

TEACHERS LEADING IN FORMAL ROLES: POSITIONS,
RESPONSIBILITIES AND TRAINING

By

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To the Faculty of Washington State University:

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Abstract

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Scholars of educational leadership have long argued that in order for building and district leaders to meet the challenge of improving schools, the leadership capacity within these schools must be increased. Teachers, assuming more leadership responsibilities and ultimately serving as leaders, may provide the leadership capacity needed to improve schools. This descriptive research study examined what school administrators are doing to support the development of teacher leaders serving in formal roles. A survey of 115 teacher leaders from four school districts located in Pierce County, Washington, were asked to respond to questions regarding their leadership positions, professional responsibilities, and training. The results revealed that in certain leadership positions, teacher leaders received the support, resources and time to become effective leaders in their schools. The findings also suggested that there may be a relationship between the leadership strategy used by district and building leaders and the level of success experienced by teachers serving in formal leadership roles.

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CHAPTER 1

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this research study is to examine how district and building school leaders have operationalized teacher leadership, what teachers in leadership positions actually do, and how teacher leaders perceive their roles given the specific responsibilities that they hold or perform in their position. Included will be a review of the literature regarding leadership models that are used, specifically shared, transformational, and distributed teacher leadership. A working definition of “teacher leader” will be established and formal roles that teacher leaders occupy will be identified. The conceptual lens of Strategic Human Resources Management or a “systems” approach to developing leadership capacity at the district and building level from a human resources perspective will also be discussed.

Using a survey of 115 teacher leaders in Pierce County, Washington, this study will address the following questions: What do school administrators do to prepare teachers for formal teacher leadership roles? What types of work are teacher leaders expected to do? What do school administrators do to increase organizational capacity that results in greater numbers of teachers who are able to serve as leaders?

Introduction

Educational reform efforts of the past two decades have focused on several common themes which have included, but were not limited to, increasing teacher quality and developing leadership capacity in order to improve the nation’s schools (The Holmes Group, 1986, 1990, 1995; National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983; National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future, 1996). In response, each state has made concerted efforts to meet the mandates spelled out in federal legislation, but few have been able to realize the

ultimate goal of ensuring that each of the nation's schools, and more importantly each classroom, is led by a high quality educator. Childs-Bowen, Moller, and Scrivner (2000) argued that "although policy and decisions can influence teacher quality, principals and teachers are the individuals who can take charge of teacher development school by school. To accomplish this will demand a broader definition of leadership within the school." (p. 27) Acker-Hocevar, Cruz-Janzen, and Wilson (2012) wrote that "[this] model of leadership recognizes teacher, community, and staff expertise. The culture of transparency invites people who work at the school to feel safe in applying and developing their knowledge, skills, and expertise in areas that are priorities within the school (p. 33).

For this type of thinking to become operationalized, the hierarchical structure of school leadership would need to be re-examined and a systemic paradigm shift in the way that schools are governed would need to occur. "Now is the time to move away from a deficit model that tells teachers what they need to do to improve, to a leadership design that engages both principals and teachers in making important decisions about improving schools" (Childs-Bowen et al., 2000, p. 28). This new framework would call on principals to conceive of themselves as "leaders of leaders" (Schlechty, 1997, p. 71), with every leader in the school focused on the "goal" of high student achievement. The language of researchers and writers of school reform efforts and leadership models echo a similar mantra that "successful organizations depend on multiple sources of leadership" (Childs-Bowen et al., 2000, p. 28).

Building leadership capacity in schools should go hand-in-hand with purposeful investments in meeting the professional needs of teachers and developing a positive school culture. Brenda Beatty (2007) wrote that "[leadership] for whole school renewal requires emotionally safe spaces for learning and growing together." She further states that a new vision

of leadership is needed, one that is “distributed and shared, [and] grounded in notions of collaborative inquiry within dynamic learning communities” (p. 328). These “learning communities” would become places where teachers readily take on activities of schoolwide importance, and as a result, help transform the culture of the school from one that is dominantly authoritative to one that is more inclusive and democratic. “When teachers lead, principals extend their own capacity, students [and teachers] enjoy a democratic community of learners, and the school benefits from better decisions. This is why the promise of widespread teacher leadership in our schools is so compelling” (Barth, 2001, p. 445).

In a presentation to the National Teacher Forum and writing on the behalf of the U.S. Department of Education, Paulu and Winters (1998) reported that teachers are critical to educational reform based on their “front-line knowledge of classroom issues and the cultures of school, and they understand the support they need to do their jobs well.” (p. 7) Researchers studying the concept of teacher leadership (Grubb & Flessa, 2009; Leithwood et al., 2009; Marks & Printy, 2003) acknowledged that the act of developing broader leadership capacity in schools has the potential to unlock a reservoir of leadership expertise focused on instructional excellence and school leadership that most principals do not possess alone.

From these ideas, formal teacher leadership roles began to emerge as educators and policymakers worked to improve overall teacher quality by addressing teacher preparation, induction, and on-going professional development (Sherrill, 1999, p. 56). The central tenet of teacher leadership aligns with the belief that individual empowerment and localization of management are at the heart of teaching and learning. These are not new concepts. In the 1990’s Smylie and Denny (1990) wrote about “the increased recognition of teacher leadership, visions of expanded teacher leadership roles, and the hope for the contributions these expanded roles

might make in improving schools” (p. 237). Similarly, Weiss, Cambone, and Wyeth (1992) argued that “when teachers share in decision making, they become committed to the decisions that emerge. They buy into the decision; they feel a sense of ownership, therefore they are more likely to see that decisions are actually implemented” (p. 350). In the early 1990’s these were innovative ideas, but as we enter the second decade of the new century, these ideas have become accepted widely.

Multiple studies (Grubb & Flessa, 2009; Marks & Printy, 2003; Printy, 2008) have argued that continuously high performing schools have high leadership capacity, which is defined as “broad-based, skillful participation in the work of leadership” (Lambert, 2005, p. 63). These same studies confirm that as the leadership capacity of a school increases, administrators and teachers in leadership roles become more alike as teachers begin to initiate action, take more responsibility for school effectiveness, frame problems, and seek solutions. This type of leadership requires that many people work in collaboration with one another, are trusted with information, participate in decision making, and contribute to the creation and transfer of knowledge (Sergiovanni, 2001). The research also suggests that in order to make significant and lasting reforms, schools would be wise to encourage and/or develop leadership capacity among the teaching staff in schools in a strategic effort to increase the achievement level of the district’s students. Acker-Hocevar et al. (2012) wrote that “the principal cannot be the only one responsible for actuating and sustaining change. All members of the organization must be participants in the decision-making and improvement process” (p. 18).

High expectations for educational excellence, coupled with state and federal reform mandates, continue to place significant demands on building principals. The already complex task of effectively managing a schoolhouse is compromised by the assumption that the principal

is in a position to provide all of the instructional facilitation that a school needs. One of the emerging “best practices” in the field of educational leadership is the use of a democratic or collaborative leadership model. Teacher leadership roles are used to facilitate instructional decision-making and ultimately to improve student learning. Principals using a democratic or collaborative leadership model, of which there are several, require active collaboration and leadership on the parts of all teachers, who may serve as leaders as they work toward school improvement.

Summary of Key Points

In an attempt to meet the requirements of federal and state mandates for holistic school reform, principals have wrestled with the expectations of being more than “traditional” building managers. More importantly, many of these solitary leaders struggle with the expectations of being skilled instructional leaders, building leaders who possess the ability to inspire teachers to “move away from self-interests and toward a collective understanding of the school’s purpose, mission, and vision” (Chirichello, 2004, p. 122). High levels of accountability for increased student achievement present a challenge that school leaders cannot manage alone, and in many schools teachers are expected to play an integral role in school reform efforts in order for significant and lasting change to occur. Grubb and Flessa (2006) emphasized this point in "A Job Too Large for One," their study of several California schools that have had co-principals who served as co-leaders. Webb, Neumann, and Jones (2004) argued that “Teachers need to see themselves as leaders or as having the potential and responsibility for leadership” (p. 254). Given the work that they do in schools each day teachers, acting as leaders, possess insights and knowledge regarding what decisions should be made to reform schools. If building

administrators focus their efforts on building leadership capacity and employ a leadership model that utilizes teachers as leaders, school reform efforts can result in successful change.

Research on the topic of school leadership suggests that student achievement is directly linked to effective leadership within the school (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999; Marks & Printy, 2003). These same studies have suggested that continuously high performing schools have high leadership capacity, which is defined as “broad-based, skillful participation in the work of leadership” (Lambert, 2005, p. 63). These scholars argued that as the leadership capacity of a school increases, teachers assume more traditional leadership responsibilities and become more like formal building leaders. As these teachers begin to initiate actions, take more responsibility for school effectiveness, frame problems, and seek solutions, the goals of the school are more likely achieved. “In this environment, administrators are keenly aware that leadership is learned and shared, not a birthright or enthroned” (Lovely, 2005, p. 21). Sergiovanni (2001) wrote that this type of leadership requires that many people work in collaboration with one another, that they are trusted with information, participate in decision-making, and contribute to the creation and transfer of knowledge. These authors have contended that schools would be wise to encourage and/or develop leadership capacity among the teaching staff in schools in a strategic effort to increase the achievement level of the district’s students.

York-Barr and Duke’s (2004) review of the literature suggests that the link between high quality teaching and student achievement is real. If school systems are unwilling or unable to invest time and resources into developing a comprehensive plan for the recruitment and development of high quality teachers, then lasting increased student achievement in schools is an unrealistic expectation. Teachers, in leadership roles, may serve as the “second line” of school leaders who help to address the challenges that come hand-in-hand with school reform efforts

and the broadening responsibilities that school leaders now have to manage as a part of their daily work. A strategic emphasis placed on recruiting, hiring, and training teacher leaders is more complex than it seems. “[The] challenge is due, in part, to the inexact ‘science’ of attracting, screening, and identifying quality candidates to fit the complex leadership needs of schools” (Shumate, Munoz, & Winter, 2006, p. 23).

Pawlenty argued that “too often the people side of education reform is overlooked. But recruiting and developing talent, building organizational capacity, redesigning human resource departments and tying them to school improvement plans, must emerge as a guiding path to school reform” (p. 1). While the work of contemporary school system reforms has focused on strengthening instructional practice, academic standards and assessments, little if any attention has been given to explicitly developing the schools’ collective leadership potential. Enhancing teacher quality and determining how to extend it beyond the realm of current leadership capacity should be a component of any plan to improve schools. However, there will not be a single answer that provides the solution to every school district’s unique set of challenges around education reform. “Because different districts face different challenges, they may choose different areas of emphasis, but nothing substitutes for a clearly enunciated strategy” (Pawlenty, 2009, p. 5). In schools where significant and on-going improvement continues, there exists a collaborative effort between administrators and teachers to realize their shared vision of change. This concept will be further explored in the “implications and recommendations” section of this study.

Potential Contribution to the Field

This research may increase understanding of what teacher leaders do. Hence, it may direct new ways to provide teachers with the leadership training that will assist them in serving

in teacher leadership positions in buildings and potentially throughout and across the districts. Staff within school buildings may begin to feel a sense of empowerment, and in turn assume more “active” leadership roles in school reform efforts. Teacher leaders may also seek to become formal building and district level-leaders.

Teachers in leadership roles may be better equipped to assist their colleagues in working toward a deeper, more meaningful focus on instructional practice. The outcome might include improved academic achievement for students throughout the school. The development of teacher leaders creates the potential to invigorate the climate of a building, helping those who view themselves as “victims” of state and national accountability measures to be the “leaders” of individual accountability for student achievement. Teachers may begin to “anticipate” the next steps in school reform as opposed to “reacting” to them.

It is my hope that this research study will provide a foundation for positive change in the learning environments of individual buildings and ultimately in districts as a whole. “[In] organizations that reach collective leadership, principals are both leaders and followers, fading in and out of these roles” (Chirichello, 2004, p. 121). There may be a need to begin using a different style of school leadership, one that is more inclusive and accepting of multiple people leading the efforts of the building and ultimately increasing the achievement of our students.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

The task of improving schools “is too large a problem for any single leader to handle alone” (Webb, Neumann, & Jones, 2004, p. 254). There is a substantive body of research that suggests that fewer highly qualified individuals are willing to assume leadership positions, due in large part to the broad set of managerial and operational responsibilities administrators have to attend (Barth, 2001; Childs-Bowen; Lambert, 2006; Moller, & Scrivner, 2000). These responsibilities, combined with the additional focus on instructional leadership and student achievement create a near impossible set of circumstances for successful leadership. In the past decade, research (Childs-Bowen et al., 2000; Darling-Hammond, 1997; Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Sherrill, 1999) on the principal’s role in school reform efforts suggests that, as the workload placed on building principals continues to grow, it becomes increasingly more unlikely that a solitary principal can successfully perform each of the leadership functions associated with this leadership role.

In elementary schools where the principal is both the building manager (Darling-Hammond, 1997; Spillane, 2005) and the solitary instructional leader, the students typically do not perform at high academic levels. The exception to this “norm” is in a relatively few schools where the principal is highly skilled and/or is a transformative leader. A study by Marks and Printy (2003) found that school performance, measured by student achievement, was more likely to improve when the principal acted as a transformational leader (supporting others) in addition to sharing instructional leadership with teachers. Different working relationships between

teachers and administrators may need to be forged in order to make the reform efforts of the last two decades positive and lasting (Sherrill, 1999).

Collaborative/Democratic Leadership

The last two decades of education reform have caused many researchers and practitioners to take a closer look at the potential of teacher and principal collaboration as it relates to instructional matters. The goal has been to determine whether or not their collaborative efforts enhanced the quality of instruction and ultimately, student achievement. The literature suggests that integrated forms of leadership can have a significant influence on school performance, both in the quality of the classroom instruction and the academic achievement of the students. Teachers are well aware of the obstacles related to school reform. They understand that the solutions are complex and that no single answer will have the same outcome in every school. Many, probably most teachers, have demonstrated the desires to tackle the challenge of improving schools each day because they are committed to doing their part, and more importantly, to make a difference. The use of a collaborative leadership strategy is ideal in this situation, as it provides teachers with a formal leader who embodies the vision of school and empowers those willing to lead with the opportunity to do so. The research suggests that by excluding teachers from leadership roles, principals alienate teachers from roles they would readily assume.

Harris and Chapman (2002) wrote that by design, collaborative and/or democratic leadership has the ability to forge consensus through participation, which includes seeking and listening to doubters. By acknowledging and understanding the perspectives of those who support and those that may challenge the educational direction of the school, principals allow all to be “heard” which in turn makes everyone more likely to participate and follow. Democratic

leaders focus their efforts on “engendering compliance with dominant goals and values and harnessing staff commitment, ideas, expertise and experience to realizing these” (Woods, 2004, p. 4). Collaborative and/or democratic leadership is concerned with influencing the whole building (or system) rather than just individuals. A common misconception about democratic management is that it effectively excludes leadership from the principal and/or other formal leaders. To the contrary, democratic and collaborative leadership “allows that initiatives may be focused in a single person at certain times” (Woods, 2004, p. 8). In fact, power and leadership in schools is not zero sum; increasing the level of teacher leadership is more likely to enhance than reduce principal leadership (Dunlap & Goldman, 1991). With moments and situations that do not require traditional hierarchical structures, it seems appropriate that the focus can and should shift to informal or emergent teacher leaders. When situations do not require the traditional hierarchy--for example when a decision must be made quickly--the focus of decision making and other leadership functions can be shifted to the larger leadership team.

Researchers have suggested that there is a “need for principals to actively support formal teacher leaders, who in turn, share instructional leadership with classroom teachers” (Mangin, 2007, p. 324). The use of a collaborative leadership model that incorporates teacher leaders in the decision-making process creates the potential for better instructional decisions to be made which may in turn positively affect student outcomes. It stands to reason that school principals “create a working environment in which teachers collaborate and identify with the school’s mission and goals” (Witziers, Bosker, & Kruger, 2003, p. 403). Davies and Goldman (2010) wrote that “trust may [also] be an essential element in school reform” (p. 4). From the perspective of these researchers, multiple factors combine to create environments where achievement and success can become the norm for staff and students alike.

Barth (2001) wrote that “the most reliable, useful, proximate, and professional help resides under the roof of the schoolhouse with the teaching staff itself” (p. 445). York-Barr and Duke (2004) supported this statement by adding that teachers, serving on the front lines of education, have “vital knowledge” of how their school works and how to meet the needs of the people that they serve. “When teachers share in decision making, they become committed to the decisions that emerge. They buy into the decision; they feel a sense of ownership; therefore, they are more likely to see that decisions are actually implemented” (Weiss, Cambone, &Wyeth, 1992, p. 350).

The literature also suggests that there are several “collaborative or democratic leadership” approaches to choose from, all of which require the principal and teachers share responsibility for staff development, curricular development, and supervision of instructional tasks. “Teacher leaders emerge within these schools to fill many roles; they join their principals as colleagues to help achieve the schools’ desired goals” (Andrews & Crowther, 2002, p. 153). York-Barr and Duke (2004) wrote that “teacher leadership reflects teacher agency through establishing relationships, breaking down barriers, and marshaling resources throughout the organization in an effort to improve students’ educational experiences and outcomes” (p. 263). This statement links directly to the topic of teacher leadership and its effects on student achievement, timely given that schools are more accountable than ever for student achievement. Linda Lambert, in her 2006 research study *Lasting Leadership: Study of High Leadership Capacity in Schools*, wrote:

If principals can be prepared to hold fast to values while letting go of power and authority, schools are more likely to attain lasting school improvement. . . . teachers should be prepared to function as full participants and leaders in the school community, attend to the learning of both children and adults, and enter into collegial relationships with principals (p. 253).

The focus of this review of the literature is to analyze and begin to understand “whether and how collaborative [or democratic] leadership makes a difference in elementary school improvement and student learning” (Hallinger & Heck, 2010, p. 654). The terms “collaborative” and “democratic” leadership refer to a variety of leadership strategies that have been practiced in many successful schools. For the purposes of this study, specific collaborative strategies that will be examined include shared, transformational, and distributed leadership models. The terms shared, transformational, and distributed leadership are not synonymous; however, each call on teachers to “conceive of their roles differently and to assume different responsibilities, mostly beyond the classroom and often for school-level improvement” (Smylie, Mayrowetz, Murphy, & Louis, 2007, p. 471).

Defining Teacher Leadership Roles

Each of the leadership strategies examined require that teachers assume a “leadership” role as they do their work every day in schools. The initial challenge for teachers and administrators interested in using one of these leadership models is having a clearly defined definition for the term and measureable expectations for the role. The term “teacher leader” has been vague and inconsistently defined due in part to the situational circumstances and special needs of the school environments where these positions or roles are in place. Sherrill (1999) made the case for the “development of common expectations of teacher leadership roles at the teacher preparation, induction, and on-going professional development phases . . .” which could serve as the foundation for their work. Much like the national standards for teaching and learning, this “base level” (p. 56) knowledge would provide a common understanding and level of consistency for teacher leadership positions.

It must be acknowledged that leadership exercised by teachers comes from those with formal leadership titles, as well as those without those titles. Educators new to the field or to a building will readily concede that they may look to senior or highly-capable “colleagues” for direction regarding the unwritten rules, processes, and procedures of the school. Teachers may opt to consult with informal leaders before consulting with the school’s formal leaders.

Receiving direction or advice from informal leaders may help to build necessary collegial relationships, help to better understand the “culture” of a building, and/or help to send the perception to building leaders that a level of cooperation and competence exists in that person new to the building. This type of informal leadership is contingent on a number of different factors, many of which are hard to identify or categorize. This point and several others serve as reasons for focused study on teacher leaders with formal titles and responsibilities.

It is equally important that teachers in leadership positions and the leadership that they exercise not necessarily be viewed by others as an alternative track to becoming a building administrator. Most of these teachers are active members in their local teacher association, and therefore must exercise caution with their colleagues in situations which may be perceived as “evaluative.” “Teachers are leaders when they function in professional learning communities to affect student learning; contribute to school improvement; inspire excellence in practice; and empower stakeholders to participate in educational improvement” (SERVE 1999). It is probably necessary that those serving in teacher leadership roles possess a level of preparation that enables them to teach model lessons, have a command of high-yield instructional strategies, work with pre-service and struggling teachers, and have communication skills that enable them to provide non-evaluative feedback to their colleagues. Childs-Bowen et al. (2000) wrote that when teacher leaders are properly empowered and motivated to do the work of a leader, they become leaders

of leaders with the capability to move other teachers as a critical mass forward in school improvement efforts. Nevertheless, some teacher leaders will choose to explore futures in school administration.

Shared Leadership

Shared leadership is defined as “leadership activity spread over leaders, followers, and the school’s context” (Scribner, Sawyer, Watson, & Myers, 2007, p. 92). In comparison to transformational and distributed leadership, this leadership strategy may be viewed by some as “passive” in nature. There is a level of “volunteerism” on the part of teachers that helps to define this leadership strategy. “Shared instructional leadership involves the active collaboration of principal and teacher on curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Within this model, the principal seeks out ideas, insights, and expertise of teachers in these areas and works with teachers for school improvement” (Marks & Printy, 2003, p. 371).

Lieberman (1986) wrote that “schools where people work together to confront their problems, where teachers have maximum autonomy to do their work but are collectively engaged in dialogue about the central problems of the school, are places that are more likely to be successful for the adults and the children” (p. 5). “The more people work together, the more we have the possibility of better understanding these complex problems and acting on them in an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect” (Lieberman, 1986, p. 6). “In this environment, administrators are keenly aware that leadership is learned and shared, not a birthright or enthroned. Therefore, they work to ensure every staff member is involved in the drive toward excellence” (Lovely, 2005, p. 21).

Chirichello (2004) wrote that “we must abandon the centrist, one person taking charge tradition that prevails in our schools today. Our vision must focus on we rather than me” (p.

121). In schools where principals and teachers in leadership positions have been successful in using this leadership strategy, the foundational aspect of this strategy reveals that “individual people do not possess leadership; leadership happens when people participate in collaborative forms of thought and action” (Darth, 2001, p. 15). Lovely (2005) wrote that “when shared responsibility flows through the arteries of a school, the wisdom of working as a whole supersedes any desire for individual triumph” (p. 16). Teachers and principals understand what it takes as a collective to bring out the best in each other and more importantly, in their students.

“In schools, if others aren’t entrusted to act, the principal’s successes are limited to only those tasks he can complete on his own” (Lovely, 2005, p. 17). Shared leadership doesn’t require that all teachers contribute in the same way. This leadership strategy relies on the school’s members to contribute in ways that take into account their personal strengths. For example, if a teacher is good at organizing academic events, then that teacher might serve as the “lead” for the school’s science fair. In Lovely’s (2005) words, “teacher leaders need to be cultivated in accordance with their talents and interests” (p. 18). Delegation of roles and responsibilities are at the heart of this particular leadership strategy. This requires that principals relinquish some of the “control” that often defines their position. Principals using a shared leadership strategy must become comfortable with teacher leaders accomplishing tasks differently, and at times, making mistakes with what they might describe as “routine” tasks. Lambert (2002) wrote that “shared instructional leadership among professional staff is state-of-the-art practice” (p. 40).

“Capacity-building leaders work to make the strengths of employees productive and their weaknesses inconsequential” (Lovely, 2005, p. 19). Principals using this leadership strategy understand how and when to delegate tasks and authority for the betterment of their schools. They capitalize on the talents of their teacher leaders and use the strengths of their staff to build

high-achieving schools. “Instructional leadership must be a shared, community undertaking. Leadership is the professional work of everyone in the school” (Lambert, 2002, p. 37). “Today’s effective principal constructs a shared vision with members of the school community, convenes the conversations, insists on a student learning focus, evokes and supports leadership in others, models and participates in collaborative practices and facilitates dialogue that addresses the confounding issues of practice” (Lambert, 2002, p. 40).

Marks and Printy (2003) also suggested that a shared leadership model allows teachers some authority and power in making curricular and instructional decisions that improves both the teachers’ work lives and student achievement. “Teacher leadership reflects teacher agency through establishing relationships, breaking down barriers, and marshaling resources throughout the organization in an effort to improve students’ educational experiences and outcomes” (York-Barr & Duke, 2004, p. 263). The research is clear that these teacher leaders can and do contribute to higher levels of student achievement in their classrooms.

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership is focused on staff development and fostering a collaborative school culture in order to meet the expected outcomes spelled out in current school reform efforts. Transformational leadership, put briefly, provides intellectual direction and aims at innovating within the organization, while empowering and supporting teachers as partners in decision making (Conley & Goldman, 1994). Teachers are called on to be facilitators, not experts of professional development, and they use their status as teacher leaders to share and encourage high leverage instructional practices. “Transformational leadership helps teacher leaders to initiate change that leads to democratic participation by other teachers in the school community. In transformational leadership, the leader is expected to facilitate and initiate the

organizational change, even though both the leader and the followers negotiate the vision as it is being carried out” (Webb, Neumann, & Jones, 2004, p. 260).

According to Barnett and McCormick (2004), “Principals are in a unique position to challenge the way schools do business and mobilize and motivate teachers to develop the new approaches to teaching and learning being demanded by governments through reform” (p. 407). The purpose of a transformational leadership model challenges the hierarchical structure of schools and seeks to replace this structure with one that is more egalitarian. Organizations that use a transformational leadership strategy have principals that are both leaders and followers, who transition seamlessly from one role to the other as the situation demands.

“The transformational leader plays a pivotal role in precipitating change; followers and leaders are bound together in the transformational process” (Marks & Printy, 2003, p. 375). One of the key components to this leadership strategy is that the principal is able to identify new strengths of teacher leaders, encourage them to develop these skills and abilities, and provide the needed motivation in order to maximize their talents as leaders in the school. “Transformational leaders motivate followers by raising their consciousness about the importance of organizational goals and by inspiring them to transcend their own self-interest for the sake of the organization” (Marks & Printy, 2003, p. 375). Transformational leaders have the ability to mobilize and energize members of the organization, are inspirational motivators, provide intellectual stimulation to those working with them, and they keep in mind the needs of the individuals around them. Transformational leadership is focused on promoting the mission of the school, expecting a high level of performance by all within the community, and focusing on building a strong organizational culture. Transformational leadership is concerned with fostering

collaboration, focusing attention on inquiry into teaching and learning, and shaping positive organizational culture and effectiveness.

Webb, Neumann, and Jones (2004) wrote that critical leadership, which serves as a mirror to transformational leadership, is an “idea-centered conceptualization of leadership [that] does not establish power relationships in which there are exclusively defined leaders and followers. Critical leadership measures power by the capacity of all members involved in the interaction” (Webb et al., 2004, p. 259). Even more so than transformative leadership, critical leadership parallels distributed leadership in that this leadership concept operates at its optimal level when all of the members within the organization are engaged in the business of working toward their shared vision. Where transformative and critical leadership exists, there is evidence to support the assertion that these efforts are leading to changes in teaching, learning, and the organization of the school, which results in greater student achievement.

Distributed Leadership

In the past decade, James Spillane and his associates have expanded our understanding of collaborative leadership by introducing the concept of distributed leadership. The distributed leadership approach reflects the insight that “successful organizations depend on multiple sources of leadership” (Childs-Bowen, Moller, & Scrivner, 2000, p. 28). “Rather than viewing leadership practice as a product of a leader’s knowledge and skill, the distributed perspective defines it as the interactions between people and their situation” (Spillane, 2005, p. 144). Much of the literature on distributed or shared leadership suggests that by expanding the leadership capacity within schools, “principals include teachers in dialog and decision making that is directly connected to the educational and instructional matters” (Marks & Printy, 2003, p. 370) and this connection has the potential to influence student achievement. Spillane (2005) wrote that

“a distributed perspective frames leadership practice in a particular way; leadership practice is viewed as a product of the interactions of school leaders, followers, and their situation” (p. 144).

Smylie et al. (2007) viewed “distributed leadership as the sharing, the spreading, and distributing of leadership work across individuals and roles throughout the school organization” (p. 470). At times, distributed leadership is defined as a “perspective on leadership [that] acknowledges the work of all individuals who contribute to leadership practice, whether or not they are formally designated or defined leaders” (Harris & Spillane, 2008, p. 31). Other times distributed leadership is “leadership that is stretched over the practice of two or more leaders” (Spillane, Diamond, & Jita, 2003, p. 538). The work done in schools where this leadership strategy is used “happens in ways that may be separate from the influence of formal leaders (Rayner & Gunter, 2005, p. 153.) There is no top-down approach to leadership; tasks, initiatives, and decisions occur in a dispersed and democratic way. Distributed leadership requires the principal and teachers to move beyond the hierarchal constructs present in shared leadership. Distributed leadership is more abstract in nature, requiring those who practice it to see “leadership practice differently and illuminating the possibilities for organizational transformation” (Harris & Spillane, 2008, p. 33).

It should be added that by using distributed leadership and training teachers to become leaders, schools create a greater potential to create excitement in the work of leading school reform, and teachers are provided with an avenue for long-term professional development and career satisfaction. Practicing distributed leadership implies that there is a “blur” between the roles of those defined as followers and those as leaders. This does not mean that everyone is the “leader.” Goldman and Acker-Hocevar (2012) remind us that in using this strategy, “the term represents a consensus that leading schools involve multiple individuals, both those who hold

formal leadership roles and those who do not.” (p. 1). What it does mean is that the school’s staff is open to a more democratic and collective form of school leadership. Distributed leadership forces the practitioners to develop the relationship with the multiple leaders participating in the leadership practices that they are engaged. “Distribution of leadership involves a consideration of how leadership tasks are co-enacted by two or more leaders working together or independently” (Spillane, Diamond, & Jita, 2003, p. 538). Distributed leadership does not necessarily dilute the responsibilities of the building principal. It does allow the principal to spend more time on issues that are most important to him or her and also has the potential to provide teachers with a “big picture” view of the school.

Conclusion

The research also suggests that positive school culture is associated with higher student motivation and achievement, improved teacher collaboration, and improved attitudes of teachers toward their jobs. Alma Harris (2003) argued that “teacher leadership is a form of agency that can be widely shared or distributed within and across an organization, thus directly challenging more conventional forms of leadership practice” (p. 315). By putting into practice a collaborative or democratic leadership model in an organization, teachers serving as leaders experience a sense of empowerment that leads to increased collaboration and job satisfaction. Webb et al. (2004) wrote that “we are at a time of great professional change in education that requires dynamic models of decision-making ... More importantly, any model of educational leadership must genuinely include teachers in the decision-making process” (p. 261). Roland Barth (2001) wrote that “most would agree that schools are full of an overabundance of underutilized talent. When teachers lock their cars in the parking lot each morning, too many of them also lock up astonishing skills, interests, abilities, and potential” (p. 449).

The intent of this study is to understand the extent to which different teacher leadership models are used, what they involve for teacher leaders in schools, and what issues have emerged. Despite the growing literature on teacher leadership, these topics have not been explored in depth, nor has the relationship between teacher leadership and collaborative leadership been fully examined. While this study does not address how teacher leadership affects student outcomes, as a school leader, I believe that teacher leadership has the potential to improve school performance, and this study will provide a better understanding of teacher leaders and what they do.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

Introduction

How do building principals and school districts develop leadership capacity in elementary and middle schools using teachers in formal leadership roles? What do teacher leaders believe principals and school districts expect them to do, what supports do they provide, and (possibly) what is the culture like in the schools that have/use teacher leaders in formal positions? This study addresses these issues as well as the type of school culture and professional development of schools that employ teacher leaders in formal roles.

This chapter describes the research strategy, data, and the characteristics of a population of teacher leaders. This research involves the collection and analysis of data about the behaviors and attitudes of individuals in a specific organizational role. A descriptive research method is intended to test hypothesis or propose causal relationships in order to develop a clear description of individual behavior in a social setting (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2005). Although this study makes use of this research method, a hypothesis was not tested nor was a causal relationship established. The approach however, was appropriate as there has been little research about what teacher leaders are expected to do and how they feel about it. Descriptive research can be either qualitative or quantitative, depending on the researchers cited in the study conducted. When the research is quantitative, as in this study, the data are presented in statistical terms as in this study. This method uses frequencies, averages, and statistical calculations based on surveys as a means of data collection.

Qualitative researchers who conduct descriptive research argue that descriptive research is used “to describe or somehow draw a picture of what happened, or of how things are

proceeding, or of what a situation or person or event is like” (Punch, 2009, p. 21). This statement implies equality to this primarily quantitative study. Descriptive study can be very valuable if “careful description of complex social processes can help us to understand what factors to concentrate on for later explanatory studies” (p. 22). Most descriptive research projects employ quantitative methods and the information gathered is used to determine if there is correlation among the variables.

One of the limitations of this study is that teacher leadership is a complex phenomenon and the research only examines a portion of it. Also, this study is not designed to explain causal relationships. I am not expecting to learn if the principals are using formal, collaborative leadership strategies with teachers or whether their leadership actually increases student performance. There are too many uncontrollable factors in both the independent and dependent variables.

A descriptive research approach is considered appropriate in this study given the type of information that addresses the research questions. As was stated earlier, the purpose of this study is to learn about the specific leadership roles that teachers occupy, what their colleagues and administrators expect from them in terms of performing role-specific duties, and learn more about the training and support that is offered to them by building and district-level leaders. In addition to the forced response survey questions, a set of open-ended questions asked for better understanding of the background knowledge and skills participants possessed prior to their current assignment. Also of interest was the manner in which teachers were hired into the position: each participant was asked to share any additional information that might assist in better understanding teacher leadership roles.

Instrument Development

A descriptive research approach, using an already-established survey instrument, is appropriate for this study and should provide the type of information needed to address the research questions. As stated earlier, the purpose of this study is to learn about the specific leadership roles that teachers occupy, what their colleagues and administrators expect from them in terms of performing role specific duties, and learn more about the training and support that is offered to them by building and district-level leaders. In addition to the forced-response survey questions, open-ended questions allowed participants to provide more detailed information about themselves and their jobs. I hoped also to gather information about how they were hired and how they have been trained.

Multiple surveys were reviewed and critiqued from a variety of research studies and investigations. The intent was to use survey questions that have been validated by previous research or researchers. The survey was created using questions that were first tested in the MetLife National Leadership Survey of 2003 and the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) Teacher Questionnaire of 2008.

Metlife Incorporated has created and conducted teacher surveys for the past 28 years. The participants for the 2003 survey were selected from a national representative group from across the country. This particular survey was designed to explore the important elements of leadership in schools. The perspectives of all stakeholders in schools were included in this survey. A total of 1,017 K-12 teachers and a representative sample of 800 K-12 principals were interviewed by telephone or online. A total of 1,017 parents of students in K-12 schools were interviewed online only, and students in grades 3 through 12 were interviewed face to face by a representative from Harris Interactive. The survey provided information about aspects of school leadership that all of

the respondents agreed upon as well as those aspects that they disagreed. This survey has been established, tested, and validated for approximately three decades.

The TALIS of 2008 was designed to survey teachers and principals in secondary education. Educators from 24 countries were surveyed, and the required response rate had to be above 75% in order for the results to be included in the international report. The survey was presented to the participants as a questionnaire which could be completed online, or by pencil and paper. Teachers within schools in the countries that participated were randomly chosen. The survey focused on leadership and management of schools, which was one of several aspects of school learning environments. The results provided the participating countries with information that would enable teachers to be more effective in their professional practice.

The questions selected for this survey were chosen for their specific content, aimed at learning more about what is expected of teacher leaders in formal roles, what professional preparation or on-going training they have received, and given the work that they do, what are the expected outcomes? Included in the survey are several questions based on survey questions in Linda Lambert's book, *Leadership Capacity for Lasting School Improvement*, 2003.

Small but specific changes in the wording of some of the questions reflected recent developments and were sensitive to the language that would be familiar to those in the local context. The survey questions aligned with the research questions and were grouped using the section "title" typed in all capital letters (see Appendix B). Note that when the final version of the survey was distributed to participants, questions were grouped and numbered by sentence structure and wording. Examples include such wording as "My principal ..." and "I am expected to"

Participants

Most of the teachers who were selected to participate were identified by the building-level administrator with the exception of one school district. In order to identify participants for this study, I contacted individual building principals by telephone in each of the districts with the exception of one. Following the brief telephone conversation, an email containing an “informed consent” for the study was sent to the principals, and in one case an assistant superintendent. This email included a short paragraph that explained the purpose of the study, why certain teachers in the district were selected to participate, and a link to the Zoomerang survey. It should be noted that all of the respondents who chose to participate took the online survey. In one district, the assistant superintendent was the primary contact, identifying each of the teacher leaders who would be eligible to participate in this study.

This study included 115 teacher leaders working at the elementary and middle school levels who are currently serving in formal roles as an instructional coach, learning specialist, or grade level team leader. Specific demographic information about the participants, which includes gender, ethnicity, age range, highest level of education, primary assignment, and length of time in current position, will be shared in several of the tables used for this study. Although the positions of department chair and dean of students are listed as leadership positions from which I planned to collect data, it must be noted that all of the participants fit into the other three position types.

The choice of these districts was partially a matter of convenience. At the same time they are relatively large districts, ranging from 6,500 to 21,000 and demographically diverse with respect to both socio-economic status and ethnicity. Moreover, each of the districts presently (2012) has established teacher leadership positions or has had them in previous years. In order to

maintain virtually absolute confidentiality of the data, teachers' districts were not included on the survey. It should be noted that based on the number of contacts made to teacher leaders in the buildings/districts, Bethel had the greatest number of participants, followed by Franklin Pierce, University Place, and Puyallup Schools.

Participants for this study were selected from schools in Pierce County in Washington State. Specifically, four school districts located in the southeastern suburban areas of the city of Tacoma, were identified and contacted to take part in this study. Bethel, Franklin Pierce, Puyallup, and University Place School districts provided access to teacher leaders for this study. Each of the districts is located along the Interstate 5 highway corridor, which runs from Vancouver, British Columbia, to California. The districts are all within five to 15 miles of Joint Base Lewis McChord, one of the largest Army and Air Force bases in the western United States. This military base is home to over 25,000 soldiers and 29,000 family members, many whom count themselves as neighbors in the four school districts previously mentioned. It should be mentioned that each of the school districts mentioned in this study are considered "bedrock" or "support" communities due to their close proximity to the military base and the high number of military dependents (children and their families) who are served by these districts.

Bethel School District is located in the southeast of this geographic area. This school district is the second largest in this study, serving roughly 17,500 students in the 27+ schools of the district. Sixty-three percent of the students identify themselves as Caucasian/White with 37% of the students coming from one of seven identified ethnic or racial minority backgrounds. Thirty-three percent of the students attending Bethel's schools qualify for the free or reduced breakfast and lunch program. Fourteen percent of the district's students receive special education services and 2% of their students are served as transitional bilingual students. The district has

roughly 862 classroom teachers, not including support personnel and administrators. The average years of experience for teachers in the district is 12 years and the percentage of teachers with a Master's degree is 66%.

Franklin Pierce School district is adjacent to Bethel SD on its northern border. This district is the third largest school district of the four that took part in the study, serving just over 7,200 students in their 13+ schools. This district is considered a "minority-majority" district with 46% of the students identifying themselves as Caucasian/White and 54% of the students coming from one of seven identified ethnic or racial backgrounds. Sixty-five percent of the students attending Franklin Pierce Schools qualify for the free or reduced breakfast and lunch program. Twelve percent of the students receive special education services and 8% of their students are served as transitional bilingual students. The district has roughly 448 classroom teachers, excluding support personnel and administrators. The average years of experience for teachers in the district is 10 years and the percentage of teachers with a Master's degree is 64%.

Puyallup School District is located northeast of Franklin Pierce's Schools, but situated primarily along FP's eastern border. This is the largest school district in this study serving more than 21,000 students in their 31 schools. Sixty-six percent of the students identify themselves as Caucasian/White with 34% of the students coming from one of seven identified ethnic or racial minority backgrounds. Thirty-one percent of the students qualify for the free or reduced breakfast and lunch program. Thirteen percent of the students receive special education services and 3% of the students are served as transitional bilingual students. The district has roughly 1,180 classroom teachers, not including support staff and administrators. The average years of experience for teachers in the district is 13 years and the percentage of teachers with a Master's degree is 72%.

University Place School District is located on the west side of Interstate 5 just south of the city of Tacoma. None of the district's borders make contact with the previously mentioned districts. University Place is the smallest of the four districts to participate in this study, serving 5,500 students in their eight schools. Fifty-five percent of the students identify themselves as Caucasian/White with 45% of the students coming from one of seven ethnic or racially minority backgrounds. Thirty-six percent of the students qualify for the free and reduced breakfast and lunch program. Twelve percent of the students receive special education services and 3% of the students are served as transitional bilingual students. The district has roughly 311 classroom teachers excluding support personnel and administrators. The average years of experience for teachers in the district is 14 years and 66% of the teachers have a Master's degree.

Process

As an administrator in the South Pierce County region, I wanted to make sure that districts and teachers felt free to participate or not, and that their responses to survey items would be confidential as promised. As a consequence, I decided that surveys would be anonymous and would not contain district identifiers.

The first step taken to ensure the confidence of respondents was to meet with the building administrators at whose schools where I hoped to survey staff. At these meetings, I explained my research topic and gave them an overview of the study along with a copy of the survey statements. The survey questions were reviewed with the principals and additional information was offered if the questions seemed unclear. I explained that I would be asking them to provide me with names and positions of the teacher leaders, but that there would be no way to identify who provided the data or how they responded.. The goal was to guarantee anonymity so that teachers would respond freely and administrators might be less likely to be selective when

providing names for the study. I did ask the principals to encourage the identified “leaders” to participate in the study after they were contacted by me.

The participants received an email thanking them for their willingness to receive an electronic survey in the study, which was immediately followed by an informed consent. The informed consent provided a general overview of the research topic and provided a general definition for the term “teacher leader” along with a list of the specific formal leadership positions that would be of interest in this study. All participants who were sent the survey, regardless of whether they responded, were given two Washington State lottery tickets as a token gift of appreciation. It should be noted that several administrators were opposed to the idea of participants receiving a “gift” for participation in this study. In those cases, the “informed consent” did not include a mention of this gift. Lastly, a link to a Zoomerang survey was included at the end of the informed consent that took the participants to the first question on the survey.

Respondents to the survey could decide to complete only part of the survey. But if they submitted responses, those answers were counted in the data set collected by Zoomerang, the online survey tool. Each of the districts participating in the study had used Zoomerang on previous occasions so respondents were familiar with how to use the instrument.

Aside from making certain that the survey items were field tested and used in studies larger than this, it was important to identify survey items that aligned with the research questions of this study. A descriptive analysis was conducted and the factors for analysis were identified and used as the constants on the data tables that were created.

The first set of survey items was selected to fit specifically under the broad category of “leadership tasks” and was predominately focused on listing the expectations that the principal

had of the teacher leader or the staff as a whole. The second set of items was selected to fit under the broad category of “school culture” and was focused primarily on what the building principal and teachers serving as leaders were doing to create a culture where teacher leadership could flourish. The last set of items were selected to fit the broad category of “leadership capacity” and was primarily focused on what building and district leaders were doing to encourage leadership on a larger scale throughout the school and the district as a whole.

Respondents to the survey could at any time decide to no longer participate. However, those questions to which they responded were counted in the data set collected by this online survey tool. The Zoomerang online survey tool was selected for use in this study based on the recommendations from the building principals consulted in the initial phase of this research study. Each of the districts participating in the study had on multiple occasions used this survey tool for other surveys of their staff in this year and in years previous.

Positionality

As was mentioned above, this subject is of particular interest to me. My work as an educator is based on the belief that building leadership capacity in schools and using teacher leaders to accomplish the difficult work of improving schools would make it possible to reach our collective educational goals. Every attempt will be made to limit the amount of personal bias that may become a part of the results of this study. Firm reliance on the data collected and purposeful analysis of the data will reveal the most accurate findings for this study.

My stance as a researcher of this topic has been impacted in multiple ways, given my experiences as a teacher leader serving in several formal leadership roles. Throughout my career in education, it has been my experience that students in the classrooms led by teachers as leaders appeared to achieve at higher levels than those of teachers who were not leaders. Not only did

these teachers serve as “leader” within the school community, but more times than not, they also appeared to be the teachers who were practicing the most current instructional “best practices” in their classrooms and as leaders influencing the instructional practices of others.

As the building leader and in a position to encourage and empower teachers to serve as leaders in the building, it will be extremely important to remain consistent with what current research says is “best practice” in creating an environment where democratic or collaborative leadership can exist. It will be important for these teachers to have learning opportunities with specific leadership skills (i.e. group processing, cognitive coaching, critical conversations, etc.) in order to test whether or not their practices have a positive effect on the instructional practices of their colleagues but more importantly on student achievement in their classrooms.

Limitations of the Study

Although the topic of teacher leadership has been one of study for several decades, the data gathered from this study will demonstrate that there is still more to learn. This being said, given a review of the literature available regarding teacher leadership, leadership models that incorporate the use of teacher leaders, and what has been learned about teachers serving in formal roles, several limitations have emerged as a result of this study.

The findings gathered during this study cannot be used to make broad assumptions or serve as a basis of fact regarding teacher leaders. Conclusions that will be drawn regarding teacher leaders in formal roles will be based on a single study of this kind. Although many of the survey questions were used on a number of larger scale studies, this study does not directly mirror any of those studies. The results and/or findings in this study would be more valid if the research questions had been tested in a greater number of schools and districts.

This study included respondents from four school districts. Although efforts were made to include additional districts and their teacher leaders, this did not occur in this study. There were 115 participants in this study. As was stated above, there would be greater confidence and the findings would be more valid if there were larger numbers of participants.

As results will demonstrate, there was a certain amount of variation in the specific roles and responsibilities of the teachers leading in formal leadership roles. As an example, Bethel and Franklin Pierce Schools both employ instructional coaches to work as formal teacher leaders in the districts. Bethel schools primarily use their instructional coaches to work as math specialists or support personnel for classroom teachers. Franklin Pierce schools use their instructional coaches to provide support to new teachers, lead grade level professional learning communities, and to serve as staff developers for all curricular areas. As the respondents described the work that they were expected to do, there were differences in positions from one building and/or district to the next. Because of this variation, the responses that are provided on the survey allowed room for inconsistencies in the way that the data were interpreted.

Finally, there were variations in terms of how the building principals are using formal leaders in their buildings. Given the needs of buildings and the vision and goals set by the building principal, the formal leadership roles differed from building to building. Also, the principals' understanding of teacher leadership and leadership models had an effect on the ability of teachers to assist in leading the building.

In contrast, the strengths of this study are related to the knowledge that will be gained as a result of the data collected. These data may serve as a foundation for similar studies of teachers leading in formal positions to be conducted. The result may also encourage principals to

investigate and use particular leadership strategies to assist them in meeting their identified goals.

In addition, districts may choose to create strategic plans for developing leadership capacity in school buildings across the district. This may have an impact in the ways in which applicants are selected for interview and hired in the district. It may also have an effect on the type of training that potential leaders receive in an effort to build leadership capacity.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

The presentation of findings for this study of teacher leaders serving in formal roles will begin with a brief examination of the broad leadership concepts that the survey items were grouped by. The concepts will be defined and then will serve as leadership “factors” for comparing the data which were generated by the responses of the participants. These data will be presented using two “means” tables, first by the survey items grouped by leadership factors followed by factor statistics. This section will also provide an analysis of some of the demographic information connected to the responses provided. An examination of the four open-ended questions will also be included in this chapter, and it will be compared with the survey items to determine if common themes emerged across the broad leadership concepts.

Leadership Concepts

In order to better understand and interpret the data collected with the survey, the survey items were grouped by broad leadership concepts. These “concepts” or “factors” were drawn from the literature reviewed, but more specifically, from what Danielson referred to as the supporting conditions that must be in place in order for teacher leaders to grow and flourish as professionals (2006). The three research questions served as the basis for the leadership concepts identified. These conceptual lenses or factors were: leadership tasks, or what is expected from teachers serving as leaders, school culture, or what structures are in place that encourages teacher leadership, and leadership capacity, or what are building/district leaders doing to encourage teacher leadership.

According to Danielson (2006), the cultural and structural factors that promote teacher leadership substantially impact work toward the school’s mission of meeting the educational

needs of all students. Cultural leadership factors, in effect, set the tone for the building; they create the expectations for teachers and assist in developing the expectations that they have for one another. Cultural factors include; ways of promoting risk taking, establishing democratic norms, and the creation of a “professional” environment. Structural factors provide the mechanisms for how the school is organized and how teachers will engage in the work of the school. Structural factors include; involvement in school governance, ways for promoting new ideas, time for collaboration, and skills acquisition. These factors were used to determine how to assemble and interpret the survey items.

The analyses in this study include the presentation and comparison of means and standards deviations for the five scales discussed above. This format is consistent with what Creswell (2009) and Gall, et al. (2005) characterize as appropriate for descriptive research. At points, individual items, those displayed in Table 1 will also be discussed. The scales consist of statistical means and standard deviations of scales based on a 5-point range with 1 being low and 5 being high. There are a few missing values, but where these exist, the scale scores represents the mean of those questions for which there were responses.

Once the survey data were collected, it became apparent that the three conceptual leadership lenses or factors would not adequately provide the level of differentiation needed to group the survey items. After close examination of the survey items, it seemed more reasonable to analyze the items using five rather than three scales. Given this, the conceptual factor of “leadership tasks” was separated to create the additional factor of “monitoring teacher progress.” The conceptual lens of “leadership capacity” was divided into the two separate lenses of “school capacity building” and “district capacity building.” It was believed that the data would be easier

to understand, analyze, and draw conclusions if the survey items were grouped according to common language, shared themes, and/or instructional ideas or concepts.

Results

Table 1 displays the survey items grouped by the five leadership factors (table follows on the next page). This table shows the number of respondents, the mean of their responses, and the standard deviation. In addition to providing an overview of the general responses to the survey, several interesting inferences were drawn based on the “mean” responses or the standard deviation regarding several survey items.

There were several “outliers” that surfaced as the survey items were viewed through the leadership factors. In looking at the survey items associated with Monitoring Teacher Progress, questions 18 and 19 were particularly interesting from the standpoint that the two questions had a standard deviation of 1.19 and a mean of 2.87 and 2.95 respectively, suggesting that there was a significant variation in the way that the participants responded to these questions. Both survey items focused on the extent teacher leaders surveyed were expected to monitor schoolwide instructional practice or whether they were expected to provide non-evaluative feedback to classroom teachers. These particular survey items when viewed through the eyes of members of a collective bargaining unit or teachers union cross the line of a colleague supporting professional practice to a colleague evaluating professional practice. The teachers in formal leadership positions surveyed for this study do not have the authority to evaluate professional practice, only to observe, support, and/or correct it. Any other actions beyond this would violate the formal and informal understanding of the teacher leader/colleague relationship that is necessary for teacher leaders to be effective in their roles.

Table 1: Survey Item Statistics

	<u>N</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>
<u>School Capacity Building Items</u>			
4. My principal expects all teachers to serve as "leaders."	115	3.70	0.91
5. My principal encourages all staff members to take on at least one leadership activity each year.	115	3.57	1.01
8. My principal encourages teachers using "best practices" to share their knowledge and skills with others.	115	4.38	0.71
9. My principal provides follow-up planning and coaching support when new instructional strategies are implemented.	115	3.84	0.87
15. My principal provides time for me to meet with individual teachers and teacher teams.	113	4.23	0.79
<u>District Capacity Building Items</u>			
21. I have been provided with leadership training as it relates to my current position.	113	3.84	1.01
22. The District provides encouragement and opportunities for teachers interested in school leadership positions.	113	3.60	0.90
23. The district provides resources (time, training, etc.) to support teacher leadership development.	113	3.57	1.07
24. District and building "leadership" professional development activities complement one another.	113	3.58	0.99
<u>Leadership Tasks Items</u>			
1. Teachers in my building are encouraged to lead building instructional initiatives.	115	4.17	0.73
2. Teachers in my building are involved in designing staff development opportunities.	115	3.83	0.95
10. My principal trusts teacher leaders to carry out significant leadership responsibilities.	114	4.24	0.78
12. My principal expects me to give priority to examining and discussing students' academic work with teachers.	113	4.28	0.70
13. My principal involves me in developing and communicating a shared vision for the school.	113	4.10	0.79
14. My principal expects me to help sustain a collaborative work environment in our school.	113	4.50	0.55
16. I am expected to model "best" instructional practices and use school-adopted curriculum materials in classrooms.	113	4.54	0.58
17. I have shared in the responsibility of presenting new ideas to the school staff.	113	4.02	0.95
20. I am expected to examine and discuss the results of student assessments with teachers.	113	4.19	0.85
<u>Monitoring Teacher Progress Items</u>			
11. My principal expects me to give priority to providing personalized (one-on-one) staff development.	114	3.28	0.87
18. I am expected to be in classrooms frequently enough to monitor instruction and to get a "big picture" view of how the school as a whole is doing.	113	2.87	1.19
19. I am expected to provide non-evaluative feedback to classroom teachers.	113	2.95	1.19
<u>School Culture Items</u>			
3. My principal's leadership style helps to create a "democratic" culture in my building.	115	3.90	0.91
6. My principal expects all staff to participate in the school decision-making process.	115	3.85	0.87
7. My principal uses a "shared" leadership model in my school.	115	3.82	0.84

The responses given to the extended response number 26, “How much release time is allocated to your position for continued professional development or to mentor or provide professional development for others?” provided clarity in understanding how the job titles differed. Instructional coaches responded that their primary assignment was to monitor instructional practice in every classroom and provide non-evaluative feedback to teachers, and in many cases, acting as a liaison for the building principal. The opposite was true for those serving as learning specialists and even more so for those serving in grade-level teacher leader positions. This difference may be attributed to lack of specific leadership/instructional coaching training or it may be due to the lack of perceived or real authority that learning specialist and grade-level teacher leaders may have when compared to instructional coaches.

In looking at the survey items connected with the leadership factor of “Leadership Tasks,” two questions, numbers 14 and 16, were interesting from the standpoint that nearly 100% of the participants gave a response of “agree” or “strongly agree” to survey items that were focused on their principal’s expectations for working as a member of a collaborative team and their use of “best” instructional practices and adopted curriculum in the classroom. The same was true for survey item number 8 which was specifically focused on the statement, “My principal encourages teachers using best practices to share their knowledge and skill with others.”

These responses were consistent with what teacher leadership research done by Danielson (2006) says are what is expected by building leaders interested in building strong democratic or collaborative school environments where the collective efforts are focused on managing the process of change. Danielson goes on to say that when this is the focus for a school looking to improve, “teacher leaders motivate colleagues to become more skilled and thoughtful

regarding their work, encouraging them not to do their work differently but to do it better” (p.12).

Survey items 5, 21, and 23 in the leadership factor categories of “School Capacity Building” and “District Capacity Building” and had standard deviations that were above 1. These data suggest that the participants provided responses that that were on relative opposite ends of the response continuum, either “agreeing” or “disagreeing” with the survey items related to all staff receiving encouragement to exercise leadership in the school or receiving district support in developing their leadership capacity. As was previously mentioned, Table 1 provided an overall review of the data collected. The next series of tables will focus on specific aspects of the information collected.

Table 2. Scale statistics

<u>Scale Name</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Min</u>	<u>Max</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>
School Capacity Building	115	1.00	3.20	3.94	0.54
District Capacity Building	115	1.00	4.50	3.65	0.84
Teacher Leadership Tasks	115	1.00	3.00	4.22	0.51
Monitoring Teacher Progress	113	1.00	4.67	3.03	0.92
School Culture	115	1.00	4.67	3.86	0.72

Descriptive analyses of the responses provided for the survey items used in this study were described using a range of scores and explained using several means tables (Creswell, 2009). Specifically, means tables were created to correlate with the demographic information collected using concept lenses or factors as the constant. The next several tables, beginning with an examination of the scale statistics table, will be followed by means tables for several of the independent demographic variables.

The scales statistics in Table 2 displays the minimum, maximum, mean, and standard deviation for each of the leadership factors which included the specifically grouped survey items.

The mean for District Capacity Building was interesting given that the standard deviation of .84 is relatively high when compared to the other leadership factors. A mean of 3.65 suggests that a significant number of the participants gave a response that was more “positive” than “neutral” but indicating that while there may have been a few strong negatives, there were also many positives. An example of a survey item in this leadership factor group includes a statement like “I have been provided with leadership training as it relates to my current position” and survey items similar to this one.

The mean of 3.03 for Monitoring Teacher Progress with the standard deviation of .92 was significantly high when compared to the other leadership factors. These data suggest that the participants gave a response that “disagreed” or “strongly disagreed” with the survey items in this leadership factor. An example of a survey item in this factor group includes a statement like “I am expected to be in classrooms frequently enough to monitor instruction and to get a ‘big picture’ view of how the school as a whole is doing.” On this particular survey item, 48% of the participants gave a response that either “disagreed” or “strongly disagreed” with this survey item.

The mean for School Culture is interesting from the standpoint that the standard deviation of .72 is in the middle when compared to the other leadership factors. The mean of 3.86 suggests that on average the participants gave a response that “agreed” with the survey items in this leadership factor. An example of a survey item in this leadership factor group includes a statement like “My principal’s leadership style helps to create a ‘democratic’ culture in my building” and survey items similar to this one. For this particular survey item, 71% of the participants indicated that they “agree” or “strongly agree” with this statement.

Within the context of developing teacher leaders, these data suggest that district level administrators might focus their efforts on designing specific leadership training for the formal

leadership positions that teachers have been hired to and provide additional time for teachers to learn and practice the leadership skills presented. Building level administrators should be explicit in setting their expectations for teachers serving in formal leadership roles with the entire school staff. Teachers should clearly understand to what extent they will be expected to participate in the schools’ democratic community and what they should expect from teachers serving in formal leadership roles with regard to monitoring teacher progress throughout the school. An emphasis placed on leadership training, creating a collaborative school community, and establishing a system for providing instructional feedback are all aspects of developing leadership capacity that are consistent with current research.

Table 3: Teacher Leader Subscales by Ethnicity

	Black		Caucasian/White		Hispanic		Other	
	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N
School Capacity Building	3.70	2	3.96	102	4.00	1	3.60	6
District Capacity Building	3.75	2	3.67	102	2.75	1	3.13	6
Teacher Leadership Tasks	4.11	2	4.22	102	3.89	1	3.91	6
Monitor Teacher Progress	3.67	2	3.01	102	2.00	1	3.33	6
School Culture	4.11	2	4.22	102	3.89	1	3.91	6

Table 3 examines the connection between teacher leader ethnicity and the five leadership factors. This particular table shows that 92% of the participants identify themselves as Caucasian/White, which is consistent with national norms. Given the socio-economic status and the ethnic/racial backgrounds of the students served in the four school districts involved in this study, these teachers do not represent the populations that they serve ethnically or racially. This statement is consistent with state and national norms.

Given what the literature says about teachers serving in leadership positions, building and district leaders may need to focus efforts on developing a strategic plan aimed at attracting, hiring, and training minority teachers for leadership positions. Actively focusing on recruitment

and the hiring of teachers of color may have a positive effect as schools and districts work toward improvement goals with historically under represented ethnic and racial student groups.

It should be noted that some have asked whether or not this particular question is relevant on surveys of this type and that attitude and commitment to the work cuts across racial/ethnic categories. The lack of minority teacher leaders represented in this study is more than likely not an issue of ethnic inequality but more of an indication of the available teaching force in this part of the state and county.

If becoming a teacher leader is perceived as a promotion step or an indication of success within the context of the formal school structure, then women and men of color may have legitimate concerns regarding knowledge of the unwritten rules that might assist them in securing one of these positions (Marcus, 2000). Given that most of the participants in this study identified themselves as White women and that they represent 92% of the population, one could conclude that there do not appear to be limitations placed on women and men of color selected to formal teacher leadership positions.

Table 4: Teacher Leader Subscales by Position

	Instructional Coach		Learning Specialist		Team Leader		Total	
	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N
School Capacity Building	3.99	16	3.96	14	3.93	71	3.94	115
District Capacity Building	4.00	16	3.29	14	3.56	71	3.65	113
Teacher Leadership Tasks	4.19	16	3.88	14	3.79	71	3.86	115
Monitor Teacher Progress	4.42	16	2.83	14	2.76	71	3.03	113
School Culture	4.19	16	3.88	14	3.79	71	3.86	115

Table 4 compares teacher leader positions to the five leadership factors. For instructional coaches the mean was significantly greater in School Culture and Teacher Leadership Tasks (4.19) and Monitoring Teacher Progress (4.42). In comparison with learning specialist and team

leaders, the data suggests that instructional coaches are expected to spend a significant portion of their workday engaged in leadership tasks or in establishing and/or developing the schools' culture. In looking at a specific item from the survey "My principal expects me to help sustain a collaborative work environment in our school," 98% of the participants responded that they "agreed" or "strongly agreed" with this statement.

Instructional coaches also appear to be required to spend a significant amount of their working hours monitoring teacher progress. This statement was consistent with how instructional coaches responded to extended response question number 26, "How much release time is allocated to your position for continued professional development or to mentor or provide professional development for others?" A typical response to this question was "It is my fulltime job to mentor and provide professional development for others."

These data are consistent with what researchers in the field of educational leadership (Danielson, 2006) consider "best practice" for teachers working in formal leadership roles. Of the three teacher leadership positions, instructional coaches appear to be benefitting from the "supporting conditions and must be in place if teacher leaders are to flourish" (Danielson, 2006, p. 125). Based on their affirmative responses to survey items related to developing a culture and a systems approach to making their leadership possible, in most cases instructional coaches have been given more "opportunities to learn the skills needed for exercising leadership" (p. 129) more so than learning specialist and team leaders.

There is little doubt that in order for learning specialist and team leaders to have a similar effect on their colleagues, building and district leaders will need to find a way to make time, training, and opportunities for leadership skills practice equally available for teachers in these roles.

Table 5 examines the subcategory of “length of time in the position” in relationship to the leadership factors identified for this study. It must first be mentioned that several participants chose not to include their years of experience as a part of their response set. It should also be noted that many of the participants may have misunderstood this question, falsely understanding that they were being asked to respond to the question of “how long have you been teaching?” It is possible, but highly unlikely that approximately 25 teacher leaders have been in their current leadership roles 11 to 21 years or greater.

Table 5: Teacher Leader Subscales by Years in Current Position

	0-5 years		6-10 years		11-15 years		16-20 years		21+ years		Total	
	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N
School Capacity Building	2.12	57	2.07	19	1.94	14	1.67	3	1.98	8	2.06	115
District Capacity Building	2.44	57	2.37	19	2.66	14	1.92	3	1.97	8	2.35	113
Teacher Leadership Tasks	1.84	57	1.80	19	1.63	14	1.44	3	1.90	8	1.78	115
Monitor Teacher Progress	2.99	57	2.84	19	2.67	14	3.44	3	3.42	8	2.97	113
School Culture	2.20	57	2.12	19	2.00	14	1.78	3	2.08	8	2.14	115

This table was intriguing in that teacher leaders who have been in their positions for 16-20 years appear to have less influence in school and district leadership capacity building, developing school culture, and performing teacher leadership tasks. There are several possible reasons “why” this might be the case. Teacher leaders fitting into this category represent the smallest number of respondents to this set of survey items with an N = 3. To do the work required of teacher leaders in professional learning communities requires perseverance, energy, and the ability to establish relationships quickly.

The literature on school leadership consistently argues that relationship building takes time and it may be unrealistic to expect that this would happen with those who may have become “locked” into comfortable patterns and routines. Leadership in these areas also requires

professional development, training, and opportunities to use newly acquired skill sets. This too would take time that veteran teachers in leadership positions may not be willing to commit to.

In Table 6, first it must be noted that there was a design flaw in the survey, which was pointed out by one of the respondents in the open-ended response section and by several teacher leaders in follow-up emails sent by the researcher. Due to the design of the online survey tool, the participants were only allowed to select one of the response choices for the question, “What is the highest level of education that you have completed?” The participants could choose “Bachelor’s, Master’s, Doctoral Degree or additional certification,” however, they could not indicate that they had also earned in some cases, National Board Teaching Certification or an advanced degree in another field of study. Coincidentally, of the fifteen instructional coaches who responded, eight of them or 53% indicated that they had earned a certification other than a Master’s degree. In most cases, these respondents had earned either National Board Teaching Certification or Administrator Credentials.

Table 6: Teacher Leader Subscales by Highest Level of Education

	Add. Prof. Cert.		Bachelor's Degree		Master's Degree		Doctoral Degree		Total	
	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N
School Capacity Building	4.10	22	3.98	25	3.85	53	4.00	1	3.94	115
District Capacity Building	3.80	22	3.57	25	3.51	53	4.00	1	3.65	113
Teacher Leadership Tasks	4.06	22	3.91	25	3.77	53	3.67	1	3.86	115
Monitor Teacher Progress	3.52	22	2.75	25	2.96	53	3.33	1	3.03	113
School Culture	3.80	22	3.57	25	3.51	53	4.00	1	3.65	115

As was mentioned, the independent variable used in Table 6 was highest level of education earned by the respondents. Of particular interest was the greatest mean of 3.52 from the total mean 3.03 in “Monitoring Teacher Progress” as it connects to “Additional Professional Certification.” As was previously mentioned, over 50% of the instructional coaches indicated

that they possessed professional certification in addition to their Master’s degree. A number of these certifications earned have provided these teacher leaders with skill sets that would enable them to monitor teacher progress in meaningful ways. Job responsibilities and “time” would also need to be factored in to describing the work of instructional coaches.

Table 7: Teacher Leader Subscales by Age Range

	25 or under		26-35		36-45		46-55		56 or older	
	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N
School Capacity Building	4.00	1	3.75	29	3.95	35	4.02	26	4.22	10
District Capacity Building	2.50	1	3.34	29	3.55	35	3.85	26	3.93	10
Teacher Leadership Tasks	4.22	1	4.07	29	4.24	35	4.28	26	4.22	10
Monitoring Teacher Progress	2.33	1	2.75	29	3.18	35	3.12	26	3.20	10
School Culture	4.00	1	3.75	29	3.84	35	3.91	26	4.17	10

Table 2 examines the subcategory of “age range” in relationship to the leadership factors identified. This table was interesting in that participants fitting into the 26-35 age range somewhat struggle with District Capacity Building with a mean of 3.34 when compared with the other age ranges. What was also of interest was that in the category of Monitoring Teacher Progress,” for the 29 respondents in the age range of 26-35 the mean was 2.75. This was significant in that in the other age ranges with an N>1, the mean was >3. Upon further investigation it was found that a smaller number of teacher leaders, specifically instructional coaches were represented in this age range. Based on the raw response data and additional information gathered through the extended responses, instructional coaches were more likely to engage in behaviors that monitored teacher progress. There were fewer instructional coaches representing this age range therefore the mean was somewhat lower.

While it would be unwise to suggest that “age” plays an insufficient role in whether or not a teacher serving in a formal leadership position is successful or not, it is believed that the “experiences” of the teacher leader are significant to her or his colleagues. Although the research

in this study does not address this issue specifically, teachers who are selected to lead are usually selected because they possess collaboration, facilitation, and planning skills that have been learned and practiced over time. They also possess action and evaluation skills which makes their perspective and insights in the challenges that are faced in schools invaluable to members of the staff. It may be appropriate to conclude that it would be difficult to acquire and practice these skills with a high degree of success if the teacher leading were in her or his first few years in the profession.

Table 8 shows the mean responses to the survey items that fit into the leadership factor subcategories for the female and male respondents. These data confirm that in relationship to the survey items, there was little or no difference in the way that the women and men responded. The second point to note is that the female respondents outnumber the male respondents at a ratio of 12:1. This phenomenon is not unique, given that the majority of the data were collected from elementary school teachers and elementary schools are generally staffed primarily by female educators.

Table 8: Teacher Leader Subscale by Gender

	Female		Male		Total	
	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N
School Capacity Building	3.94	100	3.95	11	3.94	115
District Capacity Building	3.66	100	3.36	11	3.65	113
School Culture	3.86	100	3.73	11	3.86	115
Monitoring Teacher Progress	3.00	100	3.33	11	3.03	113
Teacher Leadership Tasks	4.18	100	4.32	11	4.22	115

These data collected from the survey items provided some useful information in terms of understanding the impact that teacher leaders can have on a building and/or district. Equally important information was provided in the extended responses questions, of which there were four. The next section will examine the detailed responses of three of the four questions.

How Teacher Leaders Describe Their Work

Four open-ended questions were included in this survey for the purpose of extending and clarifying responses given to the forced-choice statements. These comments or statements allowed the respondents to use their knowledge and understanding of the topic in their responses. And in some cases, their answer provided insights or additional avenues for exploring the topic (Bryman, 2004).

Open-ended Questions

The questions in this part of the survey were used to provide insight about how the respondents were selected into their positions, and determine whether the positions allowed for some “flexibility” in terms of supporting their colleagues. The questions were also intended to provide information about the professional development and/or training that the participants received which enabled them to do their work. The final question was asked to determine if the survey questions failed to collect data on any aspect of teacher leadership that the respondents believed needed to be understood or addressed.

“Position Selection” (Question 24) was concerned with how the teacher was selected for their position. For those responding as an instructional coach, many stated that they were approached by their principals, encouraged to apply for the position, and then hired. These same respondents said that they displayed leadership qualities, had a background that included specific leadership training, and in some cases had previous experience as a teacher leader. Typical responses to this question included statements like “My principal asked me to apply; my past experience and training helped; I applied and interviewed.” Unique to this position was that each person hired into the position had to go through a screening and interview process. For those answering as a learning specialist, most responded that they are asked by their principal to take

the position. In many cases, the teacher was appointed to the position, however, there were exceptions to this where the teacher was interviewed first but this was rare. These respondents said that their principal saw in them leadership qualities or these teachers working well with others. A typical response included statements like “The principal sought me out and encouraged me. He wanted all sides represented in decision making.” For those answering as a team leader, the respondents said that they “volunteered” for the position. In some cases, the team leader was volunteered by process of elimination. Several respondents had served as leaders before, however, there was no interview process and to a certain extent, no input from the principal. A quote from a teacher in this position read “It was my turn to lead.”

“Release Time to Assist Colleagues” (Question 25) was focused on how much release time was allocated to the TL position to assist their colleagues and provide professional development. For instructional coaches, most of their work day was devoted to coaching and mentoring. Some respondents commented that time was allocated whenever it was asked for from the principal. Time was made available as the situations demanded. A typical response included a statement like, “I don’t have a set amount of time that is designated, when I need to have time I put [it] onto my schedule and ask for permission from my principal.” For learning specialists, several respondents commented that professional development was not specifically built into their position or that PD occurs mostly on early release days. A typical response from teachers in this group included a statement like, “Providing professional development to teachers is not part of my position. I have time to look at assessment data with teachers, but release time is not given on a consistent basis ...” For those serving as team leaders, no release time is built into their position. Several teachers mentioned that there was time afterschool, on their own. Some mentioned that there was a stipend provided that allowed some time after school hours.

“Professional Development and Training” (Question 26) was concerned with whether or not the respondents received professional development or training in order to perform their duties of their current position. Many of the instructional coaches responded that they received Teacher Mentor Training at the Santa Cruz Leadership Academy, they were trained in cognitive coaching, received National Boards Facilitator training, attended professional conferences (i.e. WERA – Washington Education Research Association) and attended on-going professional development on a bi-monthly basis. The learning specialists responded that they received some training by the local ESD (Educational Service District), they participated in regular book and articles studies, and several had district sponsored summer institute training where leadership skills were taught. For team leaders most commented that they received no additional training or professional development.

The responses to these questions by those in the three leadership positions demonstrated a clear division between those who were “purposefully” prepared to lead and those who were expected to lead in superficial ways (i.e. relay messages, serve as the grade level contact). The responses to the last open-ended question will be explored and discussed in the “Implications and Recommendations” section of this study, which follows.

CHAPTER 5

IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this research study was to examine how district and building school leaders had operationalized teacher leadership, what teachers in leadership positions actually did, and how teacher leaders perceived their roles given the specific responsibilities that they held or performed in their positions. These school leaders had a firm understanding that the enormous task of reforming schools would require a number of skilled “leaders” working in concert with one another to meet the achievement expectations of their community, state, and federal stakeholders. A growing body of research suggested that by using one of a number of collaborative or democratic leadership strategies, the task of improving schools may be more possible than ever before.

The aim of this study was to find answers to the research questions of: What do school administrators do to prepare teachers for formal teacher leadership roles? What types of work are teachers in formal leadership roles expected to do? What do school administrators do to increase organizational leadership capacity that results in greater numbers of teachers being able to serve as leaders? And to a certain extent, was there a specific leadership strategy that should be used by building and district leaders to ensure that leadership capacity is increased? Although there are far too many variables to offer a plausible answer to the latter question, the literature regarding teacher leadership models, along with the survey data provided by teachers with “formal” leadership roles, and the additional information provided by answers to open-ended questions, have provided a place from which to understand the task and begin the work of leading in schools.

This chapter focuses on what was learned about teachers working in formal leadership roles, and the conditions that were or weren't present that enabled teacher leader success or lack thereof. Also, developing leadership capacity based on recommendations from teacher leaders will be discussed, framed by one or more of the leadership concepts or factors used to analyze the survey data collected. The chapter would conclude with recommendations for a district wide "systems" approach to the development of teacher leaders.

Conditions Needed for Successful Teacher Leaders

The information shared in Chapter 4 of this study, both from the survey and the forced-choice statements, provided insights into the significant differences that exist in the formal leadership roles present in these schools. Although the descriptive data provided a portrait of the different roles and responsibilities that instruction coaches, learning specialists, and team leaders have, the comments given in response to the open-ended questions were eye-opening.

To begin with, if we are expecting teachers to share in the responsibilities of leading schools, purposeful, regular, and appropriate training and staff development for all leaders must be provided. This professional preparation of teacher leaders is consistent with the leadership concepts or factors of school and district capacity building, which grouped the survey items that were related to expectations or activities that building and district leaders had of teacher serving in leadership positions. Simply comparing the quality and amount of training offered to instructional coaches and contrasting this with little or no training provided to team leaders reveals a leadership chasm that can't easily be filled. What the literature has made clear about developing teacher leaders is that teachers will need to learn and practice many of the leadership skills that administrators learn in their professional preparation. Taught by principals themselves or qualified professional developers, teachers who would serve as leaders will need to learn how

to frame problems, collaboratively seek solutions, participate in shared decision-making, and learn how to take part in the creation and transfer of knowledge focused on a shared vision. This must be done for all formal leaders, regardless of their job title and/or responsibilities.

Next, “time” to do the important work of leading must occur in regular and predictable ways in schools. This element of teacher leadership is consistent with the leadership factors of monitoring teacher progress and to a certain extent, school culture. The survey items in these two categories focused the level of instructional support and monitoring teacher leaders were expected to provide classroom teachers, and the expectation that teacher leaders assist administrators in developing a “democratic” culture throughout the school. It cannot be denied that working in the classrooms with the students is where the vision for school reform is actualized. Providing teachers who would serve in formal leadership roles with time to become effective leaders cannot take them away from the daily work that needs to happen in the classroom. Building and district administrators will need to seek out creative solutions that provides time within the school day for teacher leaders to practice the skills learned with their colleagues without sacrificing the time needed to teach students. This could look like leaders “teaming” with teachers, allowing leaders to coach colleagues while working with students. Additional time could be created by adding days to the length of the leaders contracted school year, providing high quality training by leaders in the field. The caveat would be that formal teacher leaders would commit to the building and/or the district to serve as a member of the leadership team.

There must be tangible incentives for teachers to seek out and want to remain a teacher leader. Framed by the leadership factor of leadership tasks, which are consistent with the survey items related to the leadership activities that teacher leaders were expected to perform in their

formal leadership roles. The research confirms that choosing the “select few” to lead our schools is ineffective and does not tap into the collective talents of the staff as a whole. Principals and district leaders should exercise caution in always selecting the predictable few who are the visible and vocal to be formal leaders. The literature suggests that invitation to lead should be offered to all and that in some cases, those who tend to shy away from leading should be groomed for formal leadership positions.

Finally, in response to the open-ended question of “what I should know about teacher leadership” from the perspective of the respondents, I found several suggestions and/or questions intriguing and deserving of further consideration or exploration. One respondent wrote: “Teacher contracts can make teacher training very difficult to provide on a large scale.” I wondered whether this comment was directed at building principals seeking to develop leadership capacity or teacher leaders, attempting to improve professional practice with their colleagues. Another respondent wrote, “I would like to see more (information) about how to bring others into leadership roles so it’s not always the same people.” This statement speaks to the need to make leadership an option for all, not just the chosen few. Another wrote: “In my opinion, a principal needs to be a strong leader with a clear vision and mission for the school so the teachers can have the opportunity to step up as leaders to support the principal’s vision,” This comment spoke to the need for principals to clearly communicate their school’s collaborative leadership plan or how they would use a collaborative leadership model to build leadership capacity. Last, another respondent wrote: “Teacher leadership needs to be intentional with a clear vision coupled with a release of responsibility to the teacher leader (expectations known).” This comment speaks to the need for principals to have a transparent leadership plan. A plan that makes the expectations for

teacher leadership known to all who would be willing to take on the responsibility of leading a school.

Recommendations

One of the respondents wrote:

The educational community as a whole lacks opportunities for teachers to remain in the classroom and assume teacher leadership roles simultaneously. It is often noted that in order to 'move up' you must 'move out,' "meaning" that to take on greater leadership [roles] you must leave the classroom. Developing a model for teacher to continue teaching and have opportunities to mentor others would [create] more leadership positions for individuals who would like to remain a classroom teacher.

The above statement speaks to the need to establish a strategic plan for developing teacher leaders, which in broad terms aligns with each of the leadership factors, but most specifically with the district capacity building factor. The survey items in this category were related to leadership training and professional development that district leaders offered, and the opportunities that were created for individuals to assume formal leadership roles. Shumate, Munoz, and Winter (2006) wrote that to ensure that capable and qualified candidates are available when formal leadership roles need to be filled, requires "Human resource administrators to play a significant role in "designing and implementing staffing and recruitment efforts" (p, 22). Human resource administrators working collaboratively with building principals could then reap the benefits of establishing a strategic plan for recruiting and developing teacher leaders. Although this may sound easy to accomplish, "the challenge is due, in part, to the inexact 'science' of attracting, screening, and identifying quality candidates to fit the complex leadership needs of schools" (Shumate et al., 2006). Having said this, there is evidence that suggests that when districts formulate objectives of recruiting teachers who may serve as leaders, district leaders often have a "plan" for mentoring and training those new to their district, thus

lessening the chance of hiring someone uninterested in leading. “There is growing evidence that these approaches can contribute substantially to organizational performance and effectiveness and can play a crucial role in organizational improvement” (Smylie & Wenzel, 2006, p. 16).

Many principals use or have begun to use a democratic/collaborative leadership as a means for creating schools that include all staff in the act of improving their school. Some principals have been successful in developing leadership capacity, but many have done so intuitively, with little or no direct knowledge of the leadership models that were discussed in this study. These school leaders would benefit from learning how to use these leadership strategies and learning what types of support teacher leaders need in order to be successful in the position they occupy.

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APPENDIX A

Teacher Leadership Survey

Format for Zoomerang

(Using Likert Scale)

1. Teachers in my building are encouraged to lead building instructional initiatives.
2. Teachers in my building are involved in designing staff development opportunities.
3. My principal's leadership style helps to create a "democratic" culture in my building.
4. My principal expects all teachers to serve as "leaders."
5. My principal encourages all staff members to take on at least one leadership activity each year.
6. My principal expects all staff to participate in the school decision-making process.
7. My principal uses a "shared" leadership model in my school.
8. My principal encourages teachers using "best practices" to share their knowledge and skills with others.
9. My principal provides follow-up planning and coaching support when new instructional strategies are implemented.
10. My principal trusts teacher leaders to carry out significant leadership responsibilities.
11. My principal expects me to give priority to providing personalized (one-on-one) staff development.
12. My principal expects me to give priority to examining and discussing students' academic work with teachers.
13. My principal involves me in developing and communicating a shared vision for the school.
14. My principal expects me to help sustain a collaborative work environment in our school.
15. My principal provides time for me to meet with individual teachers and teacher teams.
16. I am expected to model "best" instructional practices and use school-adopted curriculum materials in classrooms.
17. I have shared in the responsibility of presenting new ideas to the school staff.
18. I am expected to be in classrooms frequently enough to monitor instruction and to get a "big picture" view of how the school as a whole is doing.
19. I am expected to provide non-evaluative feedback to classroom teachers.
20. I am expected to examine and discuss the results of student assessments with teachers.
21. I have been provided with leadership training as it relates to my current position.
22. The District provides encouragement and opportunities for teachers interested in school leadership positions.
23. The district provides resources (time, training, etc.) to support teacher leadership development.
24. District and building "leadership" professional development activities complement one another.

Extended Response:

1. How were you selected to this position?

2. How much release time is allocated to your position for continued professional development or to mentor or provide professional development for others?
3. What kind of state, district, or private sector leadership professional development have you received for your current position?
4. I'm interested in teacher leadership development. In addition to the information covered by the survey, what do you think I should know?

Demographic Information:

(Choices on the survey template)

1. What is your gender?
2. How would you classify yourself ethnically?
3. What age range best describes you?
4. What is the highest level of education that you have completed?
5. What is your primary assignment?
6. How long have you been in your current position?

APPENDIX B

TEACHER LEADERSHIP SURVEY

Please answer the following questions.

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Leadership Tasks					
Teachers in my building are encouraged to lead building instructional initiatives.					
Teachers in my building are involved in designing staff development opportunities.					
My principal expects me to give priority to providing personalized (one-on-one) staff development.					
My principal expects me to give priority to examining and discussing students' academic work with teachers.					
My principal trusts teacher leaders to carry out significant leadership responsibilities.					
I am expected to model "best" instructional practices and use school-adopted curriculum materials in classrooms.					
I have shared in the responsibility of presenting new ideas to the school staff.					
School Culture					
My principal expects all staff to participate in the school decision-making process.					
My principal uses a "shared" leadership model in my school.					
My principal's leadership style helps to create a "democratic" culture in my building.					
My principal involves me in developing and communicating a shared vision for the school.					
My principal expects me to help sustain a collaborative work environment in our school.					
My principal provides time for me to meet with individual teachers and teacher teams.					
I am expected to be in classrooms frequently enough to monitor instruction and to get a "big picture" view of how the school as a whole is doing.					
I am expected to provide non-evaluative feedback to classroom teachers.					
I am expected to examine and discuss the results of student assessments with teachers.					
Leadership Capacity					

My principal encourages teachers using “best practices” to share their knowledge and skills with others.					
My principal provides follow-up planning and coaching support when new instructional strategies are implemented.					
The District provides encouragement and opportunities for teachers interested in school leadership positions.					
The district provides resources (time, training, etc.) to support teacher leadership development.					
District and building “leadership” professional development activities complement one another.					
My principal expects all teachers to serve as “leaders.”					
My principal encourages all staff members to take on at least one leadership activity each year.					
I have been provided with leadership training as it relates to my current position.					

Please answer the following extended response questions.

How were you selected to this position?
How much release time is allocated to your position for continued professional development or to mentor or provide professional development for others?
What kind of state, district, or private sector leadership professional development have you received for your current position?
I’m interested in teacher leadership development. In addition to the information covered by the survey, what do you think I should know?

Demographic Information					
What is your gender	Male	Female			
How would you classify yourself ethnically?	Asian	Black	Caucasian/ White	Hispanic	Multiracial
	Pacific Islander	Native American	Other		
What age range best describes you?	25 or under	26-35	36-45	46-55	56 or older
How long have you worked in the field of education?	0-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	16-20 years	21+ years
What is the highest level of education that you have completed?	Bachelor's Degree	Master's Degree	Doctoral Degree	Additional Professional Certification s (NBTC, ProCert, etc.)	
What is your primary assignment	Learning Specialist	Instructional Coach	Team Leader	Department Chair	Dean of Students
How long have you been in your current position?	0-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	16-20 years	21+ years

APPENDIX C

Informed Consent

You are being asked to take part in a research study that is being conducted by Shaun Carey, an elementary school principal and doctoral student at Washington State University. The purpose of this study is to examine how building administrators have developed leadership capacity in schools using leadership frameworks that call on teacher leaders to take charge in reaching schoolwide goals established as a result of school reform mandates.

For the purposes of this study, the term “teacher leader” is defined as those teachers who have formal titles which may include: instructional coach, learning specialist, team leader, department chair, or dean of students. In these formal roles, these teacher leaders initiate actions, take more responsibility for school effectiveness, frame problems, and seek solutions that move the school’s students and staff towards shared goals.

This study will ask you about the leadership tasks that you perform in your position, what kind of culture your building administrator has created to help you perform in your position, and what does your building administrator or district leadership do to support the continued professional growth of teacher leaders. Your responses will be kept completely confidential.

If you choose to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete a 15-20 minute survey. You may take this survey online using Zoomerang or you can request a hard copy of the survey. If you request a hard copy of the survey, it will be mailed to your school and include a self-addressed return envelope. If you complete the survey, two Washington State lottery tickets will be sent to you in recognition for the time that you spent completing the survey. The tickets will be mailed to you within 30 days of completing the survey.

Your participation in this study can potentially benefit you as it may provide you with an opportunity to reflect on your leadership practice and the needs for professional support you have. Your participation may potentially benefit the education system, as well, by providing information which can be used to enhance support for schools and school systems seeking to increase leadership capacity using teacher leaders.

The potential risks from taking part in this study are minimal. You experience stress as a result of being asked to participate in this study. The purpose of this survey is to understand your perspective. The purpose of this survey is neither to critique your performance as a school leader nor to assess your school’s performance on state assessments.

Any results that are presented from this survey will be presented in a way that does not identify you, your school, or your school district. Any identifiable information that is asked for on this survey will be used for analytic purposes and will not be shared publicly.

Please note that you may refuse to participate in this study or you may withdraw your consent for any reason at any time without penalty. Again, your participation is completely voluntary.