Lessons in Leadership: Learning from Teacher Leaders

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ABSTRACT

Catherine Pendleton Hart: Lessons in Leadership: Learning from Teacher Leaders
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This paper is based on a study intended to define and explore teacher leadership from the

teachers' point-of-view to help us consider what paths school systems, universities, and

policy makers might take to support the development of teacher leaders who can

transform schools through and beyond their classrooms. The significance of teacher

leaders on the achievement and development of students is well-documented, but without

a stronger research base from which to understand how teachers become teacher leaders

and enact leadership, we will limit our efforts to help teachers better shape the policies

and practices that determine students' experiences. This paper discusses the findings

from interviews with five self-identified teacher leaders and suggests recommendations

for changes to support further development of teacher leaders.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Introduction

In today's school system, teachers' expertise is vast, yet their voices go unheard. They are trusted with the education of our children and yet are not trusted to make decisions about what those children should know and be able to do or how they should be taught. While, in theory, teachers are powerful participants in what takes place in schools, they are not in positions of leadership that enable them to radically transform what happens in those schools. Perhaps as a result of the educational system's failure to value teachers in these ways, the system continues to struggle with improvement and reform. Hargreaves and Fullan (1996) write,

> Educational reform has failed time and time again. We believe that this is because reform has either ignored teachers or oversimplified what teaching is about. And teachers themselves have not yet taken the initiative to build the new conditions necessary for reversing a trend that has overburdened schools with problems, and ironically added insult to injury by overloading them with fragmented, unworkable solutions. Teachers have been too busy responding to the latest forays to steer a bold and imaginative course of their own. (p. xiii)

Within this context of overload and fragmentation in our schools, it is time for research to turn more explicitly to the question of how we might better prepare and encourage teachers to take on the activities of leadership and reform in order to maximize their potential for change and in order to allow them to speak out and to speak up for their profession and for the work that they do. If we are to finally create a school system in which teachers' voices are heard, we must do a better job preparing teachers to become leaders. This is the assumption under which this research project began. The purposes of this study were to define teacher leadership from the teachers' point-of-view, to identify types of activities in which teacher leaders participate, and to explore the development of teacher leaders across time as well as their role and impact on schools in order to provide

universities, schools, and policy makers with a better understanding of how to encourage and utilize teacher leaders to create change.

Literature Review

In 1909, Ella Flagg Young, the first female superintendent of Chicago public schools, said, "'Women are destined to rule the schools of every city. . . [Education] is woman's natural field and she is no longer satisfied to do the larger part of the work and yet be denied the leadership'" (Tyack and Hansot, 1982, p. 180). As superintendent of Chicago schools in the early 20th century, Young created teachers' advisory councils to give women a voice in policy and curriculum reform, and she worked to change the hierarchy of control in schools that she believed was both created by and a reflection of the ruling class in which directives were sent from the superintendent, down through the principals, and finally to the workers at the bottom, the teachers (Tyack and Hansot, 1982). In describing the work of teaching in the early 1900s, Young said,

> There has been a tendency toward factory-evolution and factory-management, and the teachers, like children who stand at machines, are told just what to do. The teachers, instead of being the great moving force, educating and developing the powers of the human mind in such a way that they shall contribute to the power and efficiency of this democracy, tend to become mere workers at the treadmill. (Tyack and Hansot, 1982, p. 181)

Although with the help of advocates like Young women did enjoy a brief period of leadership in education during the early 20th century (Tyack and Hansot, 1982), Ella Flagg Young's vision of an educational system run by women has, unfortunately, never been realized, and the work of teachers today, regardless of gender, is much like that of teachers 100 years ago.

The work of teachers

> *Schools with their standardized curriculum, managerial organization, and so forth, are more like 'usines' (factories) than workshops. (Casey, 1993, p. 100)*

The factory model in industry has undergone significant changes in the 100 years since the time of Ella Flagg Young; Tyack and Hansot (1982) point out, however, that the educational system has never progressed much beyond the model that Young criticized. They write,

> Schools never achieved the organizational controls or technological breakthroughs in instruction that would have paralleled mass production increases in industry. The heart of the school – the classroom – proved more resistant to change than did the factory floor. Study after study has shown that the 'core technology' of classroom instruction has remained relatively stable, despite periodic cults of efficiency and new reigning philosophies. (p. 158)

While the assembly line model in factories quickly became outdated and obsolete, the values portrayed in the programs and structure of our school system today, which emphasize efficiency and productivity over quality, equity, and choice, still reflect the values of the factory floor, and the teachers inside the classroom are still "mere workers at the treadmill." Merz and Furman (1997) explain how corporate values of efficiency and productivity manifest in today's education, writing,

> The corporate model and centralized control by 'experts' led to a proliferation of rules and regulations to govern the work lives of educators. The hierarchy of the corporate model suggests a line of authority and control in which expert administrators supervise and direct subordinate teachers. And the idea of education as 'science' has led increasingly to a view of teachers as technicians carrying out orders and fulfilling the prescriptions of the experts. (p. 39)

Teachers, the technicians in their classrooms, are disempowered by the authority and control of the administrators who subordinate them, and they are seen not as creators and "artisans" (Casey, 1993) but rather as replaceable and interchangeable cogs in a machine

whom we don't even trust to fairly and accurately assess students. Indeed, Meier (2002) writes,

> The systems we have designed to manage schooling – even in small districts – follow a familiar recipe for unsuccessful organizations, be they public or private: they treat people as though they were interchangeable parts. One qualified teacher is seen as the same as another... (p. 156)

At its extreme, this recipe has allowed for script-based teaching in which a teacher simply reads a script prepared for her by someone outside of her classroom. In this model, all teachers of the same subject are expected to read the same script for a given day regardless of variation in their students or teaching styles.

Meier (2002) further shows how standardization in schools has contributed to a loss of trust in teachers and schools. Of the standardized testing movement, she writes,

> We are witnessing a radical redefinition of the task of public education, driven by the widespread belief that by focusing our attention on externally imposed tests we can both produce higher achievement and restore public trust in our schools. I will argue that quite the opposite is true: the increasing use of standardized tests both undermines achievement and increases the distrust we have for teachers, students, and our own judgments. (p. 95)

Instead of allowing the teacher in a classroom to assess her students and make decisions about those students using her understanding of what students should know and be able to do as well as her understanding of the individual students in her classroom to determine the direction she needs to take, we have come to rely on standardized tests that treat all students alike, and we use the results of these standardized tests to assess our teachers regardless of the context in which they are teaching. With so little trust in today's schools, Meier (2002) writes, "we allow those furthest removed from the schoolhouse to dictate policy that fundamentally changes the daily interactions that take place within schools" (p. 2). In this model, the daily interactions between students and teachers are

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managed and controlled by politicians and policy makers many of whom who have, in fact, never worked inside a school. By allowing those outside of the classroom to dictate policy, we are enabling the continued failure of reform that Hargreaves and Fullan (1996) discuss.

Ultimately, by allowing these decisions to be made outside of the schools and the classrooms, policy makers and their constituencies are further disempowering teachers and negatively impacting teacher effectiveness in classrooms. A sense of disempowerment caused by a lack of control over what happens in the classroom leads teachers to a loss of self-efficacy, which, in turn, impacts the education of students. Hargreaves and Fullan (1996) write that

> teachers with a lower sense of 'efficacy,' a depressed sense of their capacity to have positive effects on their lower-attaining students, were more preoccupied with 'covering' prescribed material than were teachers with a higher sense of efficacy. Teachers with a lower sense of efficacy also tended to have lower rates of achievement in basic skills among their students. Feelings of powerlessness which contribute to teachers' lowered sense of efficacy, are often brought about in systems where they have little control over what is taught." (p. 35)

When teachers are treated as technicians to implement curricula created by those outside of the school, teachers lose a sense of confidence in themselves as professionals and rely only on what is prescribed to them rather than trusting in their own expertise and intuition to do what is best for their students.

Additional evidence of the factory model and its impact on the work of teachers can be seen in the structure of the school. The bell-schedule still in use today, with its inflexibility and emphasis on controlled mass movement, is also reminiscent of the factory floor and the machines that were being produced on those floors. Michel Foucault (1975) writes,

By other means, the 'mutual improvement school' was also arranged as a machine to intensify the use of time; its organization made it possible to obviate the linear, successive character of the master's teaching: it regulated the counterpoint of operations, performed, at the same moment, by different groups of pupils under the direction of monitors and assistants, so that each passing moment was filled with many different, but ordered activities; and, on the other hand, the rhythm imposed by signals, whistles, orders imposed on everyone temporal norms that were intended both to accelerate the process of learning and to teach speed as a virtue. (p. 154)

Although Foucault is describing schools of the 17 and 1800s, his description of the signals and whistles that govern the movement of both students and teachers in the classroom are familiar to educators today. Again, because of the emphasis on efficiency and productivity, students move from one teacher to another through the day, and each teacher, like a worker on an assembly line, is expected to impact one facet of the student's education in a manner approved and regulated by those above her. While these bell schedules may have been intended to control students, accelerate learning, and teach speed as a virtue, they have had the additional effect of controlling and managing teachers, and it is within this context of control that teachers further isolate themselves, choosing, to the extent possible, to maintain power over what goes on behind the closed doors of their classrooms (Corbett, 1991). Additionally, Merz and Furman (1997) cite a number of studies that portray the continuing isolation of teachers. They write that "schools were reported to be lonely, isolating places where teachers have little contact with other adults (e.g., Jackson, 1968; Lortie, 1975)" (p. 68). This often self-imposed isolation allows teachers a modicum of control while at the same time it weakens a collaborative system that potentially has the power to impact the schools collectively.

Not only does a desire to control their classrooms impact teacher isolation, but a desire to avoid controversy in schools also contributes to isolation. Tyack and Hansot

(1982) describe Horace Mann's influence on the lack of controversy in today's schools. They write that Horace Mann was instrumental in creating a "doctrine of neutrality" and banning controversy from public schools because he wanted public schools to be both non-political and non-sectarian, and they show how Mann's ideas have been detrimental to today's schools. They say, "[Mann's] doctrine of neutrality beyond the realm of commonly approved opinions, while seductive and politically apt, would prove a dubious legacy for future leaders" (p. 61). Meier (2002) more specifically shows how Mann's legacy has negatively impacted schools and the work of teachers today. She writes,

> Teachers have often traded away greater on-site power for the comforts of solidarity as well as friendship. (They've left it to their unions to deal with that uglier power stuff.) Many teachers have been happy to work in isolation in part because it makes it easier to be supportive of each other in small, private ways while avoiding having to recognize uncomfortable differences. Avoiding controversy is second nature to such supportive relationships. (p. 60 – 61)

Meier's description of relationships between teachers in schools today shows how teachers often forsake relationships with colleagues in an attempt to avoid controversy and conflict thereby contributing to their own isolation.

The isolation caused by the structure of schools and the school day, the teachers' desire for control in their own classrooms, and a general avoidance of controversy and conflict cause a cellular structure in schools, and Anderson and Blase (1995) explain how this cellular structure is, in large part, a cause of the top-down, hierarchical control of the schools. They write,

> Lortie (1963) and Dreeben (1970) argue that, for a number of reasons, the school principal's formal authority *vis-à-vis* teachers is limited, at least in comparison with managers of other types of organizations. Close control by administrators is impeded by the 'cellular' structure of the school (teachers teaching in separate classrooms) and the value teachers place on attaining intrinsic rewards in their work with students. As a result, Lortie maintains, 'control over teachers is accomplished through selection-socialization and subtle mechanisms which refine

bureaucratic rule (Lortie, 1963, p. 10). Lortie also emphasizes that principals are the ultimate authority on student discipline and make decisions about the allocation of space, materials and equipment – decisions that strongly influence teachers' working conditions." (p. 8)

Similarly, Merz and Furman (1997) continue, "Schools were described as overly bureaucratic and rule-bound in ways that seemed irrelevant to the task at hand" (p. 68). The rules in these bureaucratic contexts were and continue to be determined by individuals other than teachers. In their study of schools in England and Wales, Ball and Bowe (1991) found that "Despite the recognition of the need to consult, a strong managerial line existed that sat uneasily with the notion of staff participation" (in Blase, 1991, p. 42). Rather than provide opportunities for teachers to participate in decision-making processes, the educational system today is still designed to limit the power, creativity, and collaboration of teachers, to treat teachers as technicians following the orders of others, and to deaden and "routinize" (Casey, 2002) the work of teachers.

Paradoxically, the emphasis on control and discipline placed on teachers and students by principals trickles down to the classrooms where teachers, who feel a lack of control over what goes on in their classrooms due to regulations from above, emphasize discipline and control with their own students. In fact, Anderson (1991) writes,

> Most teachers. . . know the feeling of being labeled and marginalized if they are too outspoken. They know the feeling of being locked out of the centers of power where important information is shared. . . They know all the subtle and not so subtle ways teachers are silenced. And ironically, many of them end up using these very strategies on students in the micropolitics of their classrooms. As McNeil (1988) has so well illustrated, schools are more about control than they are about education. (in Blase, 1991, p. 136)

Unfortunately, the standardization, isolation, bureaucratization, and control of teachers in the context of schools today negatively impacts not only teachers but students as well.

The historical context

> *We agree with Karl Marx's aphorism that 'men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves but under circumstances directly encountered, given, and transmitted from the past.' Those conditions are always specific to time and place – that is, historical and particular. (Tyack and Hansot, 1982, p. 12)*

To understand the context of school's today, and specifically the role of the teacher within this context, it is important to look at the historical background out of which it grew. Although as previously mentioned there was a brief period in which women took part in educational leadership, Merz and Furman point out that "the inertia of the system tends to restore it to its original condition" (1997, p. 8), and in this case, after the time of Ella Flagg Young, the "inertia of the system" quickly restored the balance in favor of the patriarchal and hierarchical leadership that has been the norm in education. The impact of both patriarchy and hierarchy on today's system and the role of the teacher within that system has been profound. Tyack and Hansot (1982) chronicle the gulf between male leadership and female leadership stating that during the 19th century when the common school movement was started and public schools became institutionalized, leadership was a male prerogative. Women were banned from educational associations and were, in fact, allowed to teach only because it prepared them for marriage (Tyack and Hansot, 1982). Again, Tyack and Hansot (1982) offer insight into the relationship between female teachers and their male superintendents. They write,

> Although [superintendents] typically taught classes, and almost all had risen to the superintendency through the ranks, their relationship with other teachers (mostly female) tended to be paternalistic. It was common for them to meet teachers at the railroad station, find them places to board in town, and advise them 'on social and moral conduct,' including 'appropriate and sanitary dress.'" (p. 177)

The emphasis in these relationships was placed on controlling the way the women behaved not only in their classrooms but also in their personal lives. This early emphasis on behavior evolved and is the precursor for today's administrative control over the teacher's behavior in the classroom and school context more broadly. Teachers are expected to follow not only the rules and regulations sent down from the superintendent, but they are also expected to comply with standardized curricula in their classrooms.

Although women did play a role in forming public schools, their role was limited to those arenas, like the classroom, that were considered a part of the female sphere. Tyack and Hansot (1982) write,

> In the nineteenth century – and since – men have received most of the credit for creating and running public education. In part this resulted from the widespread assumption that leadership in the public sphere was a male prerogative. In part it also stemmed from the fact that the very important ways in which women contributed to the common school were less apparent because they were largely confined to women's sphere. (p. 63)

In addition, even in the arenas in which women were allowed some voice, women relied on men for political support and funds and only achieved power through indirection. This left the leadership of the system as a whole to be constructed by men, leading to a patriarchal system that began to employ women because of their compliancy. Tyack and Hansot (1982) write,

> When women first replaced males as teachers in urban public schools, they were valued not only because they were cheaper and supposedly more nurturing and skillful instructors of young children, but also because they were presumed to be more compliant with the direction of male superintendents than were the old schoolmasters. (p. 183)

Unfortunately, not only did women come to the profession of teaching with less power and opportunity for influence, but as they attempted to claim status and power in their role in the schools, they were not taken seriously and were, instead, given token and

symbolic leadership roles (Tyack and Hansot, 1982) that on the surface provided the

appearance of greater equality. Tyack and Hansot (1982) further explain that when

women were given leadership roles, they were most often given power over other women

and they were typically given leadership roles that did not provide them access to the

wider community. Thereby, the influence and power of women on education was limited

despite an appearance of concession. It is within this model of leadership that teachers,

79% of whom are still women according to a report from the Education Commission of

the States (2005), continue to fight for voice and leadership roles.

The teacher leader

> *As teachers face up to rising and widening expectations in their work and to the increasing overload of innovations and reforms, it is important that they work and plan more with their colleagues, sharing and developing their expertise together, instead of trying to cope with the demands alone. In this emerging conception of the teacher's role, leadership and consultancy are part of the job for all teachers, not just a privilege allocated to and exercised by a few. (Hargreaves and Fullan, 1996, p. 4 – 5)*

Current literature on the work and role of teachers in schools as well as literature

on school reform has begun to focus on the role and impact of teachers as leaders. While

it is clear that there is a burgeoning group of teachers with the ability and the desire to

lead education and education reform, it is less clear how teachers can become teacher

leaders and what impact they have on their schools and school systems. According to

literature regarding this group of teachers, teacher leaders are those teachers who have the

ability to reach out to one another in natural and spontaneous ways (Hargreaves and

Fullan, 1996), who welcome and encourage conflict and critique (Meier, 2002), who feel

a sense of self-confidence (Reeves, 2008), who foster relationships within the school as

well as in the community, and who are knowledgeable about both policy and reform (Hargreaves and Fullan, 1996) and action research (Reeves, 2008). In addition, teacher leaders are those teachers who are life-long learners (Meier, 2002) as well as self-reflective practitioners (Reeves, 2008).

The literature on teacher leaders also describes ways in which these leaders should work towards impacting and reforming schools through the paradoxical relationship between collegiality and conflict. Merz and Furman (1997) point out that "Out of this literature [regarding the conditions of schools today] came the ideas, which have become an important piece of the reform literature, of collegiality among teachers and the development of professional community (e.g., Little, 1993; McLaughlin, 1993; Sergiovanni, 1994)" (p. 68). Similarly, Hargreaves and Fullan (1996) write, "We see all over the world in the 1990s that individuals, spontaneously connecting with other individuals, and creating new groups and alliances, are a far more potent force for revolutionary change than formal institutions. This includes those institutions that claim to be pursuing reform" (p. 9). Education reformers of the 21st century are encouraging teachers to come out from behind closed doors and to reach out to one another to create power through collegiality and community, and, while community is necessary to provide support to teacher leaders through relationship, it is, more importantly, necessary as a step towards providing a structure through which teacher leaders can critique and voice disagreement in a supportive and caring environment. As previously mentioned, today's schools tend to suppress and avoid conflict; however, Tyack and Hansot (1982) point out that successful school reformers of the past, including Leonard Covello and Marcus Foster, used conflict as a means to reform. Deborah Meier (2002) writes, "Interpersonal

strife and hostility are surely not job-enhancing, but that doesn't prove that their absence will lead to progress. . . schools, like good classrooms, are laboratories for learning the art of helpful criticism for kids and teachers, which includes bringing our differences out into the open" (p. 60). In order to reform our schools, we must first provide a structure in which differing opinions can be heard, discussed, and considered without the fear of retaliation or exclusion, and it is for this purpose that community among teachers as well as between teachers and administration is imperative.

Ironically, although the large number of women in the profession of teaching has, in part, resulted in the hierarchical structure of schools today, it is also the large number of women in the profession of teaching that has the most potential to change the face of education through the collaborative work of teacher leaders. Hargreaves and Fullan (1996) explain the unique role women can play in this movement towards collegiality, community, and constructive conflict in our schools. They write,

> Reviewing the research on collaboratively run organizations, Rothschild (1990) concludes that women's socialization prepares them better to develop and lead such [collaborative] organizations. Women tend, more than men, to negotiate conflict in ways that protect ongoing working relationships. . and they tend to value relationships in and of themselves as part of their commitment to care. (p. 60 – 61)

While traditionally women have been overpowered and controlled by men in education , with an emphasis on networks of leadership that can sustain conflict and critique through relationship, women can have the power to instigate and carry forward significant reforms. While in the past women were recruited because of their subordination and compliancy, we are now looking to women to create the environment of care necessary to encourage and sustain difference and disagreement in schools. Research and resulting program and policy reform must support this movement towards collegiality,

relationships, and networks of teacher leaders who are open to conflict and critique so that the movement towards teacher leadership in our schools does not fail as it did after the work of Ella Flagg Young.

The impact of teacher leadership

> *How can we who teach reclaim our hearts, for the sake of our students, ourselves, and educational reform? That simple question challenges the assumption that drives most reform – that meaningful change comes not from the human heart but from factors external to ourselves, from budgets, methodologies, curricula, and institutional restructuring. (Palmer, 1997, p. 19).*

Teachers have the potential to make significant, pro-active, and positive changes on issues in education including, among many other issues, programming and reform, student achievement and recruitment and retention of high quality teachers. By placing power in the hands of teachers working together in networks of leadership, teacher leaders can bring about reform that is both effective and practical in the classroom as well as the school and that is likely to be carried through as it was intended. Currently, the practice of making reform and program decisions without the input of teachers who carry out those decisions dooms reform to failure as described by Hargreaves and Fullan (1996). They write, "However noble, sophisticated, or enlightened proposals for change and improvement might be, they come to nothing if teachers don't adopt them in their own classrooms and if they don't translate them into effective classroom practice" (p. 13). While teachers who are not given the opportunity to voice opinions regarding new policies and programs are often resistant to implementing something new in their classrooms, as Casey (1993) found in her study, women who see themselves as the

builders of decisions are more likely to live by them. With teachers in the role of both

building and implementing policy and programs, reform is more likely to be successful.

In addition, as previously mentioned, teachers who feel a lack of efficacy are less

likely to impact the learning of their students than are teachers who feel a strong sense of

efficacy, and teachers with little control over what happens in their classrooms often feel

a lower sense of efficacy than those who feel more control (Hargreaves and Fullan,

1996). Reeves (2008) explains the power of efficacy, writing that teachers who feel that

they will be able to impact the achievement of their students are likely to do so. Teachers

who are given more leadership regarding what is taught and how are, therefore, more

likely to positively impact the learning of their students.

Empowering teachers by giving them voice regarding what happens in their

classrooms has effects beyond the academic achievement of their students. First,

empowering teachers and giving them a sense of control impacts interactions and

relationships in their classrooms. Boyd (1991) writes,

> As [Willard] Wallace [1932] saw it, teachers typically feel they must dominate
> their students and force them to learn things for which they may see little need.
> For Waller, this coercive and autocratic state of affairs 'determines the political
> order of the school' (p. 8). Studies of the power relationships between students
> and teachers, such as found in the present volume, represent the contemporary
> exploration of Waller's insight. Significantly, contemporary school reformers are
> very much concerned with this issue, as they wrestle with ways to overcome the
> classroom dynamics between teachers and students that foster 'treaties' and
> mutual non-interference pacts' [sic] undercutting the quality of teaching and
> learning (Powell, Farrar, & Cowen, 1985; Sedlak et al., 1986)." (in Blase, 1991,
> p. viii)

As previously discussed, teachers who feel dominated by administrators, superintendents,

school boards, policy makers, and a multitude of other outsiders who make decisions

about their classrooms are, in turn, more likely to both dominate their own students and

merely "cover" prescribed material. Allowing teachers leadership opportunities may help

alleviate the classroom dynamics that currently undercut the quality of teaching and

learning by providing teachers a sense of power and control.

Additionally, empowered teachers are more likely to teach their own students a

sense of empowerment and control over their own learning. Anderson and Blase (1995)

describe the way in which a shift from leadership as management to leadership as a form

of empowerment can impact both students and communities. They write,

> democratic / empowering leadership represents a shift from an emphasis on
> leadership as management. . . to an emphasis on leadership as a form of
> empowerment. . . This form of empowerment does not simply leave teachers
> alone to be autonomous professionals within their own classrooms, but engages
> them in a larger mission of student and community empowerment. It recognizes
> that, in fact, autonomous teachers can be a barrier to student and community
> empowerment." (p. 21)

This shift to democratic and empowering leadership not only extends education beyond

the classroom and the student into the community, but it also echoes the ideas of collegial

and collaborative leadership encouraged by contemporary leadership reformers. In this

way, the education of students becomes a collective responsibility with teachers, students,

and community working together on all aspects of the student's education and

development.

Most importantly, by giving teachers leadership roles, we are more likely to be

able to recruit and retain high quality teachers. In this sense, leadership is important

because it impacts the work of the teacher by improving the quality of the work and the

teacher's sense of satisfaction in her role – two results that will benefit recruitment and

retention of effective teachers. According to Hargreaves and Fullan (1996), the quality of

the work and the working environment itself are the motivating factors for teachers, not

money; however, without the ability to shape the working environment, including what and how they teach, many teachers end up dissatisfied (Hargreaves and Fullan, 1996). Additionally, Hargreaves and Fullan (1996) write, "teachers still do not experience their teacher preparation or ongoing working conditions as intellectually inspiring or problem-solving enterprises" (p. ix). Without an intellectually inspiring environment, many of our best teachers become frustrated and bored, ultimately leaving for more challenging jobs. In fact, citing the US Department of Education, the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (2007) writes, "Teacher attrition has grown by 50 percent over the past fifteen years. The national teacher turnover rate has risen to 16.8 percent. In urban schools it is over 20 percent, and, in some schools and districts, the teacher dropout rate is actually higher than the student dropout rate."

One way education can provide its teachers more intellectual and problem-solving challenges is by allowing them leadership roles in curriculum development. The significance of teacher leadership in curriculum development is portrayed by Casey (2002), who writes, "both intellectual skills and physical labor are involved in the curriculum creation process, which, unlike fragmented and routinized factory work, includes all aspects from conception through execution and even distribution" (p. 98). This form of intellectual stimulation for teachers combats the dulling and monotonous day in day out and year in year out work of covering the prescribed curriculum. Casey further highlights the significance of leadership roles as she explains how relationships between colleagues based on significant educational and professional issues such as curriculum development improve working conditions for teachers and create opportunity for shared leadership that sustains and supports involvement in labor.

Providing teachers with leadership opportunities not only provides a more intellectually stimulating environment in which they can build relationships through problem solving, but it also helps teachers "put themselves back together" (Palmer, 1997). In the current system of education, the work of teachers is fragmented and disjointed (Hargreaves and Fullan, 1996), and leadership opportunities can help teachers to remember their whole identities and become less fragmented. Palmer highlights not only the power for reform that whole teachers can bring to bear upon the system but also the power of self-identity that can sustain the teacher. He writes, "Remembering ourselves and our power can lead to revolution, but it requires more than recalling a few facts. *Re-membering* involves putting ourselves back together, recovering identity and integrity, reclaiming the wholeness of our lives" (1997, p. 20). For a teacher to become whole in her profession, she must have some impact on all aspects of the profession, she must feel a sense of integrity in her role, and she must have the opportunity to critique and express her opinions even and especially when they contradict the status quo. This sense of integrity can only come from the same feelings of efficacy and empowerment that allow teachers to be confident in their work with their students.

Finally and significantly for our students, involvement in leadership can provide depleted caregivers with the fulfillment they need to continue caring for others (Witherell and Noddings, 1991). Cooper (1991) summarizes many of Noddings' ideas describing how caregivers can become depleted through continued caregiving and how they often need significant involvement in non-human activities to rejuvenate themselves. Ultimately, teachers are caregivers, working to support students as they face a loss of

identity on a daily basis through the process of learning (Bracher, 2006). As caregivers, it is important that teachers avoid burnout and depletion, and Cooper writes,

> Noddings also suggests that to maintain the ethical ideal, one needs to build 'a reservoir of sustenance from activity in the non-human world' (p. 124). 'An ethic of caring strives to maintain the caring attitude. That means that the one-caring must be maintained, for she is the immediate source of caring. The one-caring, then, properly pays heed to her own condition' (p. 105). This remains a central problem in our society today. Caregivers are often totally depleted before they retreat to the nonhuman world Noddings mentions above. Yet because society bestows great social approval on their actions without rewarding them economically and because women often find a sense of self-worth through giving to others, many caregivers continue to give to the point of depletion." (in Witherell and Noddings, 1991, p. 105)

Work in policy and leadership provides an opportunity through work in non-human activities for caregivers to take care of themselves in order to be more fully prepared to continue caring for students. This type of opportunity may combat teacher burnout and depletion.

While much has been written about the condition of schools today, the historical context out of which those conditions emerge, and the existence and potential impact of teacher leaders, not much has been written about what teacher leadership means to teachers or how teachers become leaders themselves. This study seeks to merge these strands of previous research to identify ways in which teacher education programs at universities, mentoring programs within our public schools, and policy makers in the policy world might better prepare teachers to become leaders willing and able to nurture relationships and community through conflict and disagreement within schools.

The Study

The researcher

I am a teacher and a teacher leader, and this study comes as a result of my own story. As a confident, intelligent, and goal-oriented woman, I have never been content to sit in my classroom year after year, delivering the same standardized content to students over and over again. After serving on the Superintendent's Teacher Advisory Council during my second and third years of teaching, achieving my National Boards certification in my fourth year of teaching, and becoming a mentor in my fifth year of teaching and a cooperating teacher in my sixth year of teaching, I was bored and yet, I did not want to leave my classroom. I have known that I wanted not only to be a teacher but also to have a *career* in teaching since childhood, and I have encountered skepticism from people in my life who have thought I was too smart to be a teacher. They asked why I wanted to waste my time teaching, and they told me I would never last – that I would be burnt out and bored after a few years. Underlying their response to my career choice was the assumption that teaching was not an intellectually inspiring endeavor, and unfortunately, all too often, this assumption is well-founded.

After eleven years in the classroom, I am still happy to be teaching, but I struggle every year against the boredom and monotony that can become the work of a teacher in what Hargreaves and Fullan (1996) term a "flat" career. They write,

> "There are two fundamental problems in this [flat] tradition. First, spending many years in one's classroom without substantial outside stimulation reduces commitment, motivation and effectiveness. Good ideas and innovations developed by individual teachers are often inaccessible to others in the profession. Spending year in and year out performing the same role is inherently deadening." (p. 11)

I came to my work as a teacher leader and to my decision to enter a graduate program for a Master's degree in an attempt to avoid becoming the burnt-out teacher I saw in so many classrooms, and I came to my research topic in an attempt to help others avoid becoming the same.

When I tell people about my Master's degree program, they ask if I am studying to become an administrator, and when I tell them no, they ask what I am going to do with the degree. My answer? I am going to stay in my classroom. I am going to keep doing the thing that I love to do. For a time, the Master's degree program has kept my boredom at bay, but as I finish this year, I am already considering what I will do next to fight the boredom, and I have a vested and very personal interest in my own work. I hope that by contributing to the research on teacher leaders I will encourage reformers and policy makers to listen to teachers. I hope that by contributing my own findings, I will take the world of education one step closer to embracing teacher leadership and creating jobs like the hybrid teacher described by the Center for Teaching Quality (2010) in their monograph entitled *Teachers of 2030.* In imagining the work of teachers in 2030, they write,

> Most [teachers] are now serving in hybrid positions where they teach students part of the day or week, and also have dedicated time to lead as student support specialists, teacher educators, community organizers, and virtual mentors in teacher networks. Some spend part of their non-teaching time working closely with university – and think tank based researchers on studies of teaching and learning – or conducting policy analyses that are grounded in their everyday pedagogical experiences. . . These specially trained hybrid teachers are groomed for a long career in teaching.

In this new vision of the profession of teaching, teachers like me, who consider themselves teacher leaders will continue to find challenge in their work and enjoy teaching over the course of many years.

The procedure

The design of this study, which incorporates life history, narrative inquiry, phenomenology, and ethnography was chosen to provide voice not only to the participants in the study but also to me as both the researcher and a fellow teacher leader. I chose to use a narrative inquiry and life history approach based, in part, on Kathleen Casey's study (1993) entitled, *I Answer with my Life: Life histories of women teachers working for social change.* Casey used life history and narrative inquiry to complete her study in order to give her participants voice. In fact, she writes,

> The voices of teachers have been systematically edited out. . . Women teachers'
> own understandings and interpretations of their experiences have been, until very
> recently, 'not only unrecorded, but actually silenced' (Popular Memory Group,
> 1982: 210), in educational literature, as well as in the larger public domain. This
> book represents one attempt to remedy that situation." (p. 4)

Just as Casey used her study to provide a voice to her participants, I hoped to provide a voice to teacher leaders through the life history and narrative inquiry approach. Additionally, according to Marshall and Rossman (2006), life history and narrative inquiry are especially useful in exploring issues of social identity and this was the goal of this study. Although life history and narrative inquiry were appropriate given the attempt both to explore the social identity of teacher leaders within schools and to provide opportunity for the participants' voices to be heard, this approach also suffers from potential memory gaps as well as the subjectivity of both the participants and the researcher. To alleviate the impact of these weaknesses, I asked participants to bring historical artifacts related to their leadership experience to the second round interviews and I used these artifacts to triangulate the data.

To further develop my research design, I chose to use a phenomenological approach to my research because I am a teacher leader myself. According to Clark Moustakas (1994), the phenomenological approach allows the researcher to be a part of her own study as it permits a focus on the researcher's personal experience combined with those of the participants, and the findings of a phenomenological study should be relevant to the researcher's own life and experience. In fact, Harmon (1991) writes, "whereas we learn certain kinds of things from distancing ourselves from the subject studied, we get another kind of knowledge from intuitively 'becoming one with' the subject. We do not learn about reality from controlled experiments but rather by identifying with the observed" (in Moustakas, 1994, p. 46). Although the close connection between the researcher and the topic of the study can be a drawback, especially if the participants feel the researcher already knows the answers to her own questions or if the researcher allows her pre-judgments regarding the topic to predetermine analysis codes or essential findings, these drawbacks are alleviated, in part, by the epoche phase of this approach during which the researcher

> engages in disciplined and systematic efforts to set aside prejudgments regarding the phenomenon being investigated. . . in order to launch the study as far as possible free of preconceptions, beliefs, and knowledge of the phenomenon from prior experience and professional studies – to be completely open, receptive, and naïve in listening to and hearing research participants describe their experience of the phenomenon being investigated. (Moustakas, 1994, p. 22)

During the epoche phase of my study, which occurred before my first interview, I answered my own interview questions and wrote down my own understandings and beliefs about teacher leadership in order to identify them as pre-data assumptions and in order to bracket them off and allow the participant data, rather than my own assumptions, to determine codes during the analysis phase of the project. Additionally, a member-

check was used during the focus group interview as a means to minimize my own personal interpretations.

Finally, I incorporated an ethnographic approach to my study because it encourages "*learning from people*" as opposed to "*studying people*" (Spradley, 1979, p. 3, italics in original), and my intention was to learn from teacher leaders themselves what defined the role of a teacher leader within the context of the school. I chose interviews as a central data source to guide this learning. To develop my interview questions, I used James Spradley's work, *The Ethnographic Interview* (1979). Using this resource, I developed interview protocols for all three rounds of interviews that included descriptive questions, structural questions, and contrast questions.

Five self-identified teacher leaders were recruited to participate in this study. I used contacts at local universities to identify potential participants, and I described to my contacts only that I was looking for teachers who considered themselves to be teacher leaders. I did not define what I meant by teacher leader for the contacts or for potential participants. Each of the five self-identified high school teacher leaders participated in two individual interviews of approximately 1 – 1½ hours each. During the second round of interviews, I asked participants to share artifacts that reflected their leadership experience. These documents were used to determine the types of activities in which teacher leaders are involved as well as to triangulate the data and to provide historical artifacts to support participant observations. In addition, I conducted a culminating focus group interview as a follow-up to the individual interviews. The focus group interview also lasted approximately 1½ hours and all participants were present. Interviews were conducted using a narrative inquiry format. After the first question, which asked teacher

leaders to define teacher leadership in order to ground their further responses in a common understanding of their use of the term, I asked participants broadly to tell the story of their teacher leadership. This question was explicitly modeled on Kathleen Casey's research (1993), , in which she opened by asking her participants to "tell me the story of your life." She writes, "This was the most open-ended way I could invent to elicit the selectivities of the subjects themselves" (1993, p. 17). By asking participants to tell me the story of their leadership, I invited these teacher leaders to define leadership in their own terms and in their own voice. Additional follow-up questions were asked as necessary. The second individual interview began with follow-up questions related to data collected during the first round of interviews. After I asked follow-up questions, I asked participants to share their artifacts and to respond to two artifact-related questions: 1. In which of the activities for which you brought artifacts did you have the most impact as a teacher leader and 2. Which of the activities for which you brought artifacts was most difficult and why? Finally, in these second round interview questions, I asked teacher leaders to categorize various elements of teacher leadership. For example, I asked them to define types of leaders, types of leadership activities, and stages of leadership. During the final focus group interview, I again asked participants follow-up questions related to data collected during all individual interviews. In addition, I read participants the lists of significant findings and asked them to modify and / or elaborate on them as a member checking procedure (for final lists, see Appendix B).

Analysis was completed on an ongoing basis using a constant comparative method. During interviews, I kept lists of keywords used by the participants. In the first round interviews, these keywords were initially determined by listening for words that

resonated with my own experience as a teacher leader as well as words that reflected findings from the research I conducted for the literature review. Following the first few interviews and in the second-round interviews and the focus group interview, keywords were additionally identified by listening for words that echoed previous interviews. This process was repeated during transcription of the interview tapes to elaborate and expand the findings. I transcribed the interviews immediately following each interview and using the lists of keywords as well as interview transcriptions, I wrote an analysis memo of initial findings following the entire set of both the first and second round interviews. These memos were added to the lists of keywords and were an additional source of data with which to compare themes during subsequent interviews. Following the focus group interview, I read all interview data and coded the transcriptions using a word processor. I assigned colors to keywords and themes that repeated through multiple sources and used these color codings to pull evidence for each of my key findings.

The participants

All of the five participants were high school teachers; two were male and three were female. Four of the participants were full time teachers while one had a hybrid part-time teaching and part-time administrative role. Mrs. Penn had 26 years of teaching experience and taught social studies. She received her bachelor's degree with majors in history and English and a minor in math from a large state university and after teaching for two years, she took 12 years off to raise a family before returning to the classroom. Her leadership experiences included leading her department as department chair, leading the school improvement team, serving on textbook development committees, participating in a competitive fellowship with an emphasis on teacher leadership and

collegiality, and serving as a cooperating teacher for student teachers. Mr. George had

13 years of teaching experience and had received his bachelor's in Anthropology from a

small private college. He had taught his first two years in an alternative setting at a

wilderness camp. He then entered the teaching profession without a teaching license and

earned his license while teaching through a lateral entry program. His leadership

experiences included serving as a cooperating teacher for student teachers and serving as

the chair of various committees in his school including the graduation project committee

and the graduation committee. Mrs. Greene had 12 years of teaching experience and

taught English. She received her bachelor's degree in English as well as a subsequent

teaching license from a small private college, and after teaching for several years, she

received a Master's in Curriculum and Instruction with a concentration in English from a

large state university. Her leadership experiences included supporting and coaching

National Boards candidates, attending a leadership conference, serving as her school's

Education Association representative, serving as a cooperating teacher, chairing multiple

committees within her school, and serving on the governor's teacher advisory council.

Mr. Scarlatti had 10 years of teaching experience and taught social studies. He received

his bachelor's degree in Social Science Education from a small private college and after

teaching for seven years, he returned to a large state university and received his Master's

of Education in social studies education. He had recently been moved into a hybrid

position in which he taught part-time and worked as a part-time administrator for a

program within the school. Other leadership experiences included attending and

presenting at conferences and writing and sharing curriculum for a psychology class. Ms.

Carr had two years of experience. She had earned her bachelor's degree in history and, at

the same time, a license to teach 6 – 12 Social Studies from the same small liberal arts college attended by Mrs. Greene. Coincidentally, she had also student taught under Mrs. Penn. Ms. Carr's leadership experiences included attending conferences, presenting to her beginning teachers cohort, creating and sharing data collection methods, and coordinating a grant. All participants taught in the same county, but school contexts varied. Two schools were magnet schools; the other three were traditional high schools. One of the magnet schools was divided into four smaller schools within a school while the other was an International Baccalaureate magnet. One school was located in a suburb of a large city while the other four were located within the city limits. Enrollment ranged from approximately 1500 students to 2500 students across the 5 schools. Student demographics ranged from 63.7% white and 21.1% black to 30.5% white and 47.8% black. The number of students with free and reduced lunch ranged from 18.4% to 45.9% while the number of ESL and LEP students combined ranged from 6.5% to 11.2%. Finally, percentages of students not passing End of Course exams ranged from 8.8% to 15.3%.

While there were many differences in teaching experience, teacher preparation, and school context, there were also similarities among the participants that limit the scope and application of the findings. First, all of the teachers were teaching in the same county and all were white. Additionally, although multiple references were asked to recommend participants, only a few responded and not all of the recommended teacher leaders were willing to participate. Therefore, 4 of the 5 participants were recommended by the same reference and had ties to the same university either because they attended school there or because they served as cooperating teachers for student teachers from the

university. Finally, the sample size is small. A larger study with significantly more and varied participants is needed to determine whether these findings are applicable across broader contexts.

The Findings

Although initially I had intended to present the findings of this project as case studies of each teacher leader in his or her own context, analysis of the data revealed that despite differences in experience and teaching context, there were very strong similarities across the teachers' experiences as leaders. In fact, analysis showed more similarities than differences and the data were conducive, instead, to a thematic presentation of the findings. As Mr. George declared at the close of the focus group interview,

> Well, and the, the other thing that's fascinated me about today not knowing any of you is sitting down at the table and seeing how different our skill sets are and our perspectives on things are and yet how we all have shared such common themes, and we've come up with vision today, but I think even, just hearing the lists, I know there were some things on there that I said that I'm sure I wasn't the only one, and I know there were some other things that I could've easily said had I thought of them at the time and when we, you know, we're all at different points in our career one way or the other, and yet, I think we all serve pretty important roles at our various locations, so, it's been really neat.

The common themes that emerged from this study highlight ways in which the educational system might change in order to encourage the growth of teacher leaders and put more power in the hands of teachers to influence educational reform.

Defining the Teacher Leader: What does teacher leadership mean to teachers?

Participants' definitions of teacher leadership as well as their stories of their own leadership and the leadership of their colleagues revealed significant common themes defining teacher leaders. According to definitions and stories, teacher leaders are teachers who have good people skills, who are sympathetic, empathetic, even maternal,

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who feel ownership for their schools, who take risks, who continually reflect on and change their practice and inspire others to do the same, who are role models for other teachers and who lead by example without any authority, who celebrate successes, who feel responsible for not only their own students but also the students of other teachers as well as the profession of teaching as a whole, and who ultimately encourage others to lead as well.

Teacher leaders have good people skills: Participants seemed to agree that general people skills were the most important qualities for a teacher leader to possess. During the focus group interview, participants were asked to listen to a list of qualities teacher leaders posses that they had mentioned during their individual interviews (For a complete list, see Appendix B). When asked to determine the most important quality from the list, they said,

> Ms. Carr: I think if you were to combine several of those into the category that you said of people skills, I mean, I think that's it. You have to know how to deal with people.
>
> Mrs. Greene: Which includes, like, flexibility, empathy, –
>
> Ms. Carr: – and being approachable.
>
> Mrs. Green: – being approachable, all of those things together.
>
> Mr. George: Mm-hmm.
>
> Mr. Scarlatti: Compassion. That's one other one you said.

During their individual interviews, several specific people skills were mentioned including the abilities to listen, to influence others, and to navigate conflict. In comparing business leaders and teacher leaders, Mrs. Penn said, "I think that you would have to be able to listen to who's underneath you." Mrs. Penn not only discussed the

significance of listening to others, but she also took this a step further to an ability to represent the voice of others in dealings with the administration. She said, "I think being a spokesperson for other teachers to me is very important and very rewarding because they trust you to speak for them." In order to be a voice for others, teacher leaders must have the ability to listen well to their needs.

While Mrs. Penn discussed the significance of listening to others, Ms. Carr discussed the ability of teacher leaders to influence the actions of others. In describing what made her department chairs effective teacher leaders, she said,

> They know a lot about our individual personalities and how to approach each person based on, you know, personalities, and they understand a lot about the best ways to get what they want, the best ways to convince somebody to teach a class that they might not would otherwise want to teach and all of those kinds of things. They just know the best way to approach people.

Likewise, Mr. Scarlatti described the leadership skills he learned from his principal, which included not only the ability to effectively communicate with others and listen to others but also the ability to effectively navigate conflict and maintain positive relationships through disagreement. He said,

> I think that the person who influences me the most is our principal. . . he has been very helpful with me in modeling how to develop and how to maintain positive relationships with disagreement, and you know, not that I think that I would have been disrespectful or not intentionally certainly (inaudible). . . his language is very kind, and to try to be mindful of people and of relationships, and I think that is very important as a leadership skill certainly to try to let them know if you want to be their leader it is important to be accessible and be helpful and kind and not unkind, and so I think he has been really important modeling leadership skills, and since the role that I have now is teaching and a lot of other things, I think that because of that I think I pay more attention to how the administrators deal with a variety of people around issues that are sometimes contentious, so he definitely handles it, well, in my opinion, he definitely handles it the best. He's always very good at making people feel valued even when he disagrees with them, so that's how I try to be.

Like Mr. Scarlatti, who learned from his principal how to handle contentious issues by using people skills such as being accessible and making people feel valued, Mr. George also included the ability to navigate and lead others through conflict and disagreement as a significant aspect of teacher leaders. Ultimately, the significance Mr. George placed on people skills was a result of a lack of authority. He said, "Yeah, it's people skills. Just figuring out when to give and when to push, when to say, 'OK' with a look on your face that let's everybody know you're not OK with it and when to totally lie through your teeth and act like you're OK with it, you know, because you have no real authority." Because teacher leaders do not have any practical authority over other teachers, they relied on people skills to maneuver situations and colleagues.

Teacher leaders are empathetic and even maternal: One specific aspect of people skills that stood out was the ability to be empathetic and even maternal. Both Mrs. Greene and Mr. Scarlatti included the role of a maternal quality in their definitions of leadership. Mrs. Greene stated,

> I think just like with any leader there is this element of compassion, understanding, and empathy, that you have to be able to know the people you are leading and know what is going to make them work and not work, very similar to in the classroom, what good teachers do. . . I feel like sometimes in other places we think about leadership just as the skill, like, 'Can I lead someone?' but I think especially with beginning teachers, like a lot of my leadership comes with National Boards stuff. Teachers who are already involved in something that is really high stakes that those dispositions of support and compassion and sometimes maternal kinds of skills are just as important as, 'I know my stuff, so listen to me.'

Mr. Scarlatti stated, "Our department chairs at our school are an ideal view of what teacher leaders should be. Not all of them [teacher leaders], but many of them are very helpful, very nurturing, encouraging, often motherly, actually."

Teacher leaders feel ownership for their schools: The participants in this study

revealed that teacher leaders feel ownership for their schools. Mrs. Greene provided an

example of her sense of ownership. She said,

> For example, this morning, there was a Miller High Life case of beer in the
> middle of the parking lot. Empty bottles in the middle of the parking lot in the
> case and three administrators drove past it, and so when the fourth one got out of
> the car right behind me, I handed him my keys and said, 'I stopped my car and got
> the nastiness. It's in my front seat. Somebody needs to deal with this while I'm
> teaching today,' and they just did because they felt bad because they all said 'Oh
> yeah, we saw that, ha ha,' and I was like, 'This is our school,' and so I think just
> that they know that I have a really vested interest in the place and everything that
> happens here, not just the building. I want it to be clean, but I want it to be a safe
> place for our kids where they can focus on learning, and every bus in our school
> should not have to drive past a Miller High Life case of empty beer on their way
> in.

This sense of ownership was a significant factor in the reasons participants became

leaders as well as a significant factor in their actions as leaders. Mr. George talked about

the significance of ownership in his decision to step up as a leader with a new principal.

He said, "when the principal who opened the school left, and we didn't know who we

were getting, we all had this thought. Everything we knew was gone, and deciding, at

that point, I want to be involved in whatever's next because I've put enough time in, I

care enough about this place that I need to figure out what my role is."

Teacher leaders are risk-takers: In defining teacher leadership, two of the participants

directly stated that teacher leaders are risk-takers. Mrs. Penn said, "I think that it's

someone who's willing to take risks," and Mrs. Greene stated,

> I think to be a teacher leader it means to attempt best practices and show other
> teachers, whether they have more or less experience than you, that it's OK to take
> risks in the classroom and try new things, and if they're really terrible it's also OK
> to say, 'Wow, that went really poorly. Can we do something different today?'

As Casey (1993) writes, however, "*naming* is not as important as *doing*" (p. 74), and so it

is important to look not only at the definitions participants attributed to teacher leadership

but also at what Mrs. Greene called the "skills, applications, and disciplines" [taken from

National Boards Standards] of teacher leaders as revealed through their stories. Both

Mrs. Penn and Ms. Carr's stories revealed risks they took either as teacher leaders or as

a part of their journey to becoming teacher leaders. Mrs. Penn described a fellowship

opportunity for which she applied even though it was out of her subject area. She said,

> You have to fill out this plan, and it's really more science and math, so the
> deadline was January 31st, and it was the week before, and I called the woman
> that was in charge, and I talked to her about it. 'Tina, I just don't think I can do
> this. I'm just not a science person, and you work with professors,' and she said,
> 'No Anne, go for it. We've never had a social studies person,' and so I did, and I
> presented this plan of working on bio-terrorism, of meshing the science and the
> history of it, and this was maybe 2001, 2002. It was after 9/11, and so I filled it
> out and you get invited to interview, and I interviewed with two people from
> _____ that were going to be my mentors, and I got it.

Mrs. Penn's willingness to apply for a fellowship outside of her subject area was a risk

that she was uncomfortable with but that, as a teacher leader, she chose to take anyway.

Similarly, Ms. Carr described her first experience as a teacher leader in which she was

required to make a presentation to her department in exchange for permission and funds

to attend a conference. She said,

> When I student taught, I went with my cooperating teacher to the North Carolina
> Council for the Social Studies, and I really wanted to go back the next year
> because I thought it was wonderful, and so I asked my department chair, 'Does
> anybody from our department go,' and she was like 'No, we like to send one
> person though. Do you want to?' And so then I had to go and ask my principal,
> 'Can I be the person from my department and will you pay for me to go?' because
> I didn't have any money, and she was like, 'Yes, but you have to present three
> things that you learned when you get back,' and so, that was the first time, I mean
> I was just six months into teaching and I'm presenting to faculty.

Ms. Carr later revealed that this experience was the most difficult she encountered as a

teacher leader. Her difficulty with this experience was due to the fact that as a new

teacher, she was presenting to faculty who had more experience than she did. Her

willingness to take this risk, however, was a first step towards becoming a teacher leader.

Teacher leaders are reflective and open to change and they inspire others to be so as

well: Not only were teacher leaders in this study risk-takers, but they were also reflective

practitioners who often defined leadership through a willingness to change and do

something different in their classrooms and with their students. Mrs. Greene's story

reveals ways in which she is willing to look reflectively and critically at her own practice.

She said,

> Working with my first student teacher – we were, you know, working through
> lesson planning and things like that, and I remember just saying to her before the
> county said you had to do this, 'You know, if you put the objectives and the
> agenda on the board, then that'll be a very easy way for you to remember to say it
> at the beginning and then review it at the end for closure,' and I remember sort of
> thinking, 'But I don't do that,' and I remember thinking, 'If I'm going to say to
> her that she has to do that, then I have to start modeling that behavior as well.'

As a teacher leader, Mrs. Greene was willing to change her own practice in order to

better lead her student teacher. In addition, not only did Mrs. Greene's story reveal ways

in which she was willing to critique and revise her own practice, but her definition of a

leader also revealed ways in which her leadership encouraged others to be open and

reflective in looking at their practice as well. She said,

> So I think sort of an honest look at your own teaching practice may be the best
> example for other teachers to show them that teaching still is an art that has to be
> crafted and worked on, and it's not a science, and just because something works
> for me it doesn't work for you, perhaps, because I know that even my colleagues
> have said, 'Oh, this is a really cool lesson' and I've thought, 'I'm going to do that
> tomorrow,' and then it really just flops, and I'm like 'How could it have worked

so well when you did it?' So, I think being a role model in terms of that – best practices, lesson planning, but also I think having the courage to say, 'Let's think about our practice in a different way.'

Her willingness to not only reflect on her own practice and make changes but also to role model this way of being a teacher for others marks Mrs. Greene as a teacher leader.

Similarly, Mr. Scarlatti stated in his definition of a teacher leader that "a teacher leader is someone who is a teacher in some way and who also works with other teachers to inspire them to do something different or to set their sights on a different goal or to work differently or more effectively with students, or basically to do their jobs better," and his story reveals ways in which he, as a leader, critiques and encourages his colleagues to think about their practice in a different way. He said,

> . . . something I enjoy the most is asking questions and asking people to think about their practice and look for biases and look for assumptions and be critical of the curriculum, that kind of thing. . .. We have a teacher who is very, very good at teaching material. She's not very good or has not been very good at really talking with her kids, and she doesn't really know, in general, what's going on with them. She is not open to hearing feedback about how class is going, why things are working or not working, and I think that's important, and she's been teaching probably, I think five or six years, but she's very rigid, and she teaches in a way that's sort of down the list of the curriculum and talks. She talks the whole time. It's a science course that you would think would be more experiential and lab oriented, but she talks the whole time, but because she's very rigid and because we asked her to do this, she did it, and it's interesting who really gets into things sometimes. I thought, 'Oh, she'll say no, I've got to prepare my kids for this exam,' or whatever, and she did it and she's been so excited by it. . . Every week she'll come in the office and say, 'Wow! We talked about what it means to be caring today in my class, and my kids, I had them draw this thing and do this. It's like, 'Oh my god! You're a different person, but it gives her permission. Now she can still go down her checklist. . . I think that's been my most positive experience from doing this is this one teacher. It's like it has opened the door for her to show that she cares about her kids and wants to know what world they live in.

Interestingly, Mr. Scarlatti also revealed that both as a teacher and as a teacher leader, he is always changing and learning something new. He said,

I also have to say that as a leader, that's something that I'm developing, and I would not describe myself as the most accomplished leader. It's something that I'm doing and working on, and it's like teaching, you know, I think I'm a good teacher, but it's something that I'm always doing and working on at the same time.

It seems that the willingness as a teacher to continually change is related, in part, to their ability to lead as both teaching and leading require the ability and desire to continually move forward and to avoid stagnation.

Furthermore, teacher leaders not only reflect on their work and make changes, but they also find rewards in transforming their practice. In describing the rewards of being a teacher leader, Mrs. Penn stated,

It enhances my teaching because every time I have ever done anything as a participant or as a leader, I have learned something and made some small change in the way I do my presentations in class. So, I'm always seeking that. I mean, I think that to be a good teacher, you always have to be flexible and change and the kids change and the technology changes and the needs of the students change, so I definitely feel that I get just as much out of it. Like, when I'm a participant, if I do one thing different after going to a workshop, then I have accomplished something.

These definitions and stories reveal that teacher leaders are not only open to reflection and change but that they also inspire such reflection and change in others and even find this change rewarding.

Teacher leaders are not necessarily comfortable with conflict: Although these teacher leaders are open to self-reflection and critique and although they are willing to engage in confrontation, they are not necessarily comfortable with confrontation. Mr. Scarlatti's story, for example, reveals his discomfort with confrontation. He says,

I wish I was a little bit more confrontational or could develop better skills at confrontation because it's important for people to be pushed. If I believe that it's really important for us to come to a consensus on something or to decide that we value something and to implement something, starting off a lot of times we'll say, 'Yes, we all value it,' and then we're not all willing to implement it, which is

where it really gets challenging. So, I think that it's important to have teachers or teacher leaders who are willing to say, 'Look, we agreed to this and we have to follow through on it,' or else it falls apart. When the rubber has to meet the road, the rubber's not there, but the road's already been built. It's not working. So, I wish I was more confrontational.

Mr. Scarlatti's story of leadership further reveals a particular example in which skills at

confrontation and conflict resolution may have been beneficial. He said,

> I have had some situations this year in this job when I have had to be confrontational, and it has pushed me outside of my comfort zone. For example, I was given the responsibility by my principal to tell a teacher who teaches a course that she will no longer be teaching that course, and it's within the program that I help to run, but I knew that this was something that would hurt her. . . At the end of the year, I had heard several complaints from students who felt as if she was not adequately reviewing with them and not adequately preparing them for their exam for the course. I had to talk to her and say, 'Your students really do not feel prepared,' and so she was flustered by that. . . I wish that I felt like I could confront people in situations like that when I really feel that something is wrong or something could be better or something needs to be changed. I can do it, but it makes me feel personally deflated in some way. . . I don't know if that's the way everybody is, but there are some people who are able to be very forceful, and sometimes people enjoy confrontation. I don't want to enjoy it because I think there is something heartless about that, but I wish it didn't bother me as much when it is something I need to do. I haven't really done the confrontation very well.

Similarly, Mrs. Greene's story echoes Mr. Scarlatti's desire for skills to handle

confrontation and conflict. She said,

> I think one skill that developed, it may be a personality trait almost, is that I shy away from conflict a lot, like confrontation, and so if I believe really passionately about something, I can do it, but it's not my favorite. I just don't enjoy that, so I would have liked to have had a skill set to be able to confidently and strategically say these are the things that you are not doing. I could do that with the help of the college and things like that. _____ had planning at the same time, so she would sit in the room because I was afraid that my student teacher wouldn't understand what I was saying to her, so I wanted someone else to be able to say that, and she would even say to me every day, you did a great job, but you have to be more firm at the beginning. You're starting with 'You did these things well,

and then she's not listening to you anymore,' so she really would coach me on how to make sure that it was really clear and not couching the criticism in praise. So that is a skill I wish that I had had from the very beginning.

Although teacher leaders are willing to handle confrontation and conflict when it arises, they are not necessarily adept at or confident with conflict management and resolution.

Teacher leaders are role models who lead by example: Mr. George demonstrated in his explanation of his leadership position one of the ways in which teacher leaders are role models for other teachers. He described his leadership, saying,

> I think the way that I have attempted to consistently be a teacher leader is by demonstrating qualities and characteristics on a day in day out basis from which other teachers could if they chose draw some type of role model. So, going to work on time, doing what you're supposed to, not complaining about what you're supposed to do too much, you know. I think part of what teachers struggle with is teachers want to be considered a profession and want to be respected as professionals and yet we don't always act as a professional outside the educational environment would be expected to act.

In this case, Mr. George not only identifies being a role model as a significant aspect of teacher leadership, but he also portrays role modeling as a way to influence the dispositions of his peers. The positive disposition of teacher leaders was also a significant theme in the interviews and will be discussed later.

Mr. Scarlatti described modeling as one of the defining activities of teacher leadership that differentiated it from administrative leadership. He said,

> If I'm really going to try to work with other teachers, I really think that I should try to maybe (inaudible) the things that I'm encouraging other people to do. . . hopefully that what I'm asking or willing the other teachers to do is an authentic task, and that goes back to the difference between teacher leadership and administrative leadership. That is, you know, it's horizontal, and [it] is important enough for me to ask someone else to try it, then it needs to start at home. So, that's an important part of leadership is the modeling as well. Doing modeling, doing what I believe is important.

Mrs. Greene, who also leads by example, explained how she learned this technique through her work with students in her classroom. She said,

> My preference is to lead by example, by example and through example. To say, see this is a good way to do this. I think I said earlier being a role model, expecting the same of others as I expect of myself, and I think that is important, and I think I learned that in the classroom, not really in leadership positions particularly, but just thinking about students who have said things to me. Like I was the first adult who had ever apologized or 'Why did you say you were wrong? Because grownups don't have to say that they're wrong when they're wrong,' and thinking, you know, I wouldn't want to be treated that way, so trying to incorporate some of those lessons from the classroom into dealing with other people.

Finally, during the focus group interview, Mr. Scarlatti said the following about role modeling:

> I think for me, it is important to have the classroom experience because I often ask other teachers to do things in their own classes and then in asking other people to do things, I need to be able to do them myself, and I have had situations where I've gotten in front of a faculty meeting and said 'Oh, yes, let's do this. This would be really wonderful', and then, I get into the classroom, and I think, 'This is not going so well,' and it's important, I think, to have that for people who are in a position to be leading among teachers to be also teaching at least some. . . I'm in a good situation for that because [my job] does provide the opportunity for that to connect what the leadership is to real practice and make sure that it can be enacted effectively.

Mr. Scarlatti's observation portrays, in part, the significance of teacher leaders. Without leaders who are also classroom teachers, policy can be made that is ineffective or impossible to implement in the classroom. With classroom teachers' input on policy, changes can be made that can truly connect with real practice.

Teacher leaders lack authority: Interestingly, one of the reasons why teacher leaders seem to lead by example is because of a lack of authority or power. Just as teacher leaders rely on people skills because of a lack of authority, they also rely on role modeling to influence others because they have no authority to do so in any more direct

manner. As Mr. George stated, "even as department chair you don't have authority. You're not going to fire somebody, I mean, you personally." Mr. Scarlatti further commented on the lack of authority that forces teachers to lead by example or, as he states, through encouraging and cajoling. He said,

> They [department chairs] really work, I think, to inspire their department members to do something, you know, to focus on whatever it might be that they need to do, whether it's issues of student achievement or something about how to run review sessions or, you know, that's in a way a mundane kind of thing, but whatever it might be that the needs are. I think that department chairs are a great example of being able to work within the department or among the network within the department to try to encourage or cajole, but what's difficult about that is, well, there's a plus and a minus to that. On the plus side, because they are ingrained within that group, they're doing things with the group. They're leading within the group. Whatever recommendations they make to the group are often to the needs of the group, and so they're good. They're genuine. They're helpful. What the problem is with that is that if people within that group don't follow through, there's no way for them to remain a part of that group and also try to do much to change the sort of misbehavior of the teacher or the lack of compliance with the teacher. So, they're a great example of both the benefits and the drawbacks of teacher leadership. So, they're in the system, but also because they're in the system, they also have limited ability to change what's happening.

A lack of authority was apparent as a theme in interviews with Mrs. Penn as well and is significant in thinking about why teacher leaders do things in the way that they do.

Teacher leaders celebrate successes and maintain a positive disposition: Two participants, Mr. Scarlatti and Mrs. Greene, both mentioned celebration and encouragement as a significant aspect of being a teacher leader. Mr. Scarlatti said,

> The two jobs I can think of other than doing what I'm doing that I could have done would be travel agent and party planner, and there's something about what I'm doing now that is sort of like taking a lot of those kinds of skills, of organizing, planning, celebrating, encouraging and putting that in an educational context where it ultimately, I think has a more powerful effect than if I was doing those jobs.

Mrs. Greene described one of her leadership positions, saying,

The most fun thing I've ever gotten to do, I'm in charge of the celebration team here. . . And we celebrate PLT success, or group academic kind of success stuff, and then we do things called code reds at faculty meetings, and I just facilitate them, which is fun because everybody is always happy.

She further elaborated on her role as an encourager and celebrator during our second interview when she explained the leadership artifacts she had chosen to share. One of those artifacts was a party decoration weight from her teacher of the year celebration. She said,

So, it was sort of symbolic of teacher of the year, but I also thought it was symbolic of remembering sometimes that as a leader you have to be the coach and the cheerleader and all of those things, and the main quarterback, all tied into one, so it sort of looked like pom-poms to me, like celebrating, remembering that that's part of leadership, too, celebrating and making people feel good about what they do that some leaders are not good at. They're just good at the telling people what to do part, and then, they forget how to get them there.

Often, celebrating and encouraging goes hand in hand with a positive attitude, and although only these two participants discussed celebration explicitly, Mrs. Greene and other participants also described moments in which they made a significant choice to remain positive. Mrs. Greene described her choice, saying,

I also had a principal once, and she said to me something like, 'There are a lot of people in the building who would never say that the Sadie in the classroom is the same person [as the Sadie outside of the classroom]' because she was like, 'You love kids, and you coddle them, and then in the teacher's lounge you're like, "Oh my God, I'm going to kill them!"' And she said, 'I want you to try really hard for a year to think what I say outside the classroom people think about me inside the classroom,' and that was a moment when I realized that she was telling me people respect what you do and you need to watch that very carefully, so that was really interesting to me, and then I moved to a trailer so it was really easy for me because I could do all of that in my trailer (laughs), like 'Oh my God!' and then come in to the teachers' lounge and be like, 'Oh, my babies,' but I did realize that it was important that if people respect you for things that you are doing, then you need to make yourself worthy of that respect. . . I think, honestly, I could say she made me aware so that I could display the compassion rather than the venting.

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In making a choice to stay positive in common workspaces, Mrs. Greene again

demonstrated a willingness to reflect on her role as a teacher and make changes. In this

case, her change involved a decision to be more positive. A similar concrete decision

was portrayed through Mr. George's story. He said, "A couple of years ago, I made a

conscientious effort to no longer participate in the bashing. If I had a problem, I went to

somebody." Mr. George further revealed the significance of choosing to take action

rather than simply to complain when he described making a positive and pro-active

decision rather than continuing to criticize. This decision not only displays a positive

disposition, but it also portrays a significant step in his journey to becoming a teacher

leader. Mr. George said,

> Every year or so, we had some turnover in our department, and the teachers that
> were hired to replace those folks, in my not so humble opinion, were just not at all
> qualified to do what we wanted them to do, and they were oftentimes picked from
> a large pool of candidates, so either they interviewed well or in some way they
> came across well, but when it was time to put the money where the mouth was, it
> just wasn't there, and I complained, and then I turned down two years in a row an
> offer to host a student teacher, and I finally said to myself, 'Something's got to
> give. You either got to quit your yapping or you got to step up to the plate
> because if you're not satisfied with the teachers coming in, the only way you have
> to change that is help the teachers that are coming in be better,' and so that was
> when I agreed to host that first student teacher.

Mr. George's decision to take a positive step is important in that it not only represents a

significant disposition of teacher leaders, but it also represents a significant step in his

growth as a leader. While Mr. George and Mrs. Greene both described ways in which

they made their own decisions to maintain a positive disposition, Mrs. Penn's story

revealed both ways in which she attempts to eradicate negativity as well as ways in which

she, as a teacher leader, has encouraged others to maintain a positive disposition. In

regards to her own attempt at eradicating negativity, Mrs. Penn said,

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Oh, I would love to learn how to do away with negativity in schools (laughs). You know, really. I just think that can be so destructive, and I think a teacher leader should be the one to try to squash that. And again, that goes back to the principal picking allies because when our new principal was coming, another social studies teacher made a comment in the office in front of the secretary, 'Well, I heard this person's an idiot,' and I was really mad, and I told my principal who was leaving. I told her because it really upset me, and I said, 'We have to give her a chance. You don't want to spread that. I mean, that is exactly what would fuel people having this perception before she ever gets there,' and she went and talked to him.

As a teacher leader, Mrs. Penn's positive disposition has not only influenced her school, but it has also influenced her work with her student teachers and mentees. In this case, her leadership involves teaching new teachers to be aware of negative attitudes in schools and to make selective choices regarding with whom one associates in a school. Mrs. Penn said,

One thing interesting that I was just thinking about, one of the _____ Fellows my second year, she was a middle school teacher. We were talking. She was saying [how] people you're around can have such an impact on you as a teacher, and she was saying her first semester, everybody she tended to hang around was very negative about the school, and she realized it was pulling her down, thank goodness, and I think her mentor pulled her aside and said people are talking about you and you need to hang out with different people, and so I tell all of my student teachers and all of my mentees [to] be very selective at a school of who you hang out with because I do feel that negativism breeds negativism, and so I think that's also a teacher realizing they need to make a choice because you are thrown together with people, and you need to make a choice, especially in a school, who you trust and who you don't trust, who you are going to be open with that you feel like you can be if you have a criticism of the administration, and I think that's internal leadership. People might not see it that way but making the choice of who you are acquaintances with or friends with or colleagues with.

Interestingly, sometimes maintaining a positive attitude simply meant making a choice not to complain when unpopular decisions were made. Mrs. Penn revealed how she handled an unpopular decision, saying,

Well, I'm a very optimistic person. I always see the glass half full. So, I always felt like things would get better. That's always the way I have been. I mean

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tomorrow's a different day, and so that's what I would say, and this one time when I went to the principal because we were having to do these stupid lesson plans in a notebook and it was supposedly one of the principals was working on a degree, and I knew that's what it was for, and I told him, I said, 'You know people are so resentful that you've done this to us,' and he goes, 'Well I don't know why. We don't ask very much,' and so I went back to the people, and I said, 'Just do it,' and then we all stopped doing it because nobody ever looked at it so, I mean, I think I go with the flow, and if I'm expected to do it, I'll do it, and I won't really complain about it because if that's part of my job, so be it, and I kind of pass that on to other people. Just get over with it, move on. I'm a move on kind of person. That's what I tell my students. It's things you can't change, so I think that's how. I just accepted it, and I did it, but sometimes I did the least amount if I didn't agree with it.

Ms. Carr, Mrs. Penn's former student teacher, echoes Mrs. Penn and reveals ways in which Mrs. Penn's leadership with her student teacher is, in fact, making a difference.

Ms. Carr stated,

> I think you have to make sure that you advocate, and if you've advocated all that you can and you've made all the points you can make and you've said everything that could be said, then you just have to accept that it's their decision to make, and that's it, like when you're talking about courses and course structure, like when kids take certain classes, those kinds of things. I mean those are their decisions, and so you have to advocate and do everything you can do but then just realize you've done everything you can do, and it's their decision.

A critical moment in the leadership of these teachers seems to have been the moment in which they made the conscious decision to remain positive.

Teacher leaders are responsible for students other than their own as well as the profession of teaching as a whole: During the focus group interview, participants were asked to whom they felt most responsible as teacher leaders. Their answer reveals that teacher leaders feel responsible for their students, students of other teachers, and the overall profession of teaching. They said,

> Mrs. Penn: I think the students. It's all about the students. So, I think the more exposure you get for yourself in a leadership role, I think you bring that back to the classroom.

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Ms. Carr: And to take that a step further, not only your students, but if you're a leader of other teachers, those teachers' students.

Mr. Scarlatti: I agree.

Mrs. Greene: I think we also have responsibility to the profession and maybe upholding or changing people's perceptions about what it means to be a teacher. So that, hopefully, one day other people will want to impact students, so it does sort of come back to that, but I think as a teacher leader we have an opportunity to interact with people who may or may not have the same impressions about what it means to be a teacher as we do. So, making sure that they know what that means.

Mrs. Greene later added,

We talked about that moment when I realized the great responsibility that comes with training up a teacher but also what a cool thing to be able to say by mentoring someone, then you sort of have a legacy of your teaching style, and that's pretty cool.

An analysis of their individual interviews reveals echoes of these responsibilities. Mr. Scarlatti's story reveals how his desire to have an impact on a larger number of students was one of the most important reasons why he began to think about teacher leadership.

He said,

I guess it was high school, maybe middle school. I wanted to be a teacher. I wanted to have a positive influence, and so I think that is really important. The classroom leadership and working with students is something that people remember for decades, and they are appreciative, and they [his aunt and grandmother] had similar stories that impacted their career choices and impacted all sorts of things about their lives, and I think that was inspirational. I think as I got into education I wanted to be similar to that as a teacher and then as time progressed I also felt as if I might have a greater impact if I also had more flexibility and more time to work with teachers, to work less directly with as many students but have more influence over larger numbers. So, that's probably the most important thing.

In addition, in his definition of a teacher leader, Mr. George said, "I guess in that role, a teacher leader is someone who in addition to, not instead of, which I think some people pick and choose, but in addition to the classroom responsibilities also take on schoolwide responsibilities that impact more than the 75 students or 90 students per semester that you teach," and he describes leadership activities in which he is responsible for the entire senior class. He said,

> I learned how to, or I guess it's something I'm still learning. When we tried to set up expectations for a group of 500 students, where you have some special programs kids, some ESL kids, and some AP kids, and we have kids who would have been doing the GP [Graduation Project] had it gone through, four kids with a full ride at Duke and two of whom are going, so setting expectations for a broader group than a class of 30, or if I teach two level fours, a class of 60, you know, so it gave me good insight into the school as a whole from an educational perspective and not just in a class of Spanish I, where you've got freshman and seniors, but in a class of 500.

In addition to being responsible for more than his own students, Mr. George described ways in which his leadership impacts the teaching profession as a whole. He said,

> Doing the student teaching, I feel like that's a way to make sure that I'm doing my little part. So, I've got four former students who are teaching Spanish somewhere. I don't know how well they're teaching it, but they're teaching it. I've got two student teachers, so, I'm doing what I can to make sure that there are still Spanish teachers around. I guess in the same token, in the school, I love to think that I'm helping somebody be a better something, classroom teacher, teacher leaders themselves one day. One day I'll leave and somebody will need to come in, and maybe they'll do things way better than I did. I don't think they could care anymore. I don't think they could want things to be better, but they might do them better, so I'd love to think that however many years from now when I'm retired somebody says, 'Hey, that next generation is leaving. There goes Senor George. Who's going to help keep [our school] the way it is or who's going to push it to be the way it should be?'

Ultimately, Mr. George revealed the extent to which he feels responsible for students of the future when he was asked to decide which leadership activity in which he was

involved had the most impact on others. He responded by saying, "I think potentially through the student teacher because if I have done right by her, then she will hopefully teach for 30 years and touch the lives of many kids."

Mrs. Greene's story is similar to Mr. George's as she also discussed the ways in which teacher leaders feel responsible for students other than their own through their contribution to the mentoring of student teachers. She said,

> Elizabeth [one of Mrs. Greene's former student teachers] is here, and we were doing some Professional Development, and she and I were both asked to present something about literacy, and so we did a round robin thing and our staff went from one teacher to the next to the next in groups, and in the third group, several of my friends came in and after they sat through Elizabeth's session and then mine, they said, 'Oh my gosh, we can tell she learned how to teach from you!' and she's a fourth year teacher now, so this was well into her second year, you know, I mean I'm not even thinking of her as my student teacher anymore, and I thought – gasp – 'Was she paying attention to everything? What did I do that she picked up on that I don't want her to learn?' You know, just thinking how important that is and what it means and how they will feel about teaching forever and how they'll do in this profession, how they'll treat children, and all of those things, and so I started to think about how when you're being a teacher leader in whatever realm, you're responsible for more than just your own kids. All of a sudden, you become responsible for children forever, you know and that's really huge to me.

At times, however, even though teachers feel a sense of responsibility to the teaching profession as a whole, they may ultimately feel most responsible for the students in their own classroom and a sense of responsibility to those students becomes more important than a sense of responsibility to the teaching profession as a whole in terms of encouraging new teachers. Mrs. Greene's story reveals this dilemma. She said,

> I had a student teacher who was having a very difficult time in terms of lesson planning, student management, grading papers, everything. I mean everything you can think of that someone would struggle with, she did, and it was very difficult for me to separate her learning from me, you know, and not say I want to teach her, and even at the very end, when I was like this has to be over, I even said to Dr. Phillips, and she giggled at me, I even said, 'Or maybe she can just sit down for a week, and I can teach again because maybe she forgot what it should

look like, you know, maybe she just needs a model again. Maybe she just forgot,' and Dr. Phillips finally had to say, 'No, she didn't forget. She knows what's expected of her and she's not doing it,' and that was really hard for me, very, very hard, but at the same time, I realized that she was harming my students, and so I had to say, 'You're a grownup. They are not grownups.'

The extent to which Mrs. Greene felt responsible to the career of this student teacher was further revealed when she said,

One of my other thoughts always in my head was I don't want her to be able to say, 'I always wanted to be a teacher, and [Mrs. Greene] didn't let me do it. It was Sadie's fault that I can't be a teacher'. . . and I kept thinking, 'I cannot be the one to tell her to sit down.' I just couldn't do that, and that is the teacher in me that says I could not say to you, 'You must give up. You must quit because you're no good at this.' I wish that I had had a clearer understanding of what she saw in me as a teacher because that is my constant second guess, like I'm afraid that somehow what she saw in me was what she thought she was doing.

Because Mrs. Greene felt responsibility towards both her students in the classroom and the student teacher, she had a difficult time navigating the conflict that arose when the student teacher was unable to do a good job. Ultimately, Mrs. Greene's responsibility for her own individual students was more important than her responsibility to teach a new teacher, but her dilemma highlights a difficult choice teacher leaders must sometimes make when they feel responsible to more than the students in their own classrooms.

Teacher leaders encourage others to lead: Teacher leaders, according to this study, are teachers who are not only able to lead but who are also able to share leadership responsibilities and encourage other teachers to become leaders as well. Mr. George described this quality, explaining,

I think a true leader leads but doesn't do and say all. So how do I role model and attempt to hold people up to standards that hopefully I also live by. I'm trying to lead like I was led. I was surrounded by strong leaders who gave me my piece of the pie and let me deal with it, so how do I lead in that same way, not where I'm handing off token things to people and not where I'm doing everything and telling

people what to do because if you have that vision for the school, it doesn't matter if there are six of you or sixteen. That's not enough. You need everybody doing their part, whatever their part is.

In addition, Mr. George identified the ability to encourage others to lead as the final stage in the growth of a teacher leader. He said,

> The culminating stage would be realizing that it's time to turn [leadership] over to somebody else and let them do it and being willing to drop back and be a mentor but be a behind-the-scenes mentor, and the person I think of, there is the woman who retired and turned graduation lines over to me. She retired and she came back for two separate years just in the spring, and she was on the committee with us, but she didn't speak, and we bounced ideas off of her, and she disagreed or agreed, and we did some things she suggested and we did the total opposite of other things, and every time, she said, 'This is yours. Do with it what you want,' and I know her, and I know how hard that was, but that was the next logical step, to let us screw it up if we screwed it up, you know?

Mrs. Penn described a teacher who she thought was a great leader, and she showed how this quality in others helped her in her growth as a leader. She said, "I think she offered me encouragement. Because of her, I went to the International Social Studies Conference and did a presentation and basically wrote a book for _____ County for C&E, so she's really the one that started my friend _____ and me to do the workshops." In addition, her stories also showed how, as an experienced and nearly retired teacher, she embodies this quality of encouraging others to lead. For example, she stated,

> People that would not think of themselves as leaders, like one of my really close friends at school, when I stepped down one of the times as school improvement chair, I recommended to our principal that she be chair, and she had never thought of herself as a [leader], and now she's a department leader and has done workshops.

Interestingly, Ms. Carr, the teacher with the least experience, defined leadership as the ability to encourage others to lead, and, as the student teacher of Mrs. Penn, she

attributed her leadership to her work as a student teacher with Mrs. Penn. Her definition of a teacher leader was simply,

> Well, I think that every teacher is sort of a leader because they're a leader in their classroom, but teacher leadership means that you are a leader at your school and to the other teachers. It also has to do, I guess, with inspiring your students, too. I see a teacher as somebody who helps others lead in addition to leading themselves.

In the focus group interview, Ms. Carr portrayed the significance of Mrs. Penn in her own development as a teacher leader, saying, "I can say that it comes from the influence of other leaders and other teacher leaders. I mean, I'm sitting here right now with the person that I student taught with and the reason that I'm a second year teacher and already a leader is her influence." It seems that if teacher leaders encourage others to lead as an aspect of their role as leaders, teacher leadership can grow exponentially with just the empowerment of one group of strong teacher leaders.

In juxtaposing these findings with the definitions of teacher leaders set out by previous researchers, it is interesting to note that although some of the characteristics defined by the teacher leaders in this study match those presented in the literature review, the definitions provided by these teacher leaders broaden the definition to include several more categories than previously noted. These participants reflect previous definitions in the literature on teacher leadership in that they are lifelong learners who participate in professional development activities throughout their careers, they are reflective, they are self-confident, they reach out to others, and they are knowledgeable about action research. In addition, however, they add to previous definitions the following characteristics: teacher leaders encourage others to lead, they feel a responsibility not only for their students and other students in their schools, but also to the profession of

teaching as a whole, they are positive and celebrate successes, they are empathetic and often maternal, they feel ownership over their schools, and they are role models for other teachers.

Identifying Leadership Activity: In what activities do teacher leaders participate? Do they participate in community-building activities?

The role of the teacher leader is multi-faceted, and, as shown through this data, the activities in which teacher leaders participate are multitudinous. For a complete list of activities in which teacher leaders participate, see Appendix B. Broadly speaking, however, the activities in which these teacher leaders participated fell into the following five categories: teacher leaders 1. develop relationships, 2. support the profession of teaching, 3. support the growth of teachers around them, 4. encourage student achievement, and 5. perform administrative duties. The most significant data collected regarding this section was in association with relationships, community, and networks.

 In developing relationships, teachers not only work with other teachers and administrators in their schools by collaborating, eliciting diverse perspectives, and celebrating successes, but they also reach out to students, parents, and communities in their work as leaders. To develop relationships with students, parents, and communities, teacher leaders interact with parents, present student awards, cooperate with human services and other community organizations and work with business alliances.

Teacher leaders work to support and encourage the growth of teachers around them as well as the profession as a whole. To support their colleagues, teacher leaders observe other teachers, support and coach teachers in their attempt at National Boards certification, clarify expectations, advise and counsel, lead by example, mentor, provide

opportunities for teachers to have voice, and recommend their colleagues for leadership positions. Additionally, to support the profession as a whole, teacher leaders participate on teacher education committees and in other university partnerships, serve as cooperating teachers for student teachers, participate in and lead staff development workshops and conferences, act as a teacher voice in forums and advisory boards, and achieve National Boards certification.

Administratively, teachers are involved in running meetings, creating agendas, organizing and planning, emailing, chairing and co-chairing committees, serving as department chairs, and presenting to and seeking approval from administration.

Finally, and perhaps most significantly, teacher leaders work to improve student achievement not only for their own students but also for the students of their colleagues and students who do not even attend their own schools. The work that they do to enhance learning for their students includes creating and reviewing assessments, designing materials and curriculum, collecting, analyzing, and presenting data, participating on the school improvement team, reviewing textbooks, and participating in action research.

Relationships, community, and networks

Relationships and community are important for teachers in that they support teachers in the reflective process and encourage them in their risk-taking and change-oriented behaviors. In this way, relationships, community, and collaboration are necessary for more than just completing tasks. Rather, these aspects of collegiality are necessary for teachers to question and to reflect on their practice as well as to take risks in the classroom to change practice in order to more effectively teach children. Deborah Meier (2002) writes that "Two intimately connected issues emerge when we think about

the nature of teacher collegiality: the ability to critique each other's work as well as the ability to disagree about matters of importance to teaching and learning" (p. 60). In order for both critique and disagreement to occur, teachers must have a sense of trust in one another, and this sense of trust can only develop through natural relationships with one another, not through the contrived collegiality that is a part of many schools today. Meier further highlights the significance of trusting relationships between teachers when she writes, ". . . teaching, like parenting, involves acts of judgment that cut close to who we are, whether we are 'good people' as well as whether we are competent people." (2002, p. 66). Because teaching is such a personal act and because what teachers do in the classroom is so closely identified with their feelings of worth, it is imperative that they feel a sense of trust in their colleagues and develop relationships, communities, and networks that support a teacher's ability to self-critique as well as to accept the criticism of others. It is this constant self-reflection and self-critique on the part of teachers as individuals as well as schools and teaching communities as a group that will allow educators and schools to grow and to continually change to best serve the needs of a continuously changing population.

Furthermore, the significance of networks and community for reform as well as the significance of networks and community for effective leadership has been noted by Reeves (2008), who writes, ". . . teaching and leadership are inseparable qualities. In the 21st century, influential scholars have advocated distributed leadership (Elmore, 2000), implying that hierarchy is less effective than networks (Reeves 2006b)" (p. 1). In addition, the significance of community and relationships specifically to educational reform and teacher leadership has been noted by Tyack and Hansot (1982) who describe

how networks of community and common vision helped both the leaders of the public

school movement and other groups and individuals in their quest for educational reform

throughout the 19th century. They write, "the most successful reformers relied most

heavily not on the authority of their official position [as state superintendents] but on

alliances with local supporters in the communities of their states" (p. 51). These

alliances led to common vision that eventually spurred and supported reform. While all

activities of teacher leaders are significant, in light of what researchers and reformers

have suggested regarding community and collegiality a closer look at the findings

regarding leadership and relationships, community, and networks is warranted.

As Merz and Furman (1997) point out, teachers value collegiality and do feel

close to a few other teachers, but relationships are focused on the task at hand more than

on the people themselves. They write,

> In *Teachers at Work*, Johnson (1990) found that teachers valued collegiality and
> most were close to a few other teachers. They thought that bureaucracy and lack
> of time limited their ability to work with others, but few reported that they felt
> truly isolated in the workplace. Equally few reported a schoolwide closeness. . .
> [Relationships identified by Johnson] seem gesellschaftlich in nature in that they
> focus on the task at hand rather than on the people more broadly. (p. 70)

The corporate values of the business world that undergird today's educational system,

according to Merz and Furman (1997), encourage relationships to form for a purpose as

opposed to as an end in themselves. When relationships form for a purpose as opposed to

as an end in themselves, those relationships are more likely to focus on the task at hand

than on the more general sense of trust that needs to be developed for reflective and

change-oriented practice. Significantly, participants in this study reflected Merz and

Furman's findings that relationships in schools tend to form for a specific purpose.

Teacher leaders did, in fact, feel close to a few other teachers; however, although teacher

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leaders in this study discussed networking as well as significant relationships they had

with colleagues, they did not specifically identify community building in schools as an

explicit act of teacher leadership and, for the most part, their relationships revolved

around completing tasks. In a list of 57 leadership activities that included giving

speeches, making presentations, sending emails, building vision, cheerleading,

mentoring, and planning and implementing curriculum, they did not mention community

building as an activity in which teacher leaders participate (again, for the complete list,

see Appendix B).

The relationships teacher leaders did discuss during this study were often seen as

a result of leadership activities or even as a reward for leadership activities. Mrs. Penn

revealed ways in which relationships developed out of leadership tasks. She said, "I feel

that I have made a lot of new friends through leadership, and good friends, because I did

something with them." In this way, for Mrs. Penn as well as for other participants,

relationships seemed to be seen as a reward of teacher leadership. When asked what she

got out of teacher leadership, Mrs. Penn said,

> Personal satisfaction when [colleagues] come back to me and make a comment
> like that was really good or tell someone else that what I did was good, so that's
> really personal satisfaction. . . And friendships.

Similarly, when asked the same question, Mrs. Greene stated, "You know, I meet

so many people across the state doing support and all that cool stuff. I mean, that's fun to

me." As a benefit of being a teacher leader, friendships, network, and community seem

to have had a significant impact on participants in this study.

Mrs. Penn additionally pointed out ways in which relationships with colleagues

are helpful in allowing teachers to remain committed to the profession of teaching as well

as to the students in their classrooms. Mrs. Penn stated, "if they stay completely to themselves and especially if they're an introverted person, then I think we could easily lose them from teaching or from the school." As previously mentioned, teaching can be a very isolating experience, and to keep good teachers in the profession, we must encourage community building and trust between teachers.

Ultimately, it seemed that teacher leadership activities were able to create collegiality that moved beyond the contrived collegiality supported by administrators although it still revolved around a particular task. Mr. Scarlatti described a relationship that grew out of his work as a teacher leader in building an AP Psychology curriculum for his school with a colleague. He said,

> When she came, we decided when we first met that we wanted to have some similar policies because we didn't want to have a lot of teacher shopping, and then as we went through the year, we got to the point, you know, 'You design the project and I'll do the test,' and we basically shared everything and then I think doing that another year we pushed each other to share better and better things and better ideas and then we when I had that assignment to do the proposal, I thought, 'Why don't we just present a lot of our work that we've done together?' because I think the other teachers were planning that as well, so it was a really special and sadly unusual relationship where we actually functioned as I think a PLT is supposed to function. We did, but a lot of that was because it was not coercive. We just thought it would be good to work together.

Mr. Scarlatti's story not only reveals the growth of an authentic relationship through work as a teacher leader, but it also reveals ways in which his relationship with his colleague helped him grow as a teacher leader. Mrs. Greene's story echoed this theme as she showed how a relationship with a colleague helped her to take risks as well as to grow personally as a leader and gain confidence in her leadership skills. She said,

> I'm a bit competitive in nature, and _____ did it before I did, and I thought that was unacceptable, and it's funny because I'm not competitive like, 'Oh, you won.' I would never have said 'Oh, my GPA was better than hers was,' but I was

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just like, 'Well, if she can do it, I can do it.' So, that was a way that team worked for us because she would say, 'You know, you can really do this.'

In addition, Mrs. Greene showed how this same relationship supports her in her growth and personal reflection as a leader. She said,

> At a leadership conference we went to together, we did Myers Briggs, and we were exactly the opposite, like if she had 9 and I had 1, then on the other thing I had 1 and she had 9, like exactly the opposite in terms of what our personalities and what our leadership styles are like. So, sometimes that's really nice because we fit very easily, but sometimes it also pushes us because things that I'm not so good at I can see her as a model and say 'Oh, well, that's how you would do that' and vice versa. Like, specifically, she's very introverted, and so a lot of what we get out of our partnership people can see more from her. Like she's very logical and an organized thinker, so she helps me do that. I'll say, 'I cannot think this way,' and she'll say, 'Wait, this is what we need to do first and then this is what we need to do second,' and I'll say, 'Are you sure?' and she'll guide me in that way, so that often happens within our little team, but, I've really tried, I guess, to push her to be more vocal because that is not her personality, and so a lot of times, I'll just say, like in a National Boards session or something like that, I'll say, 'So, Vivian, you want to do the next one?' and just sit down so that she has to talk because she would be very happy for me to talk the whole time, and she would have been the one who wrote the whole presentation and put all the pretty graphics in it and all of that, and she will be very happy to sit. So, we sort of complement each other but also push each other at the same time.

In addition, Mrs. Penn, in particular, discussed networking as a way to increase leadership opportunities and even extend her career as a teacher leader beyond her retirement. In describing what she learned from another teacher leader, she said,

> I got to know more people, and I think that's something that she probably helped me realize is that the more people you know, you never know when you might need somebody. I wanted to recommend my student teacher in the fall for the social studies student teacher of the year, but they had to do the student teaching in 2010, so had she been in the spring like _____ [College] does, I could have nominated her, but I didn't, but I knew the guy who used to be at DPI. He's in charge of it, so when I wrote, it was so nice to email someone when they could put a face with the name. So, I think that's one thing I learned from _____, too, is the more people you know. I mean I want to retire maybe

next year, and I feel like I have doors opened, that if I call somebody up and say, 'This is Mrs. Penn' that maybe that would help.

Mrs. Penn's story also extends the significance of colleagues, conversation, and constructive criticism in making one not only a better teacher but also a better teacher leader. She said,

> I think that makes you a better teacher leader to sit down and have a conversation with another teacher, to know how to give constructive criticism or to ask ideas, like, 'Why did you do that?' and build that comradery up. I almost think you need a buddy. I almost think every teacher, whether you're new or veterans, it's good to have a buddy, and it may not be somebody that you're going to stay close friends with because that'd be too easy, but somebody if you're not going to be there, you call and make them responsible, and I think that would build up leadership because I think everybody would be responsible for and to one other person.

Not only did Mrs. Penn discuss ways in which connecting with other teachers through networking helped her find leadership opportunities, but she also discussed ways in which she supported other teachers in their growth as teacher leaders by introducing them to the idea of networking and the profession of teaching beyond their own classrooms. She said,

> I've had student teachers, and I always take them to the social studies conference because I think they need to get out of the classroom and realize, and I hate that business word – networking – but I think it helps a lot, and I don't ever really think about it that way, but the more you're involved in things the more you get to know people, and you never know.

Networks and relationships were clearly important to these teacher leaders; unfortunately, however, these leaders did not seem to see relationship and network building as an explicit responsibility or activity of teacher leaders. Although they did encourage relationships and reach out to colleagues, in order to more systematically create networks of leaders in schools, it is imperative that teacher leaders begin to see building collegiality and networks as a fundamental aspect of the leadership role.

Learning to Lead on the Clock: Why and how do teachers become teacher leaders?

Although the majority of participants had the qualities of good leaders and had

been leaders in other aspects of their lives, most did not consider themselves natural

leaders with much experience. In fact, only Ms. Carr, the teacher with the least amount

of teaching experience, had considered herself a leader throughout her life. Ms. Carr

stated,

> I've always led. I was on student council in 5th grade, so I've always led. I feel
> comfortable leading, and sometimes it's even awkward for me when I'm not. I
> mean like in dealing with administration but also just in a meeting where I'm not
> the leader sometimes is just awkward, you know, because that's just naturally
> where I want to be.

In addition, in re-telling the story of her leadership, Ms. Carr explained the influence of

her grandfather on her abilities as a leader, saying,

> Well, just the fact that [leadership is] in my nature, that was from my grandfather
> because he was in charge of a lot of things, even in _____ County
> politics while I was growing up. He was a commissioner, and he helped on
> _____'s campaign, and he would carry me to campaign stuff even
> though I was six or seven years old, so that I really get from him, I think, and
> being very organized and stuff like that. He would just take charge even when
> sometimes nobody wanted him to, you know. He just wanted to be in charge, so
> that sort of comes from him.

Not only had Ms. Carr seen herself as a leader in various positions throughout her life,

but she also stepped into the role of teacher leader immediately upon receiving her first

position as a teacher. When asked how long she had been leading as a teacher, Ms. Carr

stated, "I mean I really started right from the beginning. I started being PLT leader my

first year teaching. So, yeah, just right from the beginning I've been doing stuff." For

Ms. Carr, it seems that both her personality and her upbringing led her naturally to

become a teacher leader.

The other participants did not feel as confident in their leadership abilities. Mr. George, for example, stated, "I mean, all right, so I was president of some clubs in high school, but beside that, you know, I never was much of a leader. I mean at Sullivan College I wasn't much of a leader. At [wilderness] camp I was not much of a leader until maybe the last 8 months of my two year stint." Likewise, Mrs. Greene said,

> I was not a good leader in other places. In high school, I was the captain of the cheerleading squad and I hated it, but I did it, but it wasn't something I enjoyed. I didn't really lead a lot in college, but I sort of feel like I could have. I did a lot of things. I did pageants in college, so I did a lot of community service stuff where I was creating a project and running the project, but I didn't really consider that leadership as much as the stuff I do now, but I guess it sort of was, so yeah, maybe I was, but it was more like a personal project, so it didn't seem as much like, I don't know. I'm going to think about that, but definitely, I didn't do much in college within the school environment at all.

Although both of these participants admitted to having leadership experience in the past, neither felt like that experience was a natural aspect of their personalities and neither felt ready as leaders when they began to lead (as discussed below).

More significantly, with the exception of Ms. Carr, participants revealed that they had not necessarily even become teacher leaders by intention. In fact, their stories revealed that their leadership as teachers often began when they found themselves enlisted without choice. Mrs. Greene, for example, stated,

> I guess the beginning of the leadership started with mentoring. _____, who teaches the mentor training, said, 'You are going to be signing up for mentor training this summer,' and you don't say no to _____, you just don't say no to _____, and so I came and I did it because she told me to, so that's sort of where that began, and then a very similar thing happened. _____ at NCAE needed help with National Boards stuff, and he needed a language arts teacher, and so he called me and he said, 'Hey, my name is _____ and I need you to come to _____ county this weekend to help me with this workshop,' and I said, '_____, I do not know how to be in charge of a National Boards group,' and he said, 'You'll learn!'"

Mr. Scarlatti's story similarly revealed that it was the encouragement and push of a key

mentor who moved him into a leadership position. He stated,

> I think the first leadership role I took that was not just kind of leading among
> students within my classroom but also some kind of leadership among teachers
> was not really until about a year and a half ago, and this is going back to the
> explanation of my other Master's program and how that was really instrumental in
> pushing me to do things a little bit differently. We had an assignment in class to
> write a proposal to present at the _____ Council for Social Studies
> conference, and so I wrote the proposal, and our professor _____ said,
> 'Well, you've written it, so obviously, you should submit it,' so I did, and so then
> I presented at the state conference, which to me was a big deal.

Interestingly, although Mrs. Penn did feel that she had the qualities of a good leader as

she was outspoken, she also revealed that it took the initiative of a different principal to

move her into a leadership position. She also stated, "I've enjoyed being in charge and a

leader, and I think I've been good at it, but I never really saw myself as a teacher leader."

When asked how long she had been a teacher leader, she responded, "I would say since

about 1992 when _____ was our principal and he asked me to be school

improvement chair." Her story reveals that even for people who know they have the

qualities of a good leader, it often takes a push from someone else to get them started.

Mrs. Penn's leadership story also revealed, however, that although she had the

qualities of a good leader, she did not see herself as a leader at first for very different

reasons than the other participants. For Mrs. Penn, it was her perception of teacher

leaders as different from herself and as pawns of the administration that kept her from

seeing herself as one of them. In addition, she attributed part of the blame to the

personality of her administrator. She stated,

> I was just a teacher, but I've always been outspoken, just part of my personality,
> probably too much so. I would speak up, but I was not part of the leaders, I mean,
> because I'm not a scratch your back kind of person. That's kind of to me the

people that principal chose to be the leaders – the people that kind of flattered her, and so she got in trouble, left, and that's when _____ came.

Whether they were pushed and cajoled into a leadership position or whether they chose to take the first step on their own, most of these teachers lacked confidence in their ability to be leaders when they first began to take leadership positions. For example, despite the fact that Mr. George did choose on his own to become a mentor teacher, other aspects of his story reveal ways in which he did not feel confident in his role as a teacher leader.

Mr. George said,

> I would say that I was hesitant to accept that role and I came up with good excuses why, but mostly it was, oddly enough, a lack of confidence, or I don't know what, so I would say it's been within the last five years, maybe more like four, that I would have admitted to that. I think I was poised to enter that role earlier, and the administration was directing me in that, but I was not a willing participant for more than five years.

While Mr. George's decision to step into the role of a teacher leader was indeed intentional and his own, it was heavily influenced by the encouragement of his administration, and his continued growth in and acceptance of his role as a teacher leader was fed by the faith of his administration as well as his colleagues. He said,

> For example, on the graduation project, it was, to start, with three other teachers. Well, media center specialist and two other teachers and then another teacher was added to that group and then an administrator as the graduation project underwent all its different phases, and I was at first really confused as to why I was in that group because in my mind, age-wise, I was peers with one. She'd been teaching a couple years longer than I, but experience-wise, and in my mind, I just looked up to all of them as being outstanding teachers, so any time I was in a group like that, I felt like I was welcomed, and I would make self-deprecating comments and they would say, 'Come on _____, that's not how it is,' and my joke in the graduation project group was that I was just the secretarial scribe, which in many ways was true because they had done anthologies and they had the experience, but I think every time I've been in a group like that, I have been welcomed, I have been accepted, and I have found that I fit into the group in a different way for every group that I've participated in. So, for graduation, I do things on the graduation committee which I am now co-chair of. I do things differently and do different types of things than I did, so it's not any one person, but when I have

been put in a group of people that I respect and that I would consider to be teacher leaders I have not felt like I don't belong, and so I guess, then, that has given me the confidence to go forward with the next thing.

The significance of confidence in one's decision to take on leadership roles as well as the underlying theme that many of these teacher leaders did not have that confidence at the beginning of their careers was reflected through multiple stories. When asked what skills he gained in his Master's program that helped him as a leader, Mr. Scarlatti stated,

We talked before about developing confidence and feeling some validity, which is not a skill, but I think that efficacy or a sense of capability is probably the most important thing to developing a skill. I think that during the [Master's] program, through practice, through doing, it helped to improve the quality of my communication skills and writing, but again, I've always been a confident writer. It's more of the verbal communication, especially with adults, that I haven't been as confident with. I've never really felt nervous talking with students, but getting up in front of larger groups of adults and working every month in our faculty meetings, I'm doing something, and I think that that the communication skill is important, and again, more than anything else, that's a confidence issue, so I go back to the confidence even though it's not a skill; it's a belief that's at the center of that.

In addition, when he discussed his first leadership experiences, Mr. Scarlatti repeatedly mentioned the confidence he gained in himself as a leader, implying that there was a lack of confidence before. In describing the presentation he made at a conference at the behest of a professor, he said, "so that was the first thing that I thought was a leadership thing, and that was just a small task, I guess, a small thing to do, but once you do that, for me, it was a confidence booster." It seems that the majority of these teachers were not fully prepared to lead when they stepped into their first leadership roles and, instead, it took an act of a colleague or mentor to give them the confidence to step into leadership positions.

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Overall, while most of these teacher leaders had exhibited leadership abilities in other arenas and at other times in their lives, for most, it took a colleague to push them into using those abilities as teacher leaders in schools. Often, it seems that teacher leaders are pushed, invited, or cajoled into taking on their first teacher leadership roles, and they learn to lead and have confidence in their leadership abilities only as a result of hands-on experience. Ms. Carr, who said, "the next stage is you really want to be a leader and so you start looking at what can I do because I want to lead intentionally," revealed that it is only in later stages of their career as teacher leaders that leaders are able to seek out leadership opportunities on their own and have the confidence to engage in these opportunities without outside encouragement.

The Discussion

The findings of this study reveal that teacher leaders are, unfortunately, still inhibited by the conditions of schools today. Specifically, teacher leaders, like other teachers, are impacted by the fragmentation and overload of the teacher's role and do not often have time to seek out leadership opportunities on their own. Instead, they rely on colleagues, mentors, and administrators to propel or push them into their first leadership roles. Additionally, teacher leaders often initially lack confidence in themselves, and this characteristic is likely a result of a patriarchal, hierarchical, and bureaucratic system that does not trust teachers to make decisions in their own classrooms. Without a sense of efficacy and accomplishment in their own classrooms, teachers do not have confidence in themselves and only gain confidence as leaders once they have already taken on leadership roles.

Perhaps more importantly, while fragmentation, overload and patriarchy clearly limit the opportunities for these teacher leaders to engage in leadership roles, a lack of conflict in schools as well as a fear of retaliation for criticism inhibits their ability to impact a school and the school system as a whole by suppressing differences of opinion. Although the teacher leaders in this study are self-reflective and are open to critique of their own practices and although they revealed that they were willing to engage in difficult confrontations when necessary, most of them also revealed a desire to be more adept at handling confrontation. The desire of the leaders in this study to learn how to handle controversy and conflict is significant given the importance Tyack and Hansot (1982) place on controversy in schools. They write, "We believe that a central task of leaders today is to reformulate the common purposes of public education in a manner tough-minded enough to encourage controversy and broad enough to foster pluralism" (p. 13). In order for teacher leaders to be able to effect change, they must not only be willing to encourage controversy, but they must also be skilled at handling that controversy and channeling it into healthy discussion and debate as well as pro-active change. In addition, they must be able, as leaders, to work towards creating conventions and structures for conflict that will allow for a healthier sense of critique and debate in schools without fear of retaliation or exclusion.

Not only do these teacher leaders feel inept at conflict as revealed through their stories, but there was also very limited evidence of critique of or frustration with the environment of their schools or the hierarchy of the administration. Rather, these teachers expressed a desire to remain positive in the face of restrictive conditions, and while this decision is admirable in many ways, it also reflects the lack of conflict in

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schools as well as, perhaps, an unspoken sense of both control and fear of retaliation for critical observations. Mr. George, for example, evidenced a sense of discomfort with critiquing his school that provides an example of the way in which discomfort with conflict and critique inhibits the critical evaluation and subsequent growth of a school. At one point during the interview process after being asked how he could be a leader in his department without being department chair, he asked how public his responses would be. After being told that although he would remain anonymous I did hope to publish at least some part of the results, he responded, "Then, I'll stop there." His response exhibits a discomfort, if not a sense of fear of retaliation, at being open and honest in a critical way, and this lack of criticism seriously impedes the ability of an institution to examine and reform its practices.

Additionally, this study reveals that although teacher leaders are involved in a myriad of activities and although they do value collegiality and relationship, they do not see community building as an official act of leadership. Given the research on the significance of community for improving practice within individual classrooms as well as within the educational system as a whole, this oversight is detrimental to the improvement and progress of our schools. Without community, our schools will continue to be isolating and deadening environments where teachers, whose good work is often ignored by administrators, soon lose motivation and enthusiasm and often become disengaged (Reeves, 2008). Without trusting relationships between teachers and even between teachers and administrators, teachers will continue to isolate themselves in their classrooms in a way that minimizes reflection, discussion of best practices, critique, and even conflict. If, instead, teacher leaders take on the challenge to build community and

relationships and learn to see these types of activities as leadership roles in themselves, schools can be transformed into networks of teachers working together to discuss, critique, reflect, and grow through differences of opinion.   If we are to truly reform the system of education from the factory model that began centuries ago and that still exists today, we must not only allow teacher leaders to be a part of the movement, but we must also expand teacher leadership to become a part of the role for all classroom teachers. As Hargreaves and Fullan (1996) summarize, "In short, classroom conditions will never improve until teachers take action to improve the conditions surrounding classrooms" (p. 79).

Although teacher leaders are inhibited by the conditions of school today, we must not lose sight of the tremendous impact they are able to have in the face of difficult conditions. Teacher leaders are teachers who are also able to resist in significant ways the boundaries and restrictions placed on them by the environment and conditions of schools. The teacher leaders in this study are extraordinary teachers who have managed to move beyond the isolation and routine of their own classrooms to impact aspects of education beyond their own students. They are teachers who impact students as a whole and find ways to challenge themselves by writing curriculum, by conducting action research, and by partnering with parents and communities. They are teachers who have impact outside of their own classrooms and on their colleagues by inspiring teachers to change their teaching practice, by counseling teachers, and by encouraging other teachers to take on leadership roles, and they are teachers who impact the profession of teaching by mentoring new teachers and student teachers, by participating in university partnerships, and by conducting professional development activities. As reflected in their

stories, these teacher leaders are lifelong learners and reflective and self-confident

practitioners as Reeves (2008) suggests teacher leaders must be. They work and plan

with their colleagues and take responsibility for the growth of the entire school as

Hargreaves and Fullan (1996) suggest teacher leaders must do. However, these teachers

portray teacher leadership as even more than previous definitions have suggested. One

significant addition to the definition of the teacher leader involves the connection

between teacher leadership and maternal qualities, and this connection warrants further

study. As previously mentioned, Hargreaves and Fullan (1996) see women as uniquely

qualified to lead collaborative organizations as they are more likely to handle conflict in

ways that protect relationships and are more likely to value relationships in and of

themselves than men who often see relationships as a means to an end. Women, who

have been seen as less powerful than men throughout the history of education because of

their maternal qualities, are now in a position as highlighted by Mr. Scarlatti and Mrs.

Greene to use their maternal qualities in leadership roles. These maternal qualities have

the power and the potential to support and encourage community and collaboration,

which, in turn, has the potential to bring successful reform to our schools through

openness to conflict and critique.

Finally, the results of this study show that realizing the potential of teachers as

leaders in their classrooms, their schools, and their school systems is not as difficult as it

may at first appear. The stories of these teacher leaders reveal, in fact, that the

development of teacher leaders can be as simple as an act of encouragement or invitation,

and this process of encouragement and invitation is not only simple but also

economically feasible. Another low-cost and potentially high-yield avenue towards

developing more teacher leaders seems to be as simple as identifying cooperating

teachers who are teacher leaders and who are likely to encourage their student teachers to

participate in leadership activities early on in their careers. The relationship between Ms.

Carr and Mrs. Penn clearly portrays the impact pairing student teachers with teacher

leaders can have on the professional development of new teachers.

The Recommendations

Although many of the recommendations below come from an analysis of the data

presented in previous sections, the data also revealed common themes not anticipated by

the three questions that guided the study; therefore, some of the recommendations

highlighted in this section come from additional data analysis and are presented with

additional support from the interviews.

Invitations to lead

One of the easiest and least expensive ways to encourage the growth of new

leaders based on the findings of this study is simply to ask, to invite teachers to be leaders

whether they see themselves as ready or not. The lack of invitation to leadership

positions in public schools was noted by Ms. Carr when she was asked what she had

learned about teacher leadership in the two years since she had graduated from her

teacher education program. She said,

> You're not necessarily going to always be invited to be a leader. I mean so many
> of the things I did at [college], I was asked to run for the position. . . I mean at
> [college] they have the leadership program and all of those things. One of their
> purposes is trying to build leaders, and so they're constantly inviting you to lead
> and that has not been the case because even the first few months teaching, I was
> like, 'Why is nobody asking me to do things?' and well, that's just how it works.

Mrs. Penn and Mrs. Greene also both noted the significance of asking others to lead.

When she was asked how to get new teachers into leadership roles, Mrs. Penn said,

> I think that most people want to [be involved], and I think a new teacher, get them involved in one thing, whether it's the fashion club, whether it's helping with the seniors, I think that's how you do it.

Likewise, Mrs. Greene said that one of the things she had learned as a teacher leader was

the significance of invitation. She said,

> In the fall, I'm crazy busy with this Holly Days, and I was trying to get some more parents involved, and a parent said to me, 'Oh, I would do anything if somebody would just ask me,' and I thought, 'How many freaking emails have I sent out saying I need help!' and she said, 'No, I just needed somebody to ask me personally, like, 'Hey, will you help me with this?'

While Ms. Carr and Mrs. Penn highlighted the significance of invitations, Mrs. Greene's

story further reveals the significance of *personal* invitation. To encourage teachers to

take on additional roles outside of their classrooms, principals, superintendents,

university professors, teacher leaders, and anyone else involved with the school system

should consider issuing personal invitations to teachers ready for leadership roles.

Ultimately, the more invitations that are extended personally, thoughtfully, and genuinely

the more opportunities we have to enlist teacher leaders in greater numbers.

Scaffolding leadership opportunities

Because teachers often lack confidence in themselves and, therefore, refrain from

taking on leadership roles until they are pushed into them, universities and schools must

put in place a scaffold to help teachers build confidence in themselves as leaders more

quickly. Such programs already exist, for example, in the form of the mentoring program

in schools. Mrs. Greene stated,

I think a lot of people start as leaders within education as mentors. . . you're given very specific steps. The timeline is very, very clear. You do this and you do this and you do this. You can sign the paper beside it saying you did it. So, I think that it's actually a good formula for training people to be leaders, you know, to help guide them, just like we would do a framed paragraph for a struggling writer. We wouldn't just say, 'Go. Write.' We would guide them through it.

Mr. George demonstrated the same principle when he described the roles he sought for himself when he was enlisted to help on committees for which he did not feel qualified. Mr. George scaffolded his own leadership activities by appointing himself scribe thereby allowing himself to participate as a leader in a very specific role. New teachers who are enlisted to leadership activities should be given specific tasks in order to help them gain confidence in their abilities as leaders.

Pre-service reform

Ms. Carr, who was not only the leader with the least experience but also the only leader who saw herself as a leader from the beginning of her career, attributed much of her ability to lead as an inexperienced teacher to her experience at her university and with her student teaching. Her experiences highlight the significance of the university setting in preparing teachers to be leaders and to be open to leadership experiences early in their careers. Ms. Carr described the impact her university had on her as a new teacher. She said,

That's where preparation comes into play because you have to be put into a leadership role a lot to feel comfortable as a leader. I remember we had the foundations project where you had to work with five other people and interview principals and interview department chairs and go to a PTA meeting. They put you out there. There was a lot of stuff that you had to do and then also working in a PLT [Professional Learning Team] type model with the other students to get the project done. That was a good project because we were basically analyzing a school, so we had to get the school's data and analyze the school's data and interview the principals and even suggest changes, and that was nerve-wracking

because you're just a college student and then they made us send it to the principal.

By exposing students to PTA meetings and asking them to interview and later share their findings with the principal, Ms. Carr's pre-service program primed her for taking on her own leadership roles. Universities must expect more of their student teachers and must reform their programs to "put student teachers out there" in order to better support and encourage leadership. One way to ensure that student teachers are exposed to leadership experiences in their student teaching semester is to require a leadership aspect of the student teaching portfolio. Students should be required to show that they have been exposed to teacher leadership activities in some way, and this could be as simple as attending and reflecting on various committee meetings that go on during their student teaching experience.

In addition, universities should seek out not just teachers to be cooperating teachers for their students but specifically teacher leaders. Universities must look for teachers with leadership experience with whom to pair their students in order to give students exposure not only to teaching but also to the profession beyond the classroom. Ms. Carr clearly shows the significance of being paired with Mrs. Penn, a strong teacher leader, during her student teaching experience when she recalls a critical incident in her growth as a leader. She said, "When I student taught, I went with my cooperating teacher to the _____ Council for the Social Studies, and I really wanted to go back the next year because I thought it was wonderful." This experience outside the classroom led her directly into what she identified as one of her first leadership experiences as mentioned above when she asked for permission to attend the social studies conference and then presented her experience and her new knowledge to her

department. It was her experience during student teaching with a cooperating teacher who was also a teacher leader that led her into her first leadership role.

As this study revealed, becoming a teacher leader is often about opportunity as well as a push from a mentor, advisor, professor, or administrator. In order to expand both opportunities as well as encouragement for leadership, universities should teach students about leadership options. Rather than focusing solely on what occurs in the classroom, education programs must move beyond the classroom and teach students not only that there are opportunities for leadership and growth as a classroom teacher but also that it is the responsibility of all teachers to seek out these opportunities and that classroom teaching is not a stagnant position but, instead, that it can become a career. Universities should create a course that provides information on ways teachers can grow beyond the classroom, a course that provides information on various growth activities including National Boards, mentoring, and conferences and grant writing opportunities. If students are taught to look at the teaching profession beyond the classroom, they will be better prepared to step into leadership roles and less likely to see teaching as a dead-end career with the only opportunity for promotion being a step into administration. Finally, if leadership is about opportunity, universities need to teach pre-service teachers and teacher leaders how to create opportunity for leadership for their colleagues and how to invite their peers into leadership positions. Again, teachers are the majority workers in the school system and if teachers begin to encourage and provide opportunity for leadership, inviting their colleagues to become teacher leaders, teacher leadership can grow exponentially.

Additionally, there are opportunities to reform coursework to provide instruction in skills necessary for teacher leadership. Two areas in which participants almost universally felt inadequate was in their ability to manage conflict resolution and critical conversations and in their ability to present in front of adults. Both of these are areas in which coursework reform in teacher education programs might benefit the encouragement and growth of teacher leaders. Finally, universities must explicitly teach their students about the significance of community building in schools as well as the way teacher leaders might not only encourage future leaders to value collegiality but also to actively set about creating it. When teacher leaders understand the significance of community for reform and see community building as an explicit leadership activity, community in schools can finally be realized.

University reform beyond the pre-service student

There is much that the university can do to encourage and support new teachers in their growth as teacher leaders, and these efforts do not have to stop when students graduate and enter the teaching profession. In fact, the university can play a role in providing opportunities for teachers to become leaders. Graduates should be encouraged to become leaders in conjunction with their universities. For example, universities can encourage all graduates to take on student teachers from their alma maters. In addition, universities can ask teachers to present to student teachers and new graduates, sit on committees that make decisions about the university's teacher education program, and share curricular materials in classroom presentations to pre-service teachers.

In addition, in order to keep leaders in the classroom, universities should offer more higher degree programs for teachers in the classroom that allow them to attend

classes while maintaining their positions as teachers. Mr. Scarlatti's Master's degree

program was instrumental in his growth as a leader, and it is imperative that we keep

leaders like Mr. Scarlatti in the classroom because, as Mrs. Penn mentioned during the

focus group interview, "I feel like sometimes administrators, if they come out of the

classroom and become administrators, they forget what it's like to be in the classroom."

If we are to encourage the growth of leaders who truly know what it is like to be in the

classroom on a daily basis, we must provide opportunities for leaders to grow and learn

and keep up with new research and policy while staying in the classroom at the same

time. Hargreaves and Fullan (1996) echo the importance of such programs when they

write,

> *All* teachers have a leadership contribution to make beyond their own classrooms, and should take action accordingly. . . redefining the teacher's role includes a responsibility to become knowledgeable about policy, and about professional and research issues in the wider provincial, national and international arenas. This does not mean having a second career as an academic. But it does mean connecting with the knowledge-base for improving teaching and schools. The more knowledgeable a teacher is about global educational and professional issues, the more resourceful he or she will be for students as well as for other teachers." (p. 78)

Universities can help to make it possible for *all* teachers to become teacher leaders and to

continue learning while remaining in their classrooms.

School reform

Although the university has a significant role to play in reforming education in

order to encourage and promote teacher leadership, reform does not end with the

university. Schools in which teachers are employed can also play a very significant role.

To start, beginning teachers should be encouraged to attend leadership activities in order

to gain exposure and confidence. This does not mean that they have to be involved in

leadership activities, and, in fact, it is important for beginning teachers to concentrate their focus on their classrooms for their first years; however, this focus on their own classrooms should not isolate them or deny them access to leadership opportunities. Beginning teacher programs must help build leadership confidence by pushing beginning teachers into at least observing leadership activities during their first years. In addition, schools may help do this by requiring mentors to be involved in leadership activities beyond mentoring. This will allow new teachers to see the role of experienced teachers outside of their own classrooms. Evidence of exposure to and observation of leadership activities can be built into the beginning teacher timeline as well. Mentor coordinators might also create "field trips" for beginning teachers to go as a cohort group to leadership activities. Treating new teachers as cohorts and providing them with opportunities to work together and to grow together will help build community and may even result in a greater number of teachers taking on leadership roles as they feel support and encouragement from their colleagues.

In addition, schools can make leadership opportunities for teachers known and well-publicized. As Ms. Carr stated, teachers often simply fall into leadership roles without actually seeking them out or even knowing they exist. Advertising leadership opportunities would increase the probability that more teachers would get involved.

Policy reform

Just as universities and schools have a role to play in encouraging teacher leaders, so, too, do policy makers. In order to provide opportunity for teachers not only to become teacher leaders but also to develop relationships with their colleagues and make a difference in their schools, teacher leaders need time and space to continue to connect

and to interact with one another. Recently, steps have been taken to provide this time and

space through the formation of Professional Learning Teams, but policy makers must

continue to protect and expand this time. In addition, and perhaps most importantly,

policy makers must create policy to encourage "hybrid" teacher roles. These roles would

allow teachers to spend half of their time in the classroom and half of their time as

leaders outside the classroom. This step is crucial to retaining good teachers.

The Reflection and Follow-up Studies

Although the data collected in this study reveals significant information regarding

teacher leadership, it does not reveal the full complexities of the teacher leader and

further studies will be required to fully understand this role. Specifically, the research

design and the design's impact on the responses of the participants may have limited the

scope of data collected during this study. While during the epoche phase of this study, I

anticipated stories of conflict and tension between teacher leaders and their

administrators, ultimately, there were very few instances of this type of conflict, which

may reflect the control of conflict at the system level. Even when participants were asked

to recount dilemmas they faced as teacher leaders, their dilemmas most often involved

conflicts with other teachers. It seems unlikely given the control in schools that teacher

leaders do not feel a sense of conflict with or, at the very least, a sense of frustration with

their administration and their inability to critique school structures or to impact their own

classrooms, and so the absence of conflict and frustration may be a result of a flaw in the

study design. By positioning participants as teacher leaders, the study placed them in a

positive and empowered role and potentially impacted their interpretation of the

questions as well as decisions about their responses. Additionally, the questions may have been insufficient for eliciting feelings of conflict and frustration that exist below the surface. An additional study in which teachers were asked the same questions without first being identified as teacher leaders or in which the researcher took a more critical ethnographic approach might provide comparative data to test this theory and to further explore the tensions of teacher leadership. Additional research possibilities are identified below.

Longevity and ownership

Despite the many differences in teaching context and background of the participants, there was one similarity that warrants a follow-up study. Coincidentally, all of the participants had taught at the same school since the beginning of their careers. Indeed, a significant theme throughout the interviews was a sense of ownership that some of the participants had for their respective schools. A follow-up study is needed to determine whether teacher leaders develop a sense of ownership for their schools through their leadership activities or whether, instead, teachers who feel ownership for their schools are more likely to become teacher leaders. In addition, a follow-up study might be conducted to determine whether leaders are more likely to stay at one school over time or whether this was merely a coincidence of the study.

Leadership pairs

As described above, two of the five participants discussed partnerships that were significant to their growth and their activities as leaders. While Hargreaves (1991) points out the limitations of contrived collegiality, writing, "This inflexibility of mandated collegiality makes it difficult for programs to be adjusted to the purposes and

practicalities of particular school and classroom settings. It also overrides teachers'

professionalism in their exercise of discretionary judgment in the circumstances and with

the children they know best" (in Blase, 1991, p. 69), Mr. Scarlatti's story portrays the

results of a relationship between two leaders that is allowed to develop naturally. Mrs.

Greene's experience in which she and a colleague push and complement one another

shows how significant partnerships can be for the development of teacher leaders. Given

the significance of natural collegiality to teachers generally as well as the implications

relationships with colleagues may have on the continued support, encouragement, and

growth of teacher leaders, follow-up studies regarding partnerships in teacher leadership

are warranted. The following questions arise from the data collected in this study: Are

teacher leaders more effective and / or more willing to take risks if they have a partner?

Does a relationship with another teacher make it more likely that leadership will develop?

Previous leadership experience

As this study revealed, some teacher leaders have had previous leadership

experience; however, they often do not see it as connected with their work as a teacher

leader. A follow-up study might help to determine the extent to which teacher leaders

have had previous leadership experience in a different arena. In addition, a follow-up

study of this nature might answer more specific questions regarding how teachers become

teacher leaders. For example, are teachers with previous experience more likely to accept

invitations to lead? Do teachers with previous leadership experience become leaders in

different ways than teachers with little to no previous experience?

Invitations to lead

  Teachers in this study clearly responded to invitations to lead. Mrs. Greene became a mentor and a National Boards coach because she was asked. When Mrs. Penn was asked by her principal to become school improvement chair, she did so, despite her reservations about teacher leaders. Mr. Scarlatti presented at his first conference because his professor encouraged him to do so, but what about those teachers who do not decide to become leaders? The question remains, do teachers who do not become leaders fail to grow into leaders because no one asked them to step up or encouraged them to lead or because they were asked and didn't respond? A follow-up study is necessary to determine the extent of the impact invitations to lead might have on teacher leadership.

Cooperating teachers

  The impact of Mrs. Penn on her student teacher Ms. Carr was evident throughout this study, and Ms. Carr, in fact, attributed her leadership as a teacher directly to her experience as a student teacher under Mrs. Penn. A study specifically focusing on the relationship between cooperating teachers and student teachers might reveal the impact a cooperating teacher with leadership status may have on the development of a beginning teacher into a teacher leader.

The impact of teacher leaders

  Finally, much has been written about the impact of disempowered and disengaged teachers on students; however, not as much has been written about the impact of teacher leaders on students. Although teacher leadership clearly improves the working conditions of teachers by creating a more intellectually stimulating environment, questions still remain regarding ways in which leadership might transform classroom

practice and student achievement. Do teacher leaders, in fact, feel a greater sense of efficacy in terms of their impact on student achievement? Are teacher leaders less focused on classroom discipline than their colleagues who are not in leadership positions? Although leadership is significant and essential for its impact on teachers alone, further studies should be conducted regarding the impact leadership may have on students. Additionally, more specific studies can be conducted regarding the ways in which leadership improves the working conditions of teachers. Is teacher leadership beneficial for teachers because it increases their sense of efficacy? Does teacher leadership improve the work of teachers because it does, in fact, provide work in the non-human world that helps refill the teacher's reservoir of care? These and many other questions involving the relationship between leadership and its impact on the classroom must still be explored.

The Conclusion

Research has clearly shown the significance of teacher leaders for improved education of our students. As Reeves (2008) writes,

> The relationship between leadership and student achievement is profound and *significant*, both in the statistical and in the practical sense. Researchers have created a strong foundation for this relationship, including Goodlad (1984); Schmoker (1999, 2001, 2006); DuFour (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Karhanek, 2004); Elmore (2000; Childress, Elmore, & Grossman, 2006); Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005); and the Wallace Foundation (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004). (p. 13)

While research has created a foundation for the relationship between teacher leadership and student achievement and while it is clear based on that research that teacher leadership is essential to our schools and to the progress of our students, research has not

yet delved deeply into the questions regarding ways teacher leadership can be encouraged, developed, and supported. This study attempts to begin a discussion regarding these significant issues. While more research is needed to clearly define aspects of the development of teacher leaders, we can begin by providing specific instruction in leadership skills, activities, and opportunities to pre-service teachers as well as beginning teachers, by inviting teachers to take on leadership roles, by encouraging community and collaboration in schools, and by creating policy that supports hybrid roles. With these changes to our school system, our universities, and our educational policy, educational reform measures can provide avenues through which teachers' expertise can finally be valued, their critique can finally be considered, and their voices can finally be heard. .

Appendix A: The Interview Questions as Submitted to IRB

Interview One

Background Questions:

- How long have you been teaching?
- What is your educational background (specifically highest level of degree and discipline)?
- How long have you considered yourself to be a teacher leader?

Leadership Questions

- What is teacher leadership?
- Tell me the story of your leadership.
- Do you remember the moment you decided you were a teacher leader? Was there a particular situation that caused your decision? Can you describe for me the main things that happened around the time you became a teacher leader?
- Can you recall for me anyone who impacted your turn to leadership?
- Has anybody outside of the school system influenced you as a leader? How have they influenced you?
- Who within your school influences you as a teacher leader? How have they influenced you?
- Can you describe for me the last leadership activity in which you participated?
- Can you describe for me how you lead?
- Describe a dilemma you face as a teacher leader. How do you solve dilemmas?
- Have you participated in action-research? If so, can you please describe that?
- Can you tell me about other experiences you have had as a leader?
- Describe a time when you knew or felt you were a teacher leader.

Interview Two

- Show me your leadership artifacts. How do these represent you as a leader?
- How do your artifacts reflect those activities in which you believe teacher leaders are involved?
- In which of these activities do you think you have had the most influence? Why?
- What would you be interested in learning about teacher leadership?
- Are there different kinds of teacher leaders? What are some of these?

- Are there different kinds of people who influence / support teacher leaders? Who are some of these?
- Are there different kinds of leadership activities? What are some of these?
- Are there different stages a teacher leader moves through over a career? What are some of these?
- In my analysis of our last conversation, I found that. . . Do you believe this is true? Why or why not?

ADDITIONAL FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS INCLUDING:

- In our first interview, you stated. . . can you explain and / or elaborate?
- Can you compare / contrast. . . ?
- In our last discussion, you used the word or phrase. . . Can you tell me what this means to you?
- In our last conversation, you described an experience. Can you tell me what you learned from this experience?
- What did you mean when you said. . . ?

Focus Group Interview

- From my interviews with you, I gathered that the following people helped you to become leaders: . . . Are there any other people you can think of who have impacted you in terms of your leadership?
- What characteristics did these people share that enabled them to help you develop as a leader?
- In what ways are teacher leaders different than teachers who do not develop into leaders?
- From my interviews with you, I gathered that most leadership dilemmas you have faced involve . . . Are there other kinds of dilemmas you have faced as teacher leaders?
- From your artifacts, I gathered that the types of leadership activities in which you all are involved include the following: . . . Are there any other activities that you can think of that you would consider leadership activities?
- What about other activities that you perform differentiate them from leadership activities?

ADDITIONAL FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS INCLUDING:

- In my conversations with many of you, you talked about . . . do you think this is a significant aspect of leading? Why or why not?
- In my analysis of our earlier discussions, many of you discussed. . . Why do you think this is important?
- Do you find that leadership involves. . . ? impacts. . . ?
- What have you learned about leadership? What do you wish you knew about leadership when you began teaching?
- In my analysis of our earlier conversations, I found that. . . do you think this is true?
- Many of you talked about . . . do you think there is a way to teach that?
- Can you define, clarify, or elaborate on. . .
- Can you describe your relationships with colleagues, administrators, parents, etc.?

Appendix B: The Data Lists

Activities in which teacher leaders participate:

Having conversations and discussions with other teachers and teacher leaders

Interacting with parents

Recommending others to lead

Observing

Scoring National Boards entries

Scoring Advanced Placement exams

Participating in teacher exchanges

Creating / reviewing assessments

Clarifying expectations for other teachers

Designing materials

Running meetings / coordinating / creating agendas / organizing and planning

Writing and participating in grants

Chairing, co-chairing, and participating on various boards, committees, etc.

Acting as delegates

Participating on teacher education committees and other university partnerships

Advising

Cooperating with human services and other organizations

Presenting student awards

Eliciting consensus

Getting approval from administration

Working with business alliances

Giving speeches

Acting as cooperating teachers

Inspiring others to change their practice

Organizing others

Role-modeling for others / leading by example

Working with others as equals

Eliciting diverse perspectives

Fostering learning in other teachers and classrooms

Collecting, analyzing, and presenting data

Counseling teachers

Collaborating

Participating in and lead staff development / workshops / conferences / professional development

Email

Leading Professional Learning Teams and other groups and committees

Acting as department chair

Voicing issues and acting as a teacher voice for principals, in forums, etc.

Providing opportunity for others to have voice / lead

Attempting National Boards

Assisting with School Improvement Team

Conducting action research formally and informally

Mentoring others formally and informally

Taking risks

Listening to others / learn from others

Coaching

Presenting to BTs

Teaching others about new technology – the latest and the greatest

Reflecting

Participating in textbook reviews

Writing curriculum

Making presentations to principals

Having discussions with principals

Participating in groups at school, local, state, national, even international levels

Participating in fellowships

Celebrating, cheerleading, encouraging

Creating vision

Planning and implementing curriculum

Ways teacher leaders lead:

By reflecting

By also doing what they ask of others

By eliciting reflection through conversation

By eliciting direction

By volunteering self and others / eliciting volunteers

By assigning tasks

By asking questions

By leading through example

By pushing

By encouraging

By being honest and openly critical when necessary

By congratulating

By force when necessary and by mandating action

By listening to others

By collaborating

By asking questions

By being open and honest

By celebrating

Dilemmas teacher leaders face:

Dilemmas with groups of teachers

Dilemmas with conflicting philosophies among teachers and with those they lead

Dilemmas trying not to dictate or to overpower

Dilemmas with trying not to silence the voice / opportunity / passion of others

Dilemmas with lack of response from those they are trying to lead

Dilemmas created by a lack of authority over those they are trying to lead

Dilemmas with stepping on the toes of administration and navigating the fine line between advocating and overstepping

Dilemmas with changing expectations and requirements

Discomfort with confrontation

Dilemmas creating a shared vision

Dilemmas maintaining a shared vision

Dilemmas with growth and turnover especially in terms of consistent shared vision

Dilemmas with administrative turnover especially in terms of consistent shared vision

Dilemmas with training people

Dilemmas with taking on too much

Rewards teacher leaders get from leading:

Support and recognition

Opportunity to create activities for enriching others (students and teachers)

Opportunity to benefit students

New ideas / Learning something new

New friendships

Positive feedback

Appreciation from the community and parents

Personal satisfaction

Knowledge that you have made a difference

Hope

Feeling of giving back

Seeing and influencing change

Knowledge that you have done something positive for other teachers

Skills teacher leaders possess:

Organization and time management

How to be positive

How to be honest with those of whom they are critical

How to build rapport

How to be involved outside of their own classrooms

Knowledge that their opinion is valuable and they can have a voice

How to effectively elicit help

How to present in front of adults

How to accept things they cannot change / how to be flexible

How to value the experiences and voices of others

How to push themselves and search out opportunities

People skills

Ability to evaluate resources

Ability to bite their tongue as well as to speak up and ability to tell the difference

How to motivate others

How to be more direct

A sense of capability

Communication skills and public speaking

Faith in self / confidence

How to set expectations for large groups of students

How to teach adults

How to be open and honest with administration

How to pick their battles

How to acknowledge problems without complaining

Skills teacher leaders would still like to learn:

People skills

Skills for confrontation or crucial conversations

Crisis management

How to help people agree or come to consensus

How to motivate others

How to build shared vision

Qualities / attributes / attitudes / dispositions that teacher leaders possess:

Courage

Respect

Risk-taking

Compassion, understanding, empathy, sympathy

Vision

Supportive, even maternal

Good listeners

Outspoken

Objective

Open

Accessible

Ownership of the school

Blunt

Advocate / liaison

Uphold the administrations vision and help run the school

Flexible

Desire to achieve success as teachers and for their students

See teaching as a career, not a job

Ability to network

Willingness to share

Humility

Focus and drive

Positive attitudes

Work well with others

People skills / know how to approach people

Make an attempt to get to know individual personalities

Know how to get what they want

Organized and time efficient

Understanding of place within the system

Ability to read situations and know your audience

Understanding of situation and ability to apply appropriate skills dependent upon that situation

Problem-solving skills

Ways teachers become teacher leaders:

Encouraged by someone who had faith in them (especially someone they admired)

Told by another to do something

Pushing from another

Having a natural partner

Not being able to say no

Somebody asked

Somebody said "figure it out"

Leadership positions by election

Teacher leader role models – (Observing others, being brought in by teacher leaders)

Beginning as secretarial scribe, etc., and being accepted by more powerful members of the group

Influence of professors, principals, family members and friends, other teachers, especially master teachers, department chairs

Going back to school

Networking

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