive and grade-level field trip to the local food bank:

If you have an idea that you are passionate about, it will no doubt require leadership skills and collaboration in order to become a reality. You have to be the one to get involved and promote your idea. There is a lot of planning and need for flexibility to accomplish your task.

Participant. One preservice teacher, whose activity was coded as "participant," wrote, "I believe that volunteering for an event such as preparations for the talent show would express extreme leadership

and dedication from a staff member.” This teacher candidate assisted with the school-wide talent show and parent night. This was typical of activities coded as “participant.” The candidates usually volunteered to help out with an event (e.g., school dance, PTO night, afterschool club) that was under the direction of a teacher. Thus, activities that included preservice teachers’ assisting the teacher or other school personnel were coded as “participant.”

Further, service to the school tended to be coded as “participant.” Some of the preservice teachers demonstrated an understanding of leadership roles through service: “A leader can come in many forms, but most important is that they have love for serving their school.” Another preservice teacher wrote, “A leader is not the person in control, but is the person who listens and helps lead the group to grow as a whole.”

Other preservice teachers whose essays were coded as “participant” defined leadership as being in a position of authority. For example, one teacher candidate described leadership as follows:

Another aspect that influenced my understanding of leadership and collaboration is that students need you to be serious when telling them what to do. For example, you need to look them in the eye, have a firm voice, and let them know who is boss.

Another preservice teacher, who echoed this authority stance, stated, “I learned on field trips [that] teachers need to be a strong leader, always watching his/her students closely, because there are many distractions that could draw students away from the rest of the class.” Interestingly, notions of teacher leadership as one’s being in control and having authority came from preservice teachers who completed field trips as part of the requirements. Preservice teachers who participated in grade level/collaborative events and meetings experienced leadership as listening to and working with practicing teachers to achieve a common goal.

Witness. The team of four undergraduate researchers, through the meetings and coding sessions, were an insightful group. The understandings and insider status that these four undergraduates brought to the analysis of the essays illuminated what was emphasized by the department and college in regard to leadership. For instance, the undergraduate researchers shared the following concerns during our final group meeting:

- Why was the implementation of new instructional practices in the classroom not present in any of the essays?
- Why was there so little evidence of the preservice teachers’ own beliefs about teacher leadership?

- Isn't much of what is suggested in the Teacher Leadership essay directions simply part of the teachers' responsibilities (e.g., conferences, communication with parents, committee work)? Are these activities considered to be teacher leadership?

The following statement from an essay coded as "witness" exemplifies the undergraduate researchers' concerns about what is considered leadership. This preservice teacher attended a committee meeting and professional development workshop and came to see leadership as sharing information:

Even though I could not always participate in discussions and decision making, I was able to serve as a first grade representative. This was the task that I enjoyed the most because I got to bring the ideas from the meetings into the context of the classroom. Also, I felt I got to show my leadership skills more by sharing information, participating in discussions, and strategizing ideas.

Another example of a "witness" is the preservice teacher who attended meetings as a representative of the grade level. This teacher candidate felt empowered as a leader by doing so.

Attending the workshop was important, but I was able to show leadership by bringing the ideas presented back to other teachers. From the ideas, strategies, and research presented we were able to discuss ways to bring these concepts into our own classrooms. This entire process was led by me because I was the one who had the notes, resources, and firsthand experience.

This preservice teacher has a clear idea of practical leadership (Sato, 2005) at the classroom level but was seen as passive due to the type of activity (seen as a regular responsibility) and, thus, this excerpt was coded as "witness."

Context, Compliance, and Development

In this study, we found that constraints in engaging in and evaluating authentic tasks in the student teaching semester are delineated by context, compliance and the preservice teachers' own development. In this study, context was a driving force at the school, classroom, and university levels. What preservice teachers described in their essays as leadership was influenced by context of the school and classroom. We recognize that preservice teachers are considered guests in their cooperating teachers' classrooms. Thus, what they are able to do leadership-wise largely depends on the school context (Smagorinsky et al., 2003) and what is permitted by the school administration and cooperating teacher. Hence, constraints were placed on some preservice teachers,

while others were encouraged to pursue ideas and provided resources to do so. Thus, we believe that preservice teachers have the potential to be teacher leaders but that they are not always provided with the opportunities to demonstrate their leadership beyond sharing information, attending meetings, or taking charge of students during field trips.

Further, the context (preservice teacher education) of the Teacher Leader Essay meant the teacher candidates were negotiating the task (Doyle, 1983) as university students. Perhaps the preservice teachers felt limited, by the wording of the essay directions, in regard to what was acceptable. In the deeper analysis of essays from 28 preservice teachers, we found that some had clear definitions and examples of teacher leadership, others lacked definitions, and a few copied the examples of activities from the Teacher Leader Essay directions. Several essays contained sentences taken verbatim or paraphrased from the essay directions, such as, "Parents responded well to the information that was presented and I felt it was a success because of the great feedback." Another provided the following unsubstantiated claim, using the language from the directions: "This helped me value the importance of leadership and collaboration in the school community because parents need to be involved in their child's school work and their success in school." Others began their essays by stating that they "wanted to do something that would make a difference" or that they planned something to include students, families, and colleagues. These findings indicate that some preservice teachers truly embraced the challenge of the task of being a teacher leader, while others were more concerned with compliance or fulfilling the requirements for the reward (Doyle, 1983) of licensure.

Finally, the Teacher Leader Essays did not explicitly connect the preservice teachers' leadership work to helping their students learn. Indeed, most of the essays focused on the affective benefits to themselves. For example, several essays emphasized the preservice teachers' increased confidence with communication with colleagues and parents that occurred due to the completion of the task:

Becoming a leader in the classroom comes with confidence. I believe that, through the enthusiasm and exploration of the activities made available during our first math night, I was able to gain the confidence to improve and create new activities for the second night.

Thus, the essays focused on what the preservice teachers did and the benefits that they gained by engaging in leadership activities, rather than on their students' learning. This clearly indicates that our preservice teachers are in a novice teacher stage, in which they have self-centered

concerns (Fuller, 1969; Fuller & Brown, 1975; Ryan, 1986; Veenman, 1984).

Summary and Implications

Anders, Hoffman, and Duffy (2000) make a case for investigating how teachers learn and how that learning is enacted in their professional responsibilities. Leadership, along with pedagogical and content knowledge as a professional responsibility, is an emerging requirement for effective teachers. The results of this inquiry into preservice teachers' experiences and perceptions of leadership help inform the literature on leadership preparation by specifically attending to preservice teachers' understandings of teacher leadership. This inquiry also informs preservice teacher education programs that are attempting to incorporate leadership preparation and accountability measures.

This deep analysis of the essays has great implications for thinking about the construction and evaluation of teacher leadership tasks in undergraduate teacher education. We agree with Bond (2011) that a concise definition of teacher leadership does not exist and that, instead, there is a continuum of teacher leadership. These essays demonstrated the continuum of teacher leadership but also highlighted the constraints of these required tasks: context, compliance, and development.

The findings from the first year of this study also support Cochran-Smith's (2001) claim that the "what for?" or "to what end?" questions are just as important as the "what" and "how" of these outcomes-based performance assessments. As the use of performance assessments in preservice teacher education continues to grow, more energy should be focused on the underlying assumptions of these tasks: the "what for?" question. Reframing the demonstrated outcomes required by preservice teachers means being specific about which outcomes are wanted: the "to what end?" question. However, by negotiating the specificity of the task for the sake of compliance, we risk losing preservice teachers' opportunity to embrace the challenge as a teacher leader, as students at all levels tend to prefer low-ambiguity or low-risk tasks (Doyle, 1983). The Teacher Leader Essay, which is new to our teacher preparation program requirements, offers a high level of ambiguity (open interpretation of the task directions) and high risk (accountability measures/licensure), which requires preservice teachers to demonstrate true understanding (Doyle, 1983).

Our findings echo the teacher development literature because our preservice teachers were clearly in the self-centered stage, in which they were more concerned with how competent and in control they appeared (Veenman, 1984) rather than on their students' learning. Beginning

teachers often do not remember what they learned in their university experiences and, instead, teach the way that they were taught (Darling-Hammond, 1999), perpetuating the apprenticeship of observation (Lortie, 1975). Grossman et al. (2000) found that it took two or three years after graduation for teacher education concepts to appear in instructional practices, and Levin (2003) found that ideas about pedagogy were still developing at the fifth year. Thus, while teacher leadership is now part of preservice teacher preparation programs and licensure requirements, the teacher development literature suggests that it takes time for concepts from university course work to appear in teachers' practices (Smagorinsky et al., 2003). Thus, professional development in teacher leadership will be required beyond the teacher preparation program. While the concept of teacher leadership should be introduced in the teacher preparation program (Bond, 2011), ultimately, preservice teachers' school contexts will either enhance or impede their development (Nolan & Palazzolo, 2011; Sherrill, 2011; Smagorinsky et al., 2003) as teacher leaders.

As teacher educators who are encountering increasing mandates for licensure and pressures for outcomes, we continue to investigate the following questions in our research, which are both particular and global: Are preservice teachers developmentally ready to define leadership and engage in leadership activities in the student teaching placement? Further, does mandating preservice teachers to complete leadership activities required for graduation and licensure lead mostly to negotiating a task for compliance than to an understanding or an internalization of the concept? We currently are investigating the second year of data and planning to follow these new teachers into the schools in an attempt to understand how, and whether, this leadership requirement had any lasting impact.

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Appendix A

Directions for the Teacher Leader Essay

Requirements. Each teacher candidate will complete a Teacher as Leader Essay (TLE) that documents the following: (1) leadership in the school, (2) professional development, and (3) collaboration with families.

Directions. Each teacher candidate enrolled in an internship or student teaching will complete the Individual Growth Plan assignment and participate in at least two additional activities that show experience and in-depth understanding of the concept of "Teacher as Leader." The activities may involve direct participation in the School Improvement Plan and meaningful interaction with parents/families. There must be a minimum of five hours of participation in the activities. The final reflective essay, the TLE, will be submitted electronically as a demonstration of proficiency in Leadership and Collaboration. The verification forms also will be submitted electronically as evidence of participation in the activities.

Involvement in the activities must be substantial and meaningful and can take the form of, but is not limited to, the following:

1. semester-long participation on a school improvement team;
2. evidence of planning and collegial work with the cooperating teacher (and/or another teacher in the school) on a project or problem of concern addressed in the school's improvement plan;
3. participation in the development of an IEP or an IFSP;
4. meetings with the parents/guardians at the school, phone calls to the home, and so forth;
5. planning of and participation in a school-wide event (e.g., field trip, band performance, assemblies, open house, senior projects, health fair, parent conferences, bicycle safety program);
6. planning of and participation in a school system-wide event (e.g., Special Olympics, Odyssey of the Mind, fundraiser, health and wellness initiative, science fair, writing contest, fine and performing arts events).

The format of the TLE is as follows:

1. A one-page maximum description of the activities participated in for this evidence. Activities are to be clearly identified by name and described briefly. The description is to include who sponsored the activities (e.g., teacher, school, PTO, club, school system) and when and where they were held. Any other pertinent details should be included.
2. A Participation Documentation Form (see below) for each activity, to which you will attach a one-page maximum narrative description of your involvement in each activity.
3. A five-page maximum reflective essay that describes the successes and limitations of each event and what you learned about leadership, professional development, and collaboration with families. You should respond to the prompts below:

- How does your Individual Growth Plan connect to this assignment?
 - What are the concrete details of your leadership and collaboration activities and how did they influence your understanding of leadership and collaboration? For example, a supporting statement provides a further explanation such as: “I know that the event was successful because several parents responded with positive feedback”; “The event raised \$100.00 to support X organization”; or “This helped me value the importance of leadership and collaboration in the school community because . . .”
 - How did what you learned in college affect your ability to perform leadership activities as a student teacher? Think critically about all of your experiences at WCU, such as course work, field experiences, extra-curricular activities, or special programs that you attended.
4. A verifying artifact of at least one of the activities, such as a printed program or announcement, video clip, or digital photo.

Evaluation. The TLE, as described above, will be scanned into one document and submitted and evaluated electronically using a common rubric to determine the level of teacher candidate proficiency in the above-mentioned descriptors. This will show evidence of leadership and collaboration for the teacher candidate.

Appendix B

Rubric for the Teacher Leader Essays

<i>Levels/ Criteria</i>	<i>Emergent</i>	<i>Developing</i>	<i>Proficient</i>	<i>Accomplished Score/Level</i>
Description of Activity	More than one element is under-developed or missing, and/or more than one activity is insufficient in quality for this assignment.	Either the description is not entirely clear, one element is missing, or an activity described is not appropriate for this assignment.	Includes a one-page description of leadership activities clearly identified by name and described briefly; description includes: (a) who sponsored the activities (e.g., teacher, school, PTO, club, school system), (b) when they were held, and (c) where they were held.	Exceeds minimum requirements in detail, clarity, or quality of activities (e.g., creating and sponsoring a school club, activity, or field trip requires more leadership than does attending department meetings or presenting at conferences).

Preservice Teachers' Perceptions of Teacher Leadership

<i>Levels/ Criteria</i>	<i>Emergent</i>	<i>Developing</i>	<i>Proficient</i>	<i>Accomplished</i>	<i>Score/Level</i>
Participation Documentation Form(s)	More than one element is missing or incomplete.	One element is missing or incomplete.	Includes a completed Participation Documentation Form for each activity and a one-page maximum narrative description of involvement in each activity.	Meets standards for Proficiency and exceeds them in some way—detail, clarity, insight on candidate's part, and/or quality of activity.	
Reflective Essay	More than one element is missing or incomplete.	One element is missing or incomplete.	Includes a five-page maximum reflective essay describing the successes and limitations of each event and what candidate learned about (a) leadership, (b) professional development, and (c) collaboration with families; opinions are supported by concrete details. Essay further considers connections between candidate's college preparation and student teaching: How (if at all) did what the candidate learned in college affect his/her ability to perform leadership activities as a student teacher?	Meets standards for Proficiency and exceeds them in some way—detail, clarity, insight on candidate's part, and/or quality of activity. Essay establishes clear, illuminating connections between candidate's college preparation and student teaching: How (if at all) did what the candidate learned in college affect his/her ability to perform leadership activities as a student teacher?	

Issues in Teacher Education

<i>Levels/ Criteria</i>	<i>Emergent</i>	<i>Developing</i>	<i>Proficient</i>	<i>Accomplished</i>	<i>Score/Level</i>
Verifying Artifact	Verifying artifact is not present.	Verifying artifact is present but lacks detail or is inconclusive.	A verifying artifact of at least one of the activities, such as a printed program or announcement, video clip, digital photo, is included.	Verifying artifact(s) for one or more activities is/are exceptional in clarity, relevance, or detail; or verifying artifacts are present for all of the activities.	