

UCLA

UCLA Electronic Theses and Dissertations

Title

Exploring How Teacher Leaders Influence Instructional Improvement Beyond the Walls of Their Classroom

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/67d2v7cc>

Author

Seals, Kenneth Roy

Publication Date

2014

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

Exploring How Teacher Leaders Influence Instructional Improvement
Beyond the Walls of Their Classroom

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Education

By

Kenneth Seals

2014

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Exploring How Teacher Leaders Influence Instructional Improvement
Beyond the Walls of Their Classroom

by

Kenneth Seals

Doctor of Education

University of California, Los Angeles, 2014

Professor Eugene Tucker, Co-chair

Professor Tyrone Howard, Co-chair

Teacher leadership is a critical component of school improvement efforts especially in light of the limitations of principal leadership including job demands, principal shortages, and high turnover. Schools need distributed leadership to implement sustainable improvement. Since teacher leadership has a positive impact on the school, including the students, administration, and the teachers themselves, this study focused on teacher leaders. The study examined both teacher and administrator perspectives of how teacher leaders impact instructional improvement in high schools and what supports and/or inhibits teacher leadership. Specifically this study investigated how improved or innovative instruction travels from one teacher's classroom to another and what supports or barriers exist for these teacher leaders.

Using a multi-site case study model, this qualitative study used data collected from administrator and teacher leader interviews from three high schools. These high schools were

chosen because they had the largest academic performance growth out of the 18 high schools in their school district.

The findings highlight the importance of teacher leader credibility and the need for opportunities for teacher leaders to influence other teachers. In addition, barriers to teacher leadership such as resistance or commitment to the status quo are explored. Finally, the need for more teacher leaders and support by administration is discussed. The study concludes with implications and recommendations for policy and practice.

The dissertation of Kenneth Seals is approved.

Megan Franke

Gregory Leazer

Eugene Tucker, Committee Co-chair

Tyrone Howard, Committee Co-chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2014

DEDICATION

To my best friend and wonderful wife, Katie, thank you. This dissertation could not have been completed without your support. Thank you for your patience and encouragement during this journey. To my children: Camden, Gavin, and Maren. I am excited to support you in the journeys

God has planned for you.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION	ii
DEDICATION	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vi
LIST OF TABLES	viii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ix
VITA	x
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
Introduction	1
Background	2
Teacher Leadership in Local Context	5
Research Questions	6
Research Plan	6
Public Engagement	8
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW	9
Introduction	9
Limitations of Principal Leadership	10
Instructional, Transformational, and Shared Leadership	13
Distributed Leadership	19
Teacher Leadership	21
Roles of Teacher Leaders	22
The Principal's Role	24
Benefits of Teacher Leadership	25
Barriers to Teacher Leadership	26
What Supports Teacher Leadership?	27
Teacher Leadership in Professional Learning Communities	28
CHAPTER 3: DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY	29
Introduction	29
Research Questions	29
Research Design	30
Phase One: The Sample Selection	31

Phase Two: Data Collection	32
Phase Three: Data Analysis of Each School	34
Phase Four: Cross-Case Analysis	35
Ensuring Credibility, Validity, and Trustworthiness	35
Ethical Issues	36
 CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS	 37
Introduction	37
Finding 1: Teacher Leaders Cannot Influence Instructional Improvement Without First Earning the Respect of Their Colleagues	38
Finding 2: Teacher Leaders Need Opportunities to Share With Other Teachers in Order to Influence Their Teaching Practices	45
Finding 3: School Leaders Cultivate Teacher Leadership by Involving Them in Decision-making and Providing Opportunities to Lead	52
Finding 4: Teacher Leaders Report That an Attitude of Resistance and Commitment to the Status Quo Are the Primary Barriers to Teacher Leadership	56
Finding 5: Teacher Leaders Believe There is a Need for Other Teachers to Become Teacher Leaders	61
Finding 6: Administrators Are Key Supporters of Teacher Leaders	64
Summary	68
 CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	 69
Introduction	69
Major Themes and Recommendations for Policy and Practice	70
Lingering Questions and Implications for Future Study	79
Limitations	79
Reflection and Conclusion	80
 LIST OF APPENDICES	 82
 REFERENCES	 90

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: API Data for Each School in the Union School District

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful for the support, input, and guidance of my committee members, Dr. Megan Franke, Dr. Gregory Leazer, as well as my co-chairs, Dr. Tyrone Howard and Dr. Eugene Tucker. Your input helped make this a stronger study and broadened my thinking about teacher leadership. In addition to supporting this study, I would also like to thank Dr. Eugene Tucker for his guidance over the three years of the ELP program.

I learned so much from the other members of ELP cohort 19. Thanks for embracing the longest commuting member of the cohort. It was an honor to work along side of you and learn from your experiences and insight.

My co-workers offered great encouragement as I commuted from work to UCLA. I am thankful for the support of Alan Paradise, Cindy Irby, and Steve Johnson.

I am also thankful for my parents' unwavering support of my interests and pursuits over the years, including this latest educational journey.

Finally, I acknowledge the sacrifices my family made to allow me to pursue the goal of earning a doctorate in education. I am grateful for the patience, support, and encouragement of my wife, Katie. Although my name is on the title page, this is truly our accomplishment.

VITA

1999	B.S. in Mathematics Minor in Ethnic Studies California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo San Luis Obispo, CA
2000 – 2007	Math Teacher Stockdale High School Bakersfield, CA
2003	M.A. in School Counseling California State University Bakersfield Bakersfield, CA
2004	M.A. in Educational Administration California State University Bakersfield Bakersfield, CA
2007 – 2009	Dean of Students Stockdale High School Bakersfield, CA
2009 – 2010	Attendance Administrator Kern High School District Bakersfield, CA
2011 – Present	Assistant Principal of Instruction North High School Bakersfield, CA

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Although the research shows principal leadership behaviors make a difference in improving school climate and student achievement, this research itself has reinforced the concept of the principal being synonymous with school leadership (Heck & Hallinger, 1999; J. P. Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2004). However, due to the increasing complexity of schools, limits of hierarchical leadership, demands on principals, a shortage of principals, and low principal retention rates, schools need to develop other conceptualizations of leadership (Beauchum & Dentith, 2004; Copland, 2001). Copland (2001) describes how the growing expectations of school principals have fueled the mythological construct of the superprincipal who can do it all. A growing body of research supports the development of teachers as leaders. Schools need teachers to provide leadership that extends beyond the walls of their classroom, a leadership that invests in and takes ownership of the school community (Barth, 2001). Teachers must be leaders for schools to improve student outcomes (Pellicer & Anderson, 1995).

The literature highlights the positive effects of teacher leadership on the school, the students, and the teachers. Leithwood and Jantzi's (1999) research concludes that teacher leadership has a greater effect on student engagement than principal leadership. Recent research highlights the importance of professional learning communities to school improvement (Hargreaves, 2002). In a professional learning community, teacher leadership is an expectation (Muijs & Harris, 2003). This study examined the roles of teacher leaders in instructional improvement, how teacher leaders influence improvement beyond the walls of their classroom, and the conditions that enable or inhibit their leadership in effecting these changes.

Background

In the study of educational leadership, increasing emphasis has been placed on the leader at the top. The effective schools movement in the 1980s and 1990s emphasized the importance of the principal as the instructional leader. Then the model of transformational leadership behaviors of principals became a focus of literature (Hallinger, 2003). Principals are required to be moral leaders, instructional leaders, transformational leaders, visionary leaders, and innovative leaders. As expectations of principals as leaders of change and improvement increase, the number of leadership models principles should emulate continues to grow.

Societal and government scrutiny of public schools is increasing. Due to this pressure on schools to improve and the need to engage student populations that require innovative instruction, schools are more complex organizations than in the past. In addition, in this era of increased societal and government expectations, principal jobs are more demanding. In fact, it can be argued that too much is expected from the principal (Copland, 2001). In this era of school improvement and increased accountability, principals report that their attention is being pulled in many directions (Portin, 2000). Job demands often force principals to focus on the immediate fires and put less focus on long-term goals (Peterson, 1977).

In addition, we also know that there is a principal shortage. It is a challenge to recruit and keep qualified candidates, especially at high minority, high poverty schools (Hewitt, Denny, & Pijanowski, 2011). A large study, of a district with over 350 schools, found that principals in the lowest performing schools have only 2.5 years of experience at that school (Loeb, Kalogrides, & Horng, 2010). However, research shows that school change can take seven years (Fullan, 2001). This lack of qualified principals and frequency of principal turnover requires teacher leadership to lead and sustain change. A principal's initiative or program often

diminishes and disappears once they leave the campus while the remaining teachers are left to implement a new principal's agenda. Teacher leaders who stay at a school site, outlasting principals, are in the best position to lead sustainable instructional improvement over time.

The limitations of hierarchical leadership structures are highlighted in recent research. Scholars advocate for less top down control but rather flattened leadership structures supporting collaborative or shared decision making (Fullan, 2001; Wilms, 2008). Poff and Parks (2010) examined the literature on shared leadership and developed five domains to categorize the 15 essential elements they identified. These domains include collaboration, common focus, shared responsibility, supportive culture, and widespread communication. This idea of leadership being spread throughout an organization is not new; however, the recent focus on *distributed* leadership, as a theoretical lens to view leadership activity, is new (Mayrowetz, 2008). Spillane (2006) describes distributed leadership as the focus on the interactions between leaders and followers in a specific situational context rather than the specific leadership skills or actions. Teacher leadership emerges in the context of shared and distributed leadership (York-Barr & Duke, 2004).

Teacher leadership has been prevalent in the literature of reform of the last two decades. Teacher leadership has benefits for the students, the school, the teachers, and the principal (Barth, 2001). Teacher leaders can impact the instructional direction of the school, influencing curriculum, instruction, assessment, and ultimately student achievement. When teacher leaders are involved in the decision-making process, they have more ownership, more investment, and more at stake in the success of the process (Barth, 2001). Some believe the greatest impact teacher leaders have is on themselves. These leaders become professionals, learners, and educators who have influence beyond their classroom. Although leading can be risky, and takes

both time and emotional investment, it can lead to less burnout and more fulfilled teachers. It helps them to be members of a larger professional community.

During the last decade, research on professional learning communities has grown. The acceptance of this literature by K-12 educators has exploded (DuFour 1998; Hargreaves, 2002). The emphasis on teachers as professionals and the acceptance of these professional learning communities have given rise to a great opportunity for formal and informal teacher leadership. More teachers have a voice to influence others in informal relationships, or through formal leadership positions in professional learning teams of course-alike teachers or small learning community teams. In many schools, these teams are tasked with developing learning targets, completing common assessments, analyzing data, investigating school wide policies, and planning professional development. In the midst of these opportunities, there are also obstacles to teacher leadership. Teachers may face hurdles such as time restraints, top down structures, a lack of opportunities to lead, and resistance from co-workers.

While finding qualified leaders is a struggle, the effects of successful school leadership are second only to classroom teaching in impact on student achievement (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004). Many empirical studies find that transformational leadership has a positive influence on student achievement (Griffith, 2003; Leithwood and Jantzi, 2006; Marks and Printy, 2003; Valentine & Prater 2011; Hallinger & Heck 2010). Where can we find qualified school leaders?

Rather than focusing on the leadership of the person at the top of the organizational chart, I studied the benefits of distributed leadership by examining teacher leaders. Studies of distributed leadership are increasingly common in the literature. Harris (2004) defines distributed leadership as “concentrating on engaging expertise wherever it exists in the

organization rather than seeking this only through formal position or role” (p. 13). Teachers are leaders, both informal and formal (Muijs & Harris, 2003). The research on teacher leaders reveals their ability to be an agent of reform and to improve teaching and learning (Poerkert, 2012). Phelps (2008) describes teachers who don’t become leaders as “satisfied with the status quo, easily discouraged, sometimes cynical, perhaps burned out, and may engage minimally in professional development activities” (p. 122). By examining the limitations of principal leadership and the positive transformative potential of teacher leadership, it is clear that without teacher leaders, schools will not improve.

Teacher Leadership in Local Context

The leadership of the Union School District (USD, a pseudonym) allowed me to conduct research in their school district at sites where the principal agreed to participate in the study. The USD percentage of enrolled students by ethnicity is similar to the make up of students across state of California. Both USD and California had an ethnic make up of 25% white and 6% African American students. Both had over 50% of their students identifying as Hispanic, specifically 63% in the USD and 53% statewide. California has an enrollment of 9% Asian students while USD has a 3% make up of Asian students.

In the Union School District there are 18 high schools each with its own basic autonomy in school-wide decision-making and choice of initiatives. Of the thirty-six assistant principals, 70% have been on the job less than 5 years. Of the 18 principals, 12 have been in their current position less than five years. District leadership has embraced the concept of teachers being part of a professional learning community. Each school has teams of teachers who meet regularly to discuss student learning. In addition to these learning team leaders, schools also have department chairs and professional development leaders chosen from the teaching ranks.

Research Questions

The questions that guided my research and data analysis were:

1. According to teachers and principals, how do teacher leaders influence instructional improvement at their school site? What impact do they have on the sustainability and propagation of improved instructional methods?
2. What do teachers perceive as the barriers and/or supports to teachers acting as leaders? According to teacher leaders, how do principals cultivate and/or inhibit teacher leadership?
3. What characteristics do schools that demonstrate effective teacher leadership have in common, which could inform other schools and school district policies?

Research Plan

To answer these questions I conducted a qualitative study of three high schools in the USD demonstrating improved levels of student performance. I chose a qualitative study in order to provide a rich description of teacher leaders' and principals' perceptions and experiences while answering *how* teacher leaders influence instruction beyond the walls of their own classroom. I collected data from teacher leader and principal interviews. In this study I sought to find what Merriam (2009) describes as "*understanding the meaning people have constructed, that is, how people make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world*" (emphasis hers, p. 13). I chose a qualitative case study to conduct a process that explored the perspectives and experiences of participants in a specific context. Yin (2014) describes the desire to understand a contemporary phenomenon in its real-world context and need to know the "how" and "why" questions as reasons to conduct a case study. In this study I examined "how" teacher leaders influence others, not just what teacher leaders do.

Sites

It was important to find schools that showed evidence of improving academic achievement in order to find teacher leaders involved in improving instruction. In order to conduct the study at schools where student achievement was increasing, I reviewed the Academic Performance Index (API) growth of the 18 comprehensive high schools in the district. I chose the three sites with the largest API growth over the four-year period from 2009-2013 to study. The three high schools studied were Canyon High School, Lake High School, and Valley High School (all pseudonyms). Each school had between 1800 and 2100 students enrolled. The three high schools vary in geographical location of the city, ethnic make up, percentage of socioeconomically disadvantaged students, and academic performance. However, these three schools demonstrated the most academic performance growth in the district.

Data Collection and Analysis

I interviewed the principal, an assistant principal, and teacher leaders at each site. Data analysis included coding of the transcripts and building themes from each school and a comparison across schools. The within-case analysis and cross-case analysis are two separate stages of analysis (Merriam, 2009). In each stage of analysis, I captured as many details about each site through review of the transcripts. Then I searched for patterns to “understand the behaviors, issues, and contexts with regard to our particular case” (Stake, 1995, p. 78). After I analyzed each school, I began a cross-case analysis designed to find themes or build abstractions across the schools describing similarities or differences in each case. I used the cross-case analysis to describe the practices, policies, and environment that allowed teacher leaders to influence instructional improvement beyond their classroom walls.

Public Engagement

The results of this study will help district leaders, teachers, and administrators to positively impact leadership development and instructional change at their sites. Findings and recommendations from this study will inform formal leaders on how to create conditions in high schools that empower teacher leaders to drive sustainable instructional change and improve student achievement.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Principal leadership makes a difference in improving schools (Heck & Hallinger, 1999). Without undermining principals' importance, the research also identifies limitations of principal leadership and hierarchical leadership structures. Although principals are crucial components of school improvement, change takes time, and in many cases change requires a longer period of time than the tenure of a principal (Fullan, 2001; Loeb et al., 2010). Therefore, other school leaders are necessary to sustain educational change. Instructional improvement research identifies teachers as the most important factor in improving student outcomes. Teacher leaders have a vital role to play in improving schools. The field of teacher leadership indicates that when teachers are leaders, many benefit: the principal, the teachers, and the students (Barth, 2001). In the last decade, scholars advanced the conceptual framework of distributed leadership to examine how leadership actions and interactions are distributed in schools (Mayrowetz, 2008; J. Spillane, 2006; J. P. Spillane et al., 2004).

In this chapter, I begin with a description of the leadership crisis in schools, including the limitations of principal and hierarchical leadership. Secondly, I discuss the transition of the role of principal from the instructional expert to a transformational leader who builds leadership capacity in others. This leads to the more recent conceptualizations of shared and collaborative leadership. Then I discuss the conceptual framework of distributed leadership. Distributed leadership is the lens through which I examine teacher leadership within this study. Next, I discuss teacher leadership beginning with its definition and the roles of teacher leaders. I go on to discuss the benefits of and barriers to teacher leadership, as well as the conditions that support teacher leadership. Next I discuss the evidence highlighting the teacher leader's role in a

professional learning community. Finally, I discuss school improvement and its intersection with teacher leadership.

Limitations of Principal Leadership

“Unfortunately a leadership crisis looms, as almost half of school administrators will be eligible for retirement in the next half-decade and many contemporary leadership development efforts are ill suited for the task. Therefore, the gap between the reality and the potential for effective educational leadership will be bridged not by a repetition of prior administrative leadership practices, but rather by a new approach that embraces leadership at every level” (Reeves, 2008, p. 10).

Researchers have studied principal leadership extensively over the last thirty years. Effective instructional and transformation leadership by principals has a positive effect on student achievement (Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Walters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003). However, limitations to principal leadership include principal turnover, principal shortages, increased job pressures and demands, the balancing act between leadership tasks and managerial duties, and the pitfalls of hierarchy (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003; Mascal & Leithwood, 2010).

Additionally, principal turnover can have a negative effect on student achievement. Mascal and Leithwood (2010) used a mixed methods analysis of over 2,500 teachers from 80 schools and found that principal turnover has a negative effect on the school climate, which, in turn, has a large impact on student achievement. They argue that principal turnover occurring every two or three years will not allow the principal to move past stages of initiation or implementation into stages of continuation or refinement. When principals transfer to other schools, their improvement initiatives go with them. The teachers who were working on these initiatives with the principal become frustrated and unable to continue the work (Katzenmeyer &

Moller, 2009). Distributed leadership has the potential to moderate the negative effects of principal turnover. This finding is also supported by Hargreaves and Fink (2010), who found that principals who leave networks of distributed leaders in place ensure the sustainability of school improvement initiatives when they are gone. Multiple studies show that principal turnover is more likely to be higher at schools with larger population of minority students (Gates et al., 2005; Hewitt, Denny & Pijonowski, 2008; Baker et al., 2010). Principal turnover and a lack of qualified candidates cause a principal shortage.

Accordingly, multiple studies report a shortage of qualified principal candidates. In a study examining superintendents' perceptions of the quantity and quality of principal candidates, Whitaker (2003) found that 50% of surveyed superintendents reported a "somewhat extreme" or "extreme shortage" of quality candidates. The issue of principals exiting the profession also contributes to the principal shortage. Winter et al. (2004) point to the retirement of baby boomer principals as one factor in leaving principal vacancies. The issue of principals' leaving is greater in urban schools. Papa et al. (2002) found that urban principals are more likely to leave the principalship than suburban principals. Baker et al. (2010) examined a data set of over 2,500 principals from a large midwestern city and found that schools with a Black student concentration increase the likelihood of principal mobility. In a study of employment data of over 5,000 principals in two states, Gates et al. (2005) found that the percentage of non-white students in a school positively correlated with the probability of the principal changing schools or positions. Assuming that it is important to keep good principals in their job, these findings are particularly problematic for improving diverse urban schools. Some argue increased job pressures and demands are leading to increased principal mobility and the decreased quality applicant pool.

There is consensus in the literature that demands on schools and school principals have increased dramatically (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003). As public scrutiny of schools increased with help from the 1983 report *A Nation at Risk*, principals were tasked with taking on the instructional and transformational leadership duties of the school. Increased accountability to raise student achievement amplified the pressure on principals. Copland (2001) describes the myth of the superprincipal and how it leads to exceedingly high expectations of principals. Copland argues that expanding expectations of principals were largely fueled by the expanding conceptions of the role of the principal by scholars in the field of educational administration. With each new conception, a new set of expectations is placed on the principal. These conceptions developed and shaped by researchers include instructional leadership, moral leadership, managerial leadership, participative leadership, and transformational leadership. Copland (2001) surmises “one can reason that it is these multiple conceptions of principal leadership that have shaped the ever-growing set of expectations about what constitutes ‘excellence’ in the principalship. The result? A largely unattainable ideal of mythological proportions – the superprincipal – a role that fewer and fewer aspire to and for which fewer appear qualified” (p. 531). These expectations and accountability pressures cultivate a demanding job, impacting working conditions and the ability of a single leader to live up to these expectations.

The effects of these demands on principals are evident in the research on principal working conditions. In a study of over 1,500 principals, DiPaola & Tshannen-Moran (2003) conclude that their data “reveal a profession under stress” (p. 59). They found 84% of respondents worked more than fifty hours a week and 66% reported they had neither sufficient time nor personnel (i.e. assistant principals) to fulfill mandated responsibilities. It is not

surprising that in a study of teachers qualified to be principals, Winter et al. (2004) found these teachers believed becoming a principal would negatively affect their job satisfaction and quality of their personal life. Principals perform a balancing act between leadership tasks and managerial duties. Administrators' duties can become mostly managerial and disconnected from the teaching and learning needs of the classroom. However, the teachers closest to the heart of the classroom believe they have to leave the classroom in order to become leaders (Coyle, 1997). The current hierarchical structures of school leadership need to change to a more collaborative network of teacher leaders to effectively lead school improvement (Coyle, 1997; Reeves, 2008).

Instructional, Transformational, and Shared Leadership

Historically, two conceptual models of school leadership have been the focus of most studies examining principal leadership: instructional leadership and transformational leadership (Heck & Hallinger, 1999). Hallinger (2005) notes how the model of instructional leadership emerged in the effective schools research of the 1980s, but was a model that refused to go away. Many viewed instructional leadership as a top down directive model with the principal as the expert. Hallinger (2005) postulates that due to growing dissatisfaction with this approach, researchers began to use a transformational approach in the 1990s.

Researchers of instructional leadership approaches have focused on different activities and behaviors (Leithwood and Jantzi, 2006; Marks and Printy, 2003; Murphy, 1990). This diversity does not lead to an agreement on the definition or characteristics of instructional leadership. An older conceptualization of instructional leadership may view the principal as the primary instructional knowledge holder. A newer conceptualization may view the principal as the leader of instructional leaders. Both Leithwood and Hallinger specifically describe their

conceptualization of instructional leadership in their studies. Hallinger (2003) developed an instructional management framework commonly used by researchers. This framework consists of nine functions of instructional leaders organized in three areas: defining the school's mission, managing the instructional program, and promoting a positive climate. The nine functions include framing and communicating clear school goals, supervising and evaluating instruction, coordinating curriculum, monitoring student progress, protecting instructional time, promoting professional development, maintaining high visibility, providing incentives for teachers, and providing incentives for learning. Murphy (1990), less specific than Hallinger, emphasized four instructional leadership activities: developing the school mission and goals; coordinating, monitoring, and evaluating curriculum, instruction, and assessment; promoting a climate for learning; and creating a supportive work environment. Leithwood (1992) describes instructional leadership involving the following instructional activities: improving instruction through monitoring of teachers and student work, building a shared vision, improving communication, and developing a collaborative decision-making process. A review of the literature suggests there is not a consensus on all aspects of instructional leadership. However, certain dimensions are almost always discussed. These include communicating vision and goals, monitoring and supporting classroom instruction, and promoting and maintaining a school climate and culture conducive for teaching and learning.

This instructional model continues to be prevalent in research today (Hallinger 2003; Hallinger 2005; Louis et al, 2010, Nettles & Herrington 2007). However, Valentine and Prater (2011) describe the context surrounding the development of a new model. They argue, "in the 1990s, reformers began to recommend a change in the organizational structure, professional roles, and goals of public education....As a result of numerous changes facing schools, the view

of the principal as transformational leader emerged” (p. 7). Leithwood and Jantzi (2006) explain three categories of transformational leadership: setting direction, developing people, and redesigning the organization. Marks and Printy (2003) transformational leaders are leaders who “motivate followers by raising their consciousness about the importance of educational goals and by inspiring them to transcend their own self-interest for the sake of the organization. In their relationships with followers, this theory posits, transformational leaders exhibit at least one of these leadership factors: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration” (p. 375).

Similar to instructional leadership, a common definition is not feasible, but common threads are seen in the researchers’ descriptions. The primary distinctions in the transformational leadership model are people centered activities beyond the instructional knowledge and goal facilitating necessary in instructional leadership. These activities include inspiring others to a great mission and developing individual and collective capacity to reach that mission.

Many empirical studies find that transformational leadership has a positive impact on student achievement (Griffith 2003, Leithwood and Jantzi 2006, Marks and Printy 2003, Valentine & Prater 2011, Hallinger and Heck 2010). In a quantitative study of 3,291 teacher surveys, across 117 elementary schools, Griffith (2003) showed principal transformational leadership indirectly impacted student achievement by having a positive relationship to school staff job satisfaction. Principals had a direct affect on school staff job satisfaction, which then impacted student achievement. The researchers used teacher surveys that measured transformational leadership with items representing the following categories: charisma or

inspiration, individualized consideration, and intellectual stimulation. Then, they conducted an analysis that found a positive relationship between increased student grade point averages and these transformational leadership behaviors. Leithwood and Jantzi (2006) also studied transformational leadership through teacher surveys and standardized test results at elementary schools. In a study of 2,290 teacher surveys from 655 schools, the authors found that “transformational leadership had strong direct effects on teachers’ work settings and motivation with weaker but still significant effects on teachers’ capacities” (p. 223). The authors found a strong connection between a principal’s transformational leadership and teacher motivation. However, they assume this leads to a greater likelihood teachers will change their practices, which, depending on the practices changed, will lead to greater student learning. Future research needs to focus on teacher motivation and student achievement.

Other researchers have chosen to focus on both the instructional and transformational models in the same study to measure their separate and combined effects (Marks and Printy 2003, Valentine & Prater 2011). Marks and Printy (2003) conducted a study of 24 nationally selected schools analyzing teacher surveys, classroom observations, and student work. This study measured both shared instructional leadership and transformational leadership through formal interviews with the principals and their teachers, observations, and teacher surveys. The researchers’ focus on *shared* instructional leadership is a new conceptualization in the research. They define shared instructional leadership as a collaborative process of school improvement between the principal and teachers, centered around curriculum, instruction, and assessment. In their study, key aspects of transformational leadership are innovating within the organization and empowering teachers. They found that schools high in both models, schools with integrated leadership, were higher achieving.

Similar to Marks and Printy's study, Valentine and Prater (2011) also conducted a study based on the assumption that focusing on more than one set of leadership behaviors, a comprehensive model, might demonstrate an "interactive or composite effect on student achievement" (p. 95). In addition to instructional leadership and transformational leadership, they included managerial leadership as a third dimension in their study. Their model included the following leadership behaviors: identifying and articulating a vision, providing an appropriate model, fostering the acceptance of group goals, providing individualized support, providing intellectual stimulation, and holding high performance expectations. The researchers measured these areas through a questionnaire given to teachers. Their study analyzed student achievement data on state testing, 155 principal surveys, and 1,038 teacher surveys from 131 schools. They did not find one set of leadership behaviors more effective than another, but rather all had some degree of effect on student achievement. The specific transformational factors of fostering group goals, identifying a vision, and providing models were identified most often as the leadership behaviors impacting student achievement.

A common thread in the research on transformational leadership is developing capacity in others and emphasizing a collaborative approach. This specific aspect of transformational leadership has been studied recently through research conducted to measure the effects of shared and collective leadership on student achievement (Hallinger & Heck, 2009; Hallinger and Heck, 2010; Leithwood & Mascall, 2008; Louis, Dretzke, & Wahlstrom, 2010). Leithwood and Mascall (2008) analyzed evidence from 2,750 teacher responses from 90 schools along with three years of state assessment data. They found that higher achieving schools "awarded leadership to all school members and stakeholders to a greater degree than that of lower achieving schools" (p. 529). In a study collecting data from teachers and students from 192

elementary schools over a four-year period, another study found that collaborative leadership does impact school performance (Hallinger & Heck, 2010). The researchers measured collaborative leadership, by teacher and parent questionnaires focused on collaborative decision-making, staff empowerment, and involvement of all stakeholders in evaluation of the school's academic development. They found that collaborative leadership had an indirect effect on initial academic performance and academic growth over time.

Heck and Hallinger (2009) examined the impact of distributive leadership, aimed at building academic capacity of schools, on improving students' learning outcomes. They define distributed leadership as the "forms of collaboration practiced by the principal, teachers, and members of the school's improvement team in leading the school's development" (p. 662). In a 3-year longitudinal study of 3rd grade students' standardized math scores from a random sample of 195 elementary schools, this study found that collaborative and distributed forms of leadership and capacity building were mutually reciprocal, and in turn were positively associated with improvement in math achievement.

Within the collaborative leadership framework, Louis, Dretzke, and Wahlstrom (2010) make a distinction between shared and distributive leadership. They describe shared leadership as "deliberate patterns of mutual influence" (p. 318), which includes teachers having a significant role in school-wide decision making, and distributed leadership as "a network of both formal and informal influential relationships" (p. 318). In their study they focus on deliberate shared leadership. They analyzed teacher surveys, administrator surveys, and student achievement data from 157 schools. Their study provided evidence that shared leadership, as measured by teacher surveys, is indirectly related to student achievement. It demonstrated that teachers organized into professional communities with shared leadership were characterized by a

“sense of collective responsibility for student learning” (p. 330-331). Professional learning communities are collaborative learning opportunities where teachers collectively focus on student learning, continuous improvement and results.

Distributed Leadership

Distributed leadership is a conceptual frame to study school leadership rather than a model or a prescription for leadership. The view of distributed leadership extends beyond a single school leader to other leaders and the interaction between leaders, followers, and the situation (Spillane, 2006). The term has recently increased in popularity and is similar to collaborative leadership, shared leadership, collective leadership, or democratic leadership. However, rather than a leadership model, it is a lens to study leadership. Spillane and Diamond (2007) describe the two aspects of distributed leadership as the leader plus aspect and the leadership practice aspect. The leader plus aspect refers to the necessity of organizations to have leaders at multiple levels, not just in the principal’s office. Leadership is practiced by not only leaders in designated positions, but also by informal leaders. Distributed leadership examines the work of all who exercise leadership in an organization. Harris (2008) describes this concept as the person plus perspective instead of the person solo perspective; a broad-based involvement. Murphy et al (2009) describe organizations with multiple leaders and different levels as leadership-dense.

The aspect of leadership practice is what separates distributed leadership from its relatives shared leadership or collaborative leadership. Leadership practice is the interactions of school leaders and followers in the context of their situation. It focuses on interactions rather than the actions of leaders (Spillane & Diamond, 2007). Harris (2008) argues that the focus

should extend past leader-follower interactions to interactions among leaders of different types and in all levels of an organization.

The focus of interactions between school leaders (and followers) is more than examining what each individual does, but extends to how the group collectively practices leadership by their interactions. Spillane (2006) describes this as co-performance of leadership stretched over multiple leaders. These leaders may or may not be working toward the same goal. In fact, their action may be supporting or inhibiting other leaders. Harris (2008) describes this as co-production of knowledge. Instead of focusing on individual leader traits or actions, the distributed leadership framework views leadership as interactions rather than individual actions and skills.

However, even though distributed leadership has shifted the focus from people and positions to interactions, Watson and Scribner (2007) describe how more conceptual development can be done to fully understand the collaboration, interaction, and emergent reciprocal influence. Examining the process of teacher collaboration reveals how leadership is a reciprocal influence.

Harris (2003) provides three reasons that the distributed leadership theory offers greater conceptual clarity to the study of teacher leadership. First, it examines the activities of multiple groups involved in influencing instructional improvement. Secondly, it recognizes that leadership tasks are accomplished through the interaction of multiple leaders. Finally, distributed leadership implies shared responsibility and interdependency.

Distributed leadership offers many potential benefits to organizations. Distributed leadership can lead to better decision-making since more information is considered beyond a

single person's viewpoint. In addition, increased participation can lead to greater organizational commitment (Leithwood & Mascall, 2008).

Teacher Leadership

A consistent definition of teacher leadership does not exist in the literature. Authors discuss its importance and describe it, but few define it. However, teacher leadership is a popular term in the literature and school jargon. Most conceptions of teacher leadership agree that it involves using the teacher's expertise to improve instruction and help student learning (York-Barr & Duke, 2004). Some definitions focus on how teacher leaders can improve student outcomes, influence other teachers' practices, or both. Katzenmeyer & Moller (2009) define teacher leaders who "lead within and beyond the classroom; identify with and contribute to a community of teacher learner and leaders; influence others toward improved educational practice; and accept responsibility for achieving the outcomes of their leadership" (p. 6). Reeves (2008) highlights how teacher leaders not only influence students but also other staff members, including teachers and administrators.

Teacher leadership is also defined by a focus on the reciprocal process rather than on the skills or traits of an individual person. Lambert (2003) takes a constructivist approach to teacher leadership. She describes leadership as purposeful, reciprocal learning in community. This definition of leadership, centered on a form of learning, assumes that everyone has the right, capability, and responsibility to be a leader. This broad-based definition of leadership requires, as its foundation, leadership capacity as a framework for teacher leadership. Leadership capacity goals include development of all adults in the school as reflective, skillful leaders; improvement in student achievement and development; and development of schools and districts as sustainable

organizations (Lambert, 2003). Another researcher highlights the reciprocal nature of teacher leadership by defining it as a “means to set direction and influence other to move in those directions. It is a fluid, interactive process with mutual influence between the leader and follower” (Anderson, 2004, p. 100).

Roles of Teacher Leaders

Teacher leaders can hold formal or informal roles. Within these roles, their leadership activity falls within one of seven domains: coordination and management, school or district curriculum work, professional development of colleagues, participation in school change/improvement, parent and community involvement, contributions to the profession, and preservice teacher education (York-Barr & Duke, 2004). Formal roles include instructional coach, resource teacher, curriculum specialist, mentor, team leader, or department chair. Although formal roles provide structured opportunities for teachers to lead, they can be counterproductive to the goals of teacher leadership.

Formal roles can be an important part of school improvement, unless teacher leaders’ focus is taken away from teaching and collegial relationships by quasi-administrative responsibilities (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009). Others believe that formal leadership roles can inhibit teacher leadership by limiting the possibility of what teacher leadership can look like (Anderson, 2004). Lambert (2003) argues that a broader view of leadership beyond a formal role in a position of authority will draw more teachers into the work of leadership while a person in a specific role is not attractive to most teachers.

Consequently, formal teacher leadership roles can actually act as an impediment to teacher leadership. Formal roles can reduce the distribution of leadership to teachers who do not

hold these roles along with excluding others from these formal roles. Anderson (2004) found that women and younger teachers were more successful at obtaining informal teacher leader roles versus schools with formal leadership roles. He argues that formal leadership roles are affected by structural leadership bias that may exist in administrative positions, excluding underrepresented groups. Formal roles can also exclude younger teachers since veteran teachers with higher degrees are more likely to be in formal leadership positions, as well as drawing veteran teachers from the classroom (Camburn, 2009).

In addition, formal roles are problematic from a teacher leadership perspective when they function more like administrative leadership positions (Anderson, 2004; Reeves, 2008). In these cases, these quasi-administrators, while still on a teacher contract and referred to as teacher leaders, perform administrative duties and spend little time in classrooms. Reeves (2008) describes this artificial teacher leadership as titles “applied to teachers who occupy positions in schools and central office buildings, but who have neither administrative authority nor much in the way of direct contact with students” (p. 75).

Day and Harris (2003) suggest four dimensions of the teacher leadership role. First, teacher leaders must broker the translation from what works in school improvement into the everyday routines of the individual classroom. The second dimension is exhibiting participative leadership where colleagues function collaboratively, working toward a collective goal. Performing a mediating role is the third dimension of teacher leadership. In this role teacher leaders provide expertise, information, and resources, or seek assistance to help others. The final dimension is creating relationship with other teachers to allow mutual learning.

The Principal's Role

Teacher leaders influence the principal. In a multisite case study, Anderson (2004) found a strong mutual and interactive influence of teacher leaders and principals. He identified three models of leadership reciprocity based on the patterns of relationships between principal and teacher leaders. First, in the Buffered Model the principal is isolated from many teachers but surrounded with teacher leaders. This model can inhibit informal teacher leaders while formal teacher leaders hold most of the power to influence decision-making. Next, in the Interactive Model the principal is able to distribute decision-making broadly and is involved with all teachers. Informal and formal teacher leaders interact and have influence in school wide decision-making. Finally, within the Contested Model there is a lack of trust between the teacher leaders and the principal. In this model, conflict is evident and the principal and teacher leaders cannot effectively work together to enact sustainable school improvement.

Administrators must afford teachers with the interest and skills opportunities to lead beyond the walls of their classrooms (Angelle & DeHart, 2011). These opportunities must be provided and encouraged by the principal. The role of the principal in initiating teacher leadership is important. Principals need to foster trust, develop structures for team collaboration, and recognize important contributions from each teacher (Muijs & Harris, 2007). Additionally, the principal's relationship with teachers can be an important factor in a teacher's desire to take on leadership responsibilities (Smylie, 1992).

In a study of the staff at 43 schools, Angelle and DeHart (2011) found significant differences in the perceptions of these formal teacher leaders and those in no leadership position. These examples of a fragmented culture highlight the danger of perceived in-groups and out-groups among the teaching staff at a school. Formal leaders perceive that leadership is shared

while simultaneously many other teachers don't see opportunities for leadership. It is important for principals to not rely on a small group of favorites but instead expand their view to see others in the school as potential teacher leaders.

Benefits of Teacher Leadership

There are many arguments and an increasing number of studies promoting teacher leadership. These fall into four categories: benefits of employee participation; expertise about teaching and learning; recognition and opportunities for accomplished teachers; and benefits to students (York-Barr & Duke, 2004). Katzenmeyer & Moller (2009) list the following benefits of teacher leadership: professional efficacy, teacher retention, overcoming resistance to change, career advancement, improving one's own performance, influencing other teachers, establishing accountability for results, and promoting sustainability.

Barth (2001) describes how teacher leadership benefits students, the school, teachers, and the principal. First, teacher leadership improves student outcomes. The popularity of distributed leadership in the literature is leading to more studies aimed at studying the impact of different types of distributed leadership on student achievement. A three-year study of 2,570 teacher responses from 90 elementary and secondary schools studied the impact of collective leadership on student achievement. This study found that schools with higher levels of achievement were more likely to have higher levels of influence from teams of staff (Leithwood & Mascall, 2008).

Second, teacher leadership benefits the school. Teachers model and engage in professional learning. Decision-making is spread out to include everyone's ideas. Third, teacher leadership benefits the teachers. The opportunity to make decisions and have a voice increases teacher morale. They get to have their voices heard and have an opportunity to make a difference. Finally, teacher leadership helps the principal by sharing the workload.

Barriers to Teacher Leadership

Cultural, structural, and personnel issues can act as barriers to teacher leadership. Reeves (2008) identifies three categories of barriers to improved teacher leadership: blame, bureaucracy, and “baloney.” Teacher efficacy is important for teacher leadership to thrive. When teachers blame others like students or factors out of their control, teachers lose efficacy. The second category Reeves identifies is bureaucracy. The hierarchical model of a bureaucracy will limit the success of change initiatives and the impact teacher leaders can have on the organization. Finally, Reeves identifies the category of “baloney,” which includes the prejudice and deeply held ideas not based in evidence that inhibit forward progress.

Harris (2003) identifies three barriers to teacher leadership succeeding in practice. First, those in leadership positions must demonstrate vulnerability and relinquish power to others. Secondly, existing hierarchical structures and loci of power at the top work to prevent teachers from taking on leadership roles in the school. Third, is the challenge of who distributes responsibility and authority and how it is distributed. If the principal “distributes leadership responsibility to teacher, then distributed leadership becomes nothing more than informed delegation” (Harris, 2003, p. 319).

Time is another barrier to effective teacher leadership. Teachers who spend all their time teaching or with other responsibilities are unable to work with other teachers (Firestone & Matinez, 2007). A case study of three schools with different levels of teacher leadership identified time as a barrier in each of the three schools (Muijs & Harris, 2007). This lack of time restricts the teacher’s ability to take initiative. This same study found that staff turnover stifled leadership and team development.

What Supports Teacher Leadership?

Support for teacher leadership can be personal, systemic, or organizational. Specifically, administrators can be proactive to cultivate teacher leadership by modeling, sharing power, removing barriers, providing resources, and actively listening (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009). Administrators can also recognize excellence, emphasize freedom to use judgment, listen to and act on teacher ideas, encourage innovation, provide feedback and coaching, value people and individuals, provide a sense of being included, appreciate diverse perspectives, encourage full expression without fear, and listen to and fairly handle complaints (Reeves, 2008).

In addition to these actions, an organizational culture must be in place that supports teacher leadership. Katzenmeyer and Moller (2009) identify specific school culture dimensions in which teacher leadership thrives: developmental focus, recognition, autonomy, collegiality, participation, open communication, and maintaining a positive environment.

Harris (2003) provides three conditions that schools need to foster for teacher leadership to thrive. First, teachers need time to meet and collaborate with colleagues. Second, schools must provide opportunities for professional development for teacher leaders, including learning about their leadership role. Finally, schools need to work to improve teachers' self-confidence as leaders.

Muijs and Harris (2007) conducted case studies of three schools with different levels of teacher leadership. Teacher leadership was measured by the involvement of teachers in decision-making at the school, along with the ability to initiate decisions. This study found three factors that contributed to support teacher leadership: purposeful actions by the principal, school culture, and school structures. The principal needs to purposefully set up opportunities for teachers to lead and be a driving force behind teacher leadership development. A culture of trust is also a

necessary ingredient for teacher leadership to thrive. Finally, certain structural elements need to exist in order to allow for the development of teacher leadership, such as cross-curricular teams' specific assignments of responsibility over a certain area (Muijs & Harris, 2007).

Teacher Leadership in Professional Learning Communities

Distributed leadership happens in professional communities, which support teachers as agents of change (Hargreaves, 2002; Mujis & Harris, 2003). "A critical mass of teacher leaders engaged in a professional learning community can often maintain momentum in a school's improvement efforts even during changes in formal, administrative leadership" (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009, p. 9). In a professional learning community, teachers are collaborating and learning from each other's expertise. This is a great environment to allow teacher leadership to flourish (Harris, 2003). A professional learning community is a group of educators who trust each other and share the same mission to improve student learning. This allows teachers to lead by sharing or modeling lessons to each other, examining data, and problem solving.

CHAPTER 3: DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine both teacher and administrator perspectives of how teacher leaders impact instructional improvement in high schools and what supports and/or inhibits teacher leadership. In the preceding chapters, I have argued there is a school leadership crisis. Schools need distributed leadership to implement sustainable improvement. Teacher leadership has a positive impact on the school, including the students, administration, and the teachers themselves (Leithwood & Janzi, 1998; Barth, 2001; Pellicer & Anderson, 1995). Teacher leadership is a critical component of school improvement efforts especially in light of the limitations of principal leadership including job demands, principal shortages, and high turnover.

In this chapter I review the research questions and discuss the research design. In addition, I discuss the participants and setting, data collection methods, data analysis, and ethical considerations.

Research Questions

My study was designed to answer the following questions:

1. According to teachers and principals, how do teacher leaders influence instructional improvement at their school site? What impact do they have on the sustainability and propagation of improved instructional methods?
2. What do teachers perceive as the barriers and/or supports to teachers acting as leaders? According to teacher leaders, how do principals cultivate and/or inhibit teacher leadership?

3. What characteristics do schools that demonstrate effective teacher leadership have in common, which could inform other schools and school district policies?

Research Design

This study was a qualitative multiple-site study focusing on three large high schools. Each case study was an in-depth empirical inquiry of the complex social phenomenon of teacher leadership in the real-world context of each high school. Qualitative studies seek to recognize meanings and beliefs of participants while understanding how the particular context influences their behavior (Maxwell, 2013; Merriam, 2009). In addition, qualitative studies contribute to understanding the process that leads to outcomes rather than just the outcomes. The researcher is the primary instrument of data collection and analysis and the final product is richly descriptive (Maxwell, 2013).

Since the goals of the study were to provide insight and understanding of a single phenomenon of teacher leadership through interpreting teacher leaders' experiences, a qualitative multi-site case study was the best design choice. A qualitative study is preferred when focusing on process rather than variance or outcomes (Maxwell, 2013). Additionally, research asking "how" and "why" questions that are more explanatory favors the use of a case study (Yin, 2014). This study was interested in the "how" of teacher leadership rather than the outcome or testing of a hypothesis. Qualitative research focuses on understanding the meaning people have constructed (Merriam, 2009). Therefore, a qualitative case study was best to inductively analyze teacher leadership through the experiences of teacher leaders and administrators.

In addition, a qualitative case study is concrete and contextual (Merriam, 2009). This study focused on teacher leadership and how it was cultivated or inhibited within the context of a

large high school. While some data could be obtained from surveys, some variables depend on the local context so they cannot be identified ahead of time (Merriam, 2009). The benefits of the qualitative case study included the investigation of teacher leadership within its real-world context (Yin, 2014). This study analyzed the qualitative data to develop an in-depth description of teacher leadership in the local context.

Finally, to better understand and make policy recommendations to improve teacher leadership, it was necessary to understand the process and context of teacher leadership in a specific school district. A quantitative design could not fully describe the processes and social context necessary to develop a complete insight into the phenomenon of teacher leadership in a specific district. The concrete and contextual knowledge and interpretations from a qualitative multi-site study provided the best findings to inform and improve school district practices and policies surrounding teachers leading instructional improvement.

This study was organized into four phases: 1) The sample selection, 2) data collection 3) an analysis of each school, and 4) a cross-case analysis.

Phase One: The Sample Selection

The two basic types of sampling are probability sampling and nonprobability sampling (Merriam, 2009). Nonprobability sampling, specifically, purposeful sampling, is the most appropriate choice for qualitative research, including this study, because it allows the researcher to choose a case that is information-rich and maximizes the learning about the phenomenon to be studied. In this study, I used multiple criteria to select the three sites. First, I chose high schools in Union School District (USD, pseudonym) in the central valley of California. This district was selected because it was a typical sample (Merriam, 2009) reflecting the average high school demographics and achievement in California. Maxwell (2013) describes this approach to

purposeful selection as achieving the representativeness of the setting. In addition, this district allowed access to conduct this research and is interested in using the results of the research to improve educational outcomes for its students. Therefore, I believe the results of the study will make an impact on schools in the district that participated.

Within the district, three schools were chosen for the study using a criteria that measures growth of student academic achievement. I choose the three schools that had the largest Academic Performance Index (API) growth over the four year period of 2009 – 2013. Table 1 shows the API scores for each of the 18 high schools during this period. I conducted the study at the three sites that had four-year growth of 94, 96, and 99 points. This provided a purposeful sample of schools that demonstrated the most growth in student academic achievement in the district. Since my study asked questions surrounding teacher leaders and instructional improvement, this sampling ensured that the schools studied were actually improving.

Phase Two: Data Collection

The primary data collection methods were interviews with teachers and administrators. The use of interviews helped to “gain a greater depth of understanding” (Maxwell, 2013, p. 104). The semi-structured interview method was chosen because it provided the best data to answer the research questions. I systematically collected data about different aspects of teacher leadership providing the data necessary to answer the research questions.

Teacher and Administrator Interviews

People other than the researcher observed the phenomenon of teacher leadership in each of the schools. This study used interviews to “obtain the descriptions and interpretations of others” (Stake, 1995, p. 64). In fact, the interviews were the primary tool to obtain a description of actions and events that couldn’t be observed by the researcher.

Table 1

API Data for Each School in Union School District

School	Annual API Data					4-Year Growth
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	
01	607	644	661	666	671	64
02	705	709	711	712	713	8
03*	751	812	839	850	850	99
04	647	667	690	691	689	42
05*	642	651	713	715	738	96
06	763	779	807	819	817	54
07	650	666	702	733	731	81
08	670	720	720	738	752	82
09	771	765	776	777	773	2
10	698	704	694	683	726	28
11	774	763	780	809	813	39
12	639	646	659	678	699	60
13	670	718	710	738	752	82
14	699	723	741	734	752	53
15	649	690	671	668	679	30
16	637	676	698	698	689	52
17	803	821	820	831	829	26
18*	647	681	711	723	741	94

Note. * = The 3 schools with largest growth

At each school site I conducted semi-structured interviews with four to six teacher leaders identified by the principal and their peers. In addition, I interviewed the Principal and Assistant Principal of Instruction at two sites and only the principal at the third site due to

scheduling conflicts. This was a total of 21 interviews: 5 administrators and 16 teachers. Interviews followed an interview protocol (see Appendix C & D) with a set of questions designed to explore the issues surrounding the research questions. However, the semi-structured nature of the interview allowed the researcher to ask probing or follow-up questions to serve the needs of the study based on the emerging ideas of the interviewee. Each interview was recorded on two devices, a digital recorder and an iPhone. Each interview was transcribed.

Phase Three: Data Analysis of Each School

While described in two separate sections of this proposal, data collection and data analysis took place simultaneously. This process was “recursive and dynamic” (Merriam, 2009, p. 169) beginning with the first interview. There were two primary reasons for this. First, this avoided unanalyzed transcripts from piling up, overwhelming the researcher, and making analysis more challenging (Maxwell, 2013). Secondly, the simultaneous nature of the analysis allowed for early comparisons, continual reflection, and note-taking which will inform future data collection (Merriam, 2009).

The data was analyzed using a step-by-step process of procedures suggested by Creswell (2009), Maxwell (2013), Merriam (2009), and Yin (2014).

Organization and Managing Data: Each interview recording was transcribed verbatim. I created an inventory of the entire data set: transcripts and personal memos. In addition to the inventory, I organized it so data were easily retrievable (Merriam, 2009). I kept three separate sets of the data set, one for analysis, a hard copy for back up, and an e-copy for back up in the cloud.

Listening, Reading, and Note-taking: Early in the process of data collection I listened to interviews and read transcripts while writing notes and memos to “develop tentative ideas about

categories and relationships” (Maxwell, 2013, p. 105). Memos not only helped to capture ideas and thinking but also helped generate analytic thinking (Maxwell, 2013; Yin, 2014). This was where I obtained a “general sense of the information and to reflect on its overall meaning” (Creswell, 2009, p. 185).

Categorizing and Coding: This process of data analysis “begins by identifying segments in your data set that are responsive to your research questions” (Merriam, 2009, p. 176). These units of data were assigned codes that eventually were grouped together to construct categories. Categories were constructed as a result of an inductive process of analyzing the data and identifying a pattern spanning the data (Merriam, 2009).

Phase Four: Cross-Case Analysis

After the analysis of each school, I began a cross-case analysis. A cross-case analysis identifies themes and categories that span across the cases. Categories and themes from the individual schools were organized and conclusions were made about teacher leadership across multiple schools.

Ensuring Credibility, Validity, and Trustworthiness

In order to increase the validity of the study, I recorded participant responses word for word to make sure data collected were the exact words of the participant and not shortened. In addition, my protocol consisted of open ended questions to allow participants to elaborate on answers. I tried to be mindful of reactivity threat by examining how my presence could have influenced answers to certain questions. I refrained from asking questions that would put participants in a spot to have to describe their own importance to avoid the temptation to make themselves seem more or less impactful as a leader. External validity, the extent to what we can learn and apply from this study, is increased by using multiple sites with different ethnic and

socio-economic background of students. Finally, I used peer review as another strategy to establish validity. I used another doctoral student and my committee chair to review codes and categories to provide feedback or alternative explanations.

As the researcher in a qualitative study, the ultimate method for ensuring trustworthiness is the knowledge, experience, and role I took in this study. Yin proposes that in addition to peer review, the researcher can avoid bias by being open to contrary evidence (Yin, 2014).

Throughout the study looked for surprising or contrary evidence to my own or participants' particular perspective on an issue.

Ethical Issues

Throughout the process of data collection and data analysis, I was mindful of the ethical issues present. Each participant was assured that their responses were confidential and would not be shared with administration or colleagues. Pseudonyms are used in the final report and presenting data from multiple sites helps add to the confidentiality of responses. Throughout the study I kept participant's well-being a priority, beginning by reviewing the informed consent with each participant and stressing that participation in the study was optional. I secured all the data gathered including hard copy and electronic files. I will destroy the data after three years.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Introduction

In the spring of 2014, I spent time at three large comprehensive high schools interviewing administrators and teacher leaders. These three schools were selected because they showed the largest API growth of the eighteen high schools in the district over the four-year period from 2009 – 2013. I interviewed the principal, assistant principal of instruction and curriculum, and teacher leaders. The principal and fellow teachers selected teacher leaders to be interviewed. The focus of my investigation was to identify how teacher leaders influence instructional improvement and what supports or barriers to teacher leadership exist. My study sought to answer the following questions:

1. According to teachers and principals, how do teacher leaders influence instructional improvement at their school site? What impact do they have on the sustainability and propagation of improved instructional methods?
2. What do teachers perceive as the barriers and/or supports to teachers acting as leaders? According to teacher leaders, how do principals cultivate and/or inhibit teacher leadership?
3. What characteristics do schools that demonstrate effective teacher leadership have in common, which could inform other schools and school district policies?

The findings presented in this chapter are based on an analysis of interview transcripts with 5 administrators and 16 teacher leaders from three high schools. Data was coded and then organized into emerging themes that answered the research questions. This chapter is organized by major findings addressing the research questions.

Finding 1: Teacher Leaders Cannot Influence Instructional Improvement Without First Earning the Respect of Their Colleagues

My first research question examined how teacher leaders influence instructional improvement at their school. Through the interviews with teacher leaders and administrators, it was clear that the credibility of teacher leaders was pivotal in their ability to lead instructional improvement. In 16 of 21 interviews, teacher leaders discussed the quality of being trusted, respected, or believed as the foundation for allowing teacher leaders to influence others. Chris's sentiment, a social studies teacher at Canyon High School, summarized it well when he said "Especially when you see people you respect, then I think there are a lot more people willing to say, 'Hey, I think I'm going to give that a try, too.'" In order for an idea, strategy, or instructional practice to spread, teachers needed to believe in the credibility of the teacher leader sharing or promoting it.

Many of the teacher leaders talked about respect being earned through behaviors such as friendliness and hard work. Friendliness helped build connections to other staff members providing a bridge that ideas could travel back and forth on. Hard work showed commitment and dedication to the success of the organization, strengthening the teacher leader's credibility. Julie, the Teacher Librarian at Valley High School, described how building relationships has enabled her leadership to influence others:

I think it's that you're respected on the campus. When I first got here, the library was not used at all. No one wanted to come into the library. It took a lot of effort and finally it's at the point that, if they're walking through, I'm like, "Hey, I heard you guys are doing this—why don't we add this component?" or, "I thought of this mini-research thing we could do," and because I say it, it's okay. That's because I put the effort in to be a nice person and establish relationships.

She described making an intentional effort to be friendly and build relationship so that important conversations and collaboration could take place around instructional issues. When teachers walked through the library, Julie did not just say “hello” but she engaged teachers by asking about their classes and learning about what their students were studying. This effort of establishing relationships allowed her to make suggestions and offer the library as a resource. Julie did not attribute the changes in the number of teachers using the library to her knowledge and expertise as a librarian, but rather to her efforts to establish relationships. George, a teacher at Canyon High School, also described the importance of making connections to other teachers:

You have to be able to show that you have a connection to people. For example, ...I think if that teacher who does not know the name of my colleague, the mindset from him already is negative until...by showing the idea of friendliness and reaching out to different people on campus, you at least buy the chance of them keeping an open mind about stuff you propose.

In this example, George described how something as seemingly simple as knowing and calling someone by their name would create a connection allowing meaningful dialogue about instruction to take place. The friendliness a teacher leader extended to other teachers made a difference in others trying their ideas, strategies, and instructional practices. Therefore it was not only what is communicated, but also *who* communicated it, that determined the successful influence of teacher leaders. Teacher leaders opened a door for their ideas and suggestions to influence others when they broke down barriers by friendly interactions and made connections with others by building relationships.

In addition, teacher leaders’ relationships with students also influenced their credibility. Becky, a teacher from Valley High School, explained: “I have a tendency to trust more when I

see how another teacher behaves, too, with their students. Not just in their relationship with me, but how involved they are on campus and how energetic they are about teaching.” Becky went on to share examples of walking across campus with teachers that had a positive rapport with students and observing how students would want to come up and interact with that teacher. These experiences influenced how Becky viewed this teacher. Positive relationships were necessary for teacher leaders to influence instructional improvement beyond the walls of their classroom.

Although friendliness and relationships set the stage for ideas to transfer to others, more importantly the credibility of the messenger depended on how others perceived their work ethic and commitment to the organization and the teaching profession. Debra, a teacher at Valley High School, described what it took for teachers to believe in teacher leaders: “I think that you have to be a hard worker, yourself. When people realize that you really do what you say you do, and then they see it done consistently over a long period of time, they believe you.” Teachers saw how hard other teachers work. This hard work demonstrated a commitment that showed teaching, for this person, is not just about a job. Jill, a teacher at Lake High School, described how respect is earned by demonstrating one’s devotion to teaching, which is shown by committing time and energy to the job. “They’re [teacher leaders] just always here. They’re not taking all of their absences during the year; they’re consistently here. They’re dependable.” Multiple teachers described how teachers are acutely aware of who arrives at the first bell and leaves at the last bell and also those teachers on the other end of the spectrum that show their dedication by being at work every day and putting in the time to be prepared, improve, and create the best lessons possible. When asked a follow up question about how teachers earn respect, Javier, a teacher at Lake High School, explained it by saying, “I think it has to do with

work ethic...but I think the teachers just kind of know who is working hard and who is not. You know a little bit from walking through another teacher's classroom and you know a little bit from what students say." Hard work combined with passion shows a dedication to students and the school, this in turn increased teacher leaders' credibility. Julie, the Teacher Librarian at Valley High School, described this commitment as caring what happens at the school so the students get a good education:

They [teacher leaders] just care a lot about what happens at school. I think that's part of my thing; I care what happens in the classroom even though I'm not a classroom teacher. I want this to be a good school and I want the kids to come here to have a good education. It's not just, "Oh, it's just my job."

When teachers felt that a teacher leader connected with them, worked hard, and cared about the school, they were more likely to open up and try things the teacher leader shared with them. The administrators' responses confirmed the importance of these attributes of teacher leaders. Stan, the principal at Canyon High School summed up their responses when he said, "They [*teacher leaders*] develop this credibility with the rest of the staff. The rest of the staff know, 'Hey, this is an outstanding teacher.' A lot of it, also, is work ethic. A lot of these teachers we're talking about are credible go above and beyond." The administrators recognized that the teacher leaders on their campuses, the ones helping to drive instructional improvement, developed credibility through their friendliness, hard work, and reputation as one who goes above and beyond the minimum contractual obligations of a teacher.

All of the administrators interviewed discussed the credibility or respect among the staff as a necessary characteristic of teacher leaders. All three principals described teacher leaders as first being a good teacher in their own classroom. They described teacher leaders as

“outstanding teachers”, they do “a good job in their classroom,” they “model the way of others,” and they “lead by example; they’re able to do the things that they talk about doing.” The principals recognized that teacher leaders’ credibility was based in their classroom practices. In other words, teacher leaders do not just talk the talk, they walk the walk. The work in teacher leaders’ own classrooms provided the foundation of their credibility among staff because these teacher leaders demonstrated success in seeing their instructional practices lead to increased student learning. This increased learning was evident to other teachers when they saw evidence of student success and heard from students in these classrooms.

Half of the interview respondents discussed how student results and evidence of success increased the credibility of teacher leaders and help them drive instructional improvement. Ideas, strategies, or practices that had good results encouraged teachers to share them and others to implement them. Positive results provided credibility to an idea and the teacher who used it. Even certain teachers’ student performance on standardized tests such as AP tests or California Standards Tests were discussed as “amazing” by those interviewed. Positive student testing results provided those teachers with credibility among other teachers because what they did resulted in good student outcomes.

Successful results also provided momentum for change or for new ideas. Change is not easy and may not be embraced, but teacher leaders shared examples of teachers taking steps forward, which led to positive results and helped the flywheel of innovation continue to turn. John, a teacher at Valley High School described it this way: “It’s kind of a little different change of thought and you had to be open-minded to what was going on, but when you started looking at the results, the results were obviously there.” Positive results helped teachers to embrace change and continue down a path that was unfamiliar or uncomfortable. Positive results also allowed

ideas to stick once they were implemented. In discussing the spread of one instructional strategy, Chris, a teacher at Canyon High School, said, “Teachers went back, started using it, and found some really good results with it. It began to spread and I think as people tried it, they saw the positive effects and the results with student learning.” Once something was implemented, positive impact on student learning gave the idea traction and enabled it to become part of the curriculum or instructional program.

One surprise finding was the importance of students in shaping the credibility of teacher leaders. Most respondents discussed different ways students influenced a teacher’s perceptions of another teacher. Teachers learned about other teachers from what their students shared day after day and year after year. Chris, a teacher at Canyon High school, described it this way:

Or you just kind of know because students are drawn to certain teachers. You know there’s something special going on—I’ll use Joe again as an example—there are kids knocking on his door to get into AP European History as sophomores; what kids care about European history? You know there’s something special going on there.

The amount of respect, admiration, and excitement students had for a teacher’s classroom increased that teacher’s credibility among his or her peers. Other interview respondents were more specific in describing how students shared the activities they did in one class with other teachers. Megan, a teacher leader at Canyon High School, described how students talked about the great activities they did in other classes:

As much as I probably shouldn’t say this, a lot of it is just from listening to your students. You listen to your students talk and you know—they’ll talk about what they’re doing in their classes. “Oh, we did this in science today,” or, “We did this in English.” You hear these great things that are going on and when you see students excited, how can you not

believe in that? If the kids are buying into it, how could the adults not buy into it? A lot of it just comes from that and just seeing what kids bring in, just hearing about what's going on. Then you talk to them, "Hey, what were you doing in class today? The kids were like... They came in there all pumped up."

Teachers explained that they listened to their students talk about their experiences in other classrooms. This was an open door for ideas to be shared. Another teacher explained how teachers should expect that what they do in their classroom will travel across the school. In fact, this teacher saw this as an advertisement for the good instructional strategies or activities that were taking place:

Whatever we do in our classroom that works, and I don't care who you are on this campus, someone else is going to hear about it and that's when we start calling other teachers and saying, "Tell me what you did with that, how you did that, because the kids have been using it. They've talked about it," and it's really funny. The writing that we do here, the chemistry teacher, she called me and said, "I don't know what you're doing with those kids, but they just did their lab report and it was a really good job." I'm like, "I don't know what you're doing because they're coming in and they're talking about all of this stuff they're doing in there." But this is what happens. Your kids are your best advertisement.

Students are a component of how teacher leaders influence instructional improvement. Teachers shared examples of how students came in to class using a helpful tool or template from another class or describing a lesson or something they learned that was fun and engaging. Student comments about activities in a teacher's classroom, their performance on standardized tests, and

their excitement for a certain class influenced how credible teachers were to their fellow teachers.

Administrators from each school also discussed how students were the conduits for teachers to learn about other teachers. When asked what makes teachers believe that other teachers are good teachers, Monique, an Assistant Principal at Lake High School, immediately described how teachers learned from their students:

Kids. Kids tell them. “How come you’re missing my class all the time, but you never miss Mr. Smith’s class?” “Well, I like his class. It’s a lot of fun.” “So, okay, if you like his class, he must be doing something right—maybe I need to go over there and see it.” It really does spread from kids. Kids are the ones that spread the positives and the negatives about teachers.

The principals at Canyon and Valley High School also discussed how students shared information about classes where they were learning and where good things were happening. Students were an important piece in forming the credibility of teacher leaders and transmitting the excitement for a certain idea or strategy to other teachers they interacted with.

Finding 2: Teacher Leaders Need Opportunities to Share With Other Teachers in Order to Influence Their Teaching Practices

When teacher leaders explained how they influence instructional improvement at their school site, the majority discussed sharing ideas with other teachers. It was clear that, in order for teacher leaders to influence other teachers, there has to be structured time where ideas are shared. Some teachers discussed how ideas are shared during the time between classes or at lunch, but recognized these informal meetings were not enough. Regular collaboration time among teachers, teacher leaders, and administrators were important to improve instruction within

and beyond the walls of teacher leaders' classrooms. All three sites have embraced the concept of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) where teachers of the same course meet regularly to collaborate on improving student learning. Nearly all interviewees referred to the regular, structured, collaborative time PLCs provide when discussing how a good idea, strategy, or instructional practice is shared with other teachers. Chris, a teacher at Canyon High School, described what it was like before and after the implementation of PLCs:

When I started here, we did not really—I mean, we shared some ideas at lunch or in prep periods or something like that, but now we're so cohesive—at least so much more cohesive. I still think there's freedom, but I think that not only helped when we had testing the way it was, but I think it just helped our instruction overall. Even in government econ where we don't have state testing, but we realized that was working for other groups on campus, so why weren't we doing the same thing? This is the goal, even if there isn't a test at the end.

As a teacher of seniors, who do not take state testing, Chris embraced the collaboration and ideas of other teams because of the results they had. Ultimately, he recognized the collaboration with his fellow government teachers helped improve instruction in their classrooms.

Teacher leaders discussed how, after the implementation of PLCs, it was hard to teach in isolation and “do your own thing.” The regular structured time enabled, and some would say strongly encouraged, teachers to share ideas including what worked and what didn't. Prior to the implementation of PLCs, teachers did not share with each other as much as they did at the time of the interviews. Teams of teachers teaching the same course met almost weekly to discuss instructional strategies and learn from each other. Debra, a teacher at Valley High School, described the benefits of these regular times to share:

I think that the structured time and the consistency of that meeting time gave us that ability and availability to meet and share. I don't think people would do that if it wasn't scheduled in. We do it informally a lot, just through conversations, but I think there has to be a formal structure in place at the school to make sure it's continually happening evenly, and it's not a lottery based on whose classroom you're in that you're going to get this great teaching lesson or strategy. Everybody's getting it.

Debra described how more sharing takes place now that her school has regular weekly meeting with teachers of the same course. Without this regular time to share, the informal conversations would not lead to the influence on teacher practice that the structured time provides. Debra also explained how these conversations benefit students. She refers to the educational lottery, a concept that describes how some students experience good instruction in one classroom, while a student in the same course next door will not experience the same level of instruction or curriculum. However, teacher leaders described their practice of teachers meeting regularly to agree on a high quality curriculum and share best instructional practices. For example, Becky, at Valley High, shared how common core instructional practices are shared at PLC meetings. "We've been having a lot of frustration with Common Core, just because we're all trying new things and nobody's really gotten a handle of it. We express those things at our meetings and people kind of bounce ideas back and forth, and then they take it back to their department and try to make something. It gets disseminated that way." Now students in both classrooms were given the same curriculum and benefit from instructional practices that were chosen and refined by teachers working in teams and discussing what worked and what didn't.

In addition to sharing with teams or departments, some teacher leaders shared across departments in cross-curricular teams. These meetings helped foster the transmission of

innovative ideas and effective instructional strategies from one department to another. Melissa, an English teacher at Valley High School, explained how the PLC leaders (leaders from each subject) met once a month to share ideas and what she learned from the science department:

We used to meet about once a month with [the principal] and we would talk about what's going on and what we could do to help it. We would learn different strategies from different other PLC departments and maybe use some of them to help make our teaching stronger. I know I used a lot of [*ideas from*] science; I went to the interactive notebook. I'm using that this year and it's fabulous. "How did that work? What can you do?" I had a science teacher come in and actually show me how to do it. Then I implemented it for English, and wow.

Without this structured meeting time for PLC leaders, Melissa would not have learned about the interactive notebooks and then used them to improve instruction in her classroom. Many high school campuses have 75 – 100 teachers with teachers organized by departments. Structured time for sharing and collaboration between departments allowed teacher leaders' ideas to influence more classrooms on campus.

Another teacher discussed how she saw the benefit of cross-curricular conversations. In this case teachers had a prompt for discussion but also were held accountable for implementing a strategy and reporting back to the team about how it went. Lavonne, a teacher at Lake High school, shared this "sharing, doing, and sharing" process:

I would say that there definitely has to be a willingness to work with others, but also having the time to do that, which is why I think that having the built-in time with the cross-curricular planning has been really helpful. We had some teachers share out, as well as some strategies they had. We then ... actually asked each teacher in the cross-

curricular groups to try one of the strategies we had talked about, then to expand upon it, and then to talk about whether it worked or it didn't work in their own classroom during the next meeting we had.

Not only was there time to meet, there was also discussion prompts and a process to encourage teachers to share and try new things, reflect on how it went, and share the results with others.

A component common to all three schools' system for teacher collaboration was accountability. Each school held weekly course-alike team meetings for teachers. These were not staff meeting or department meetings where members listen to the leader give directions, but these were collaborative meetings where teachers planned units, designed lessons, evaluated data, and discussed what was working and what was not working. When teams looked at results from a common assessment, teams found that sometimes students in one class perform better than students in another. Before these schools became a PLC, fellow teachers never knew how students in other classes were performing compared to their students on the same assessment. John from Valley High School describes the positive outcome of these discussions:

We met weekly to see how—when I say "we," that was the US History group and the World History group, both of those PLCs—to see how our kids were doing on those things and in many cases, why, if it went well in one class and not in the other, then it was, "What did you do? What do I need to improve on?"

Teachers benefited from the lack of isolation because sometimes they saw students of other teachers performing better than their students, which provided a catalyst to try new things to improve and not just embrace the status quo. When teachers agreed to teach the same content, give a shared assessment, and review the results together, there was an inventive and built in

accountability to prepare their students to perform well so their results weren't below the rest of the team members.

Staff meetings at schools served as professional development session where teacher leaders had the opportunity to share with their colleagues. Chris, a teacher at Canyon High School, described it this way, "As teachers have tried different methods or instructional strategies and have found success—even when they didn't find success—they had opportunities to share it with the rest of the staff at staff meetings." At all three schools studied, teacher leaders indicated teachers were encouraged by administrators to present information about successful practices to the whole staff. The administration at the three sites valued teacher leaders sharing with the whole staff and understood the importance and effectiveness of teachers leading teachers. Megan described how this looked at Canyon High School:

Our principal tries to get as many people... I would bet over half the faculty has, at least at one point in time, done some type of presentation.... We do that quite a bit at our faculty meetings. There are usually always a couple of teachers that are presenting something.

Tonya, a teacher from Lake High school, described a similar phenomenon:

They've always said, "You should come back and share what you have." Even when we chose some strategies, school-wide, like one was summarizing, one was marking the text and all that, we had workshops but they were all led by volunteer staff members who wanted to do it.

At Valley High School, Vanessa described it this way:

I feel like it's been super effective because... I know when I was new, if it was coming from administration, it's like, (coughs indicatively), and you're an administrator. Like,

oh my gosh, and when it's coming from a teacher and a colleague, I feel like I would be more willing to be like, "Well, okay. They've used it in the classroom, they know how it works.

At all three sites it was common for teacher leaders to share what they were doing and what they learned from off campus professional development sessions in front of the staff.

Almost all the administrators and teachers interviewed discussed teacher collaboration as a necessary ingredient for instructional improvement. Jill at Lake High School said "Well, before, I was my team. I didn't know what anybody else was doing, what the problems were, I didn't feel like I could go to them, and now we just meet all the time." When asked about the instructional improvements over the last 5 years, most respondents discussed the role of PLC's. Teachers at all three sites were no longer isolated but part of a team teaching the same content. They still had the freedom to teach lessons in their own style, but agreed on the essential standards students needed to learn in their content area and developed a common assessment to determine if their students learned the standards. Becky's description mirrored many of the teacher's positive comments about the dedicated time within the workday for teachers to collaborate and how this meaningful collaboration was a catalyst for instructional improvement:

I can't tell you the difference it's made for us to be able to work in a team and take the time to really look at our curriculum and really figure out what the students need, to plan together, instead of a teacher being in their own island. You know, that collaborative nature is probably the best thing.

Finding 3: School Leaders Cultivate Teacher Leadership by Involving Them in Decision-making and Providing Opportunities to Lead

Based on both administrator and teacher responses, each of the sites displayed shared leadership characteristics. Each site had different structures in place and processes where leadership was distributed in the organization. In addition, teachers from each site described being involved in school wide decisions such as modifying the bell schedule to allow for intervention during school day, choosing the high yield instructional strategies to focus on, and designing and presenting professional development. In addition, principals from the three sites believed that teacher leaders were a vital driver in the growth that occurred at their school. Maria, principal at Lake High School, shared a similar sentiment of how each principal felt about the involvement of his or her teacher leaders in the school improvement process. After describing the improved practices in and out of the classroom she said, “I believe that our teachers, they were truly instrumental in making that happen.” The principals believed teacher were leaders who were difference makers, influencing other teachers to embrace beliefs and practices that led to improved student outcomes.

Each principal met with a team made up of a variety of teacher leaders on a regular basis. The name for this group varied by school site, but the composition was very similar. Stan, the principal at Canyon High School, called this the “Guiding Coalition”. Since the other two schools had a similar team with a similar purpose, I will refer to these teams as the Guiding Coalition at each school. Each school included formal teacher leaders such as department chairs on this team, but also reached beyond department chairs to include others leaders. Stan looked for other respected teachers who did not have formal leadership position. Mike, the principal at Valley High School, included Professional Development Leaders (PDLs) on this team. In addition to PDLs, Mike created teacher leader positions called instructional coaches who joined

the Guiding coalition as well. Also just like Stan, Mike included, in his words, “non-title leaders on campus.”

Maria, principal at Lake High School, described a significant school wide change that came from the Guiding Coalition at her school: moving from a double lunch (where 9th and 10th graders eat together and 11th and 12th graders eat together) to a single lunch. The main driver was a desire to improve student learning by increasing opportunities for collaboration among teachers including teachers from other departments. The genesis of this decision was conversations that took place at the Guiding Coalition meetings. There were reasons to have a double lunch including crowd control in terms feeding students expeditiously and limiting student misbehavior, so the team needed to carefully examine the reasons to move to a single lunch.

Just sharing of information, that was one of the reasons because we felt that if everyone has the one lunch, then everybody has the opportunity, as we start moving toward the cross-curricular professional learning teams. If people want to get together and talk at lunch and if they just want to get together and strengthen their bonds as teachers—which is important for teacher leaders, too, and builds confidence in other people—that’s a way to do it, too. That wasn’t the sole reason, but it was one of the deciding factors.

The school wide decision did not originate with and was not dictated by the principal, but rather began in conversations among teacher leaders and administration in the Guiding Coalition. The school went to one lunch which allowed teachers to collaborate during a common lunch. In order to facilitate collaboration, the school set up a lunch appointment program where ten teachers each month are encouraged to have lunch with another staff member they do not normally spend time with. Along with the structural change of creating a single lunch, the lunch

appointment initiative allowed people to make connections that would otherwise not have formed.

At Canyon High School, the Guiding Coalition was responsible for developing instructional norms, which are teacher behaviors, instructional strategies, or lesson elements that are implemented in every classroom school wide. For instance, teachers agreed to use graphic organizers in their lessons. Stan, the principal, described this as a year and a half process where the teacher discussed and agreed upon norms, which should be present in every classroom. In addition to the formation of the norms, Stan discussed how important the teacher leaders on the Guiding Coalition were to “transmit” the vision of the team to the rest of a school. He says, “It’s a process. Your leaders are involved in helping shape that vision.” So this team of leaders was not only involved in substantial decision-making that impacted everyone’s classroom or the whole school community, but also had an important role in getting the rest of the teachers behind the collective vision for the school.

At Valley High School, summer professional development is organized and led by teachers. The weeklong training was called Harvesting Teacher Brilliance (HTB). Each presenter and facilitator was a Valley High teacher. Mike, the principal at Valley, described the rationale behind the training, and its name.

We crafted that title because it was about recognizing that our teachers possess the brilliance that was needed; we just needed a structure and approach to be able to pull it out of them, or to support them as they share it with others. “Harvesting Teacher Brilliance” has been a great name because that’s what it’s about. That’s what the summer staff development is about. We didn’t always have to go someplace else to get

it; we had it in our ranks. That in itself, just the name, empowers people. Just the name creates a mindset. We don't have to go someplace else to get it.

Behind the training is the belief that teachers have the capability to create and lead professional development. Mike believed in his teacher leaders and provided opportunities for them to decide what the focus of the summer training was and trusted them to lead the training.

Through this professional development, teacher leaders had the opportunity to share strategies with other teachers that improved student learning. A teacher at Valley High School described the topics of these professional development sessions as based on "teacher needs." Another described HTB as "all teacher driven."

The shared leadership at Valley High School was also evident in their decision to change the bell schedule from a modified schedule with an intervention block to a more traditional schedule. According to Alfredo, a teacher at Valley, the parameter for the decision was "It's not what's good for you, but it's what's good for the students. Take out what's good for you." Teacher teams were guided to make a decision based on what was good for students, not for teachers. This was discussed by the Guiding Coalition and then brought back to the departments. Then each department had to make a decision whether to keep the bell schedule the same or modify it. Similar to Lake High School, administrators presented the decision to change the bell schedule to teachers to decide.

Finally, Teachers at Valley High School were also actively involved in a school wide push to evaluate and improve grading policies. Debra, a teacher at Valley describes the process as a something that "could have been disastrous but it wasn't, I think because we went about it in the right way. I think a lot of input, a lot of... It was just a shared decision." Rather than a top down decision that could have resulted in fragmented results and reluctance to change, Debra

described a process of shared decision-making that allowed departments to develop a common grading policy. This process involved learning together through district professional development, a book study, and small group discussion. Debra concluded, “We made decisions as a department because we need to have it consistent, so that student A is not telling parents, ‘I want to move to that teacher’s class because they do this grading scale.’ We wanted consistency for the students. It wasn’t as bad as I thought it was going to be.” The administrative team trusted teachers to make a decision and create new grading policies that supported student learning.

All three sites had evidence of teachers involved in shared leadership and school wide decision-making. Jill, a teacher at Lake High school, shared “I think they give us a lot of opportunity to be leaders. We have all these PLTs, WASC, all these opportunities where we can be leaders.” That was the consensus among teachers interviewed. They felt like they had opportunities to lead and be involved in decision-making affecting the whole school.

Finding 4: Teacher Leaders Report That an Attitude of Resistance and Commitment to the Status Quo Are the Primary Barriers to Teacher Leadership

When discussing the barriers to teacher leadership that exist in their schools, the most common responses were not lack of resources or an unsupportive administration, but the resistance other teachers. Both teachers and administrators agreed that barriers to teacher leadership include teachers with an attitude of resistance and those committed to the status quo.

One form of resistance that emerged from the data was resistance from teachers who felt teachers taking an active leadership role were too closely aligned with the administration.

George, a teacher from Canyon High School, said:

Part of that, too, is like with staff members, when they see teachers taking leadership, they also in some ways think that it is one that is catering to the administration in there. I think one of the barriers is when you become a teacher leader on campus, some of your peers are going to think, number one, that you are the lapdog of the administration—especially if they support your efforts. Even though it was your idea, they support your efforts. I think the second thing is that they think you're not on their side when you sometimes take these movements.

George was a teacher leader who took initiative to implement new ideas. He experienced resistance from other teachers when administrators supported his ideas. For example, over the summer he read a book with research on student success and presented highlights to the staff at back to school meetings. He shared his power point with the staff and followed up with periodic emails with principles from the book. Some staff shared resistance to George's initiative to bring current research to the staff's consciousness. The resistance included comments questioning his motives and accusing him of wanting to "move up, wear a suit, and become an administrator." Some teachers question other teachers for leading. They viewed some teacher leader behaviors such as presenting in staff meetings as not being "one of them."

Another teacher from Canyon High School, Chris, described this phenomenon:

I remember a few people early on when I was teaching here. I'd get little snide comments, "You're the principal's boy." I forget the exact wording but it was kind of upsetting to have that. I don't think most people feel that way. It's a pretty small group and it's always critical of the administration, no matter what they do.

Teachers who either disliked or did not respect the administration grouped teacher leaders with the administration and were resistant or critical of teachers exercising leadership. The teacher

leaders experiencing this did not express that other teachers were critical of their ideas or questioned the merit of the strategies they were sharing, but rather were critical of a perceived connection with the administration. This took place because the administration supported their leadership by providing time at staff meeting for them to share or the fact that the administration endorsed the ideas the teacher leaders were promoting.

In addition to the resistance due to a perceived connection teacher leaders had with the administration, teacher leaders also described teachers wanting to keep the status quo. Chris shared a common sentiment reported by teacher leaders “I think it’s probably just like any school. There are a lot of teachers that just aren’t open to new ideas.” A lack of openness to changing how things were done in a classroom was a barrier for teacher leaders. Teachers became comfortable with their routines and practices and were not interested in changing. Alfredo, a teacher at Valley High School, reported “you have some that are set in their ways and they’re not doing anything to hurt the kids—they’re doing what they believe is the best for them. They have their belief which is different from the others—it’s a little bit difficult, sometimes, to change.” Alfredo did not describe an active resistance but a comfort with the way things have been done in the past. Teachers “set in their ways” were reluctant to try ideas put forth by teacher leaders.

Some teacher leaders described this commitment to the status quo as based in distrust of something new. Tonya, at Lake High School, reported that “the barrier, probably for some, is still that suspicion. I think there are some teachers that are suspicious of anything.” Tonya described teachers that due to some misgiving about a new strategy, improvement initiative, or new direction were reluctant to change their ways. Other teacher leaders described reluctance to try something new based on distrust due to a teacher leader who had a different subject expertise

or the teacher had a personal conflict with a teacher leader. Vanessa, a teacher at Valley High School said:

I've never experienced it, but I know before, in the past, people would say things like, "I don't want to listen to what they say," or, "That's a science guy," "That's a history thing and it's not going to work for my class." I've not experienced it. I don't know if maybe stuff is being talked about that I don't know about and I know there could be some conflict, like with our other AVID teacher and some other teachers on campus that don't get along with her very well. So they would probably not receive information from her very well versus from me. There are some personal problems, I guess you could say, that could hinder it.

The suspicions displayed in Vanessa's comments were not based on the merit of the ideas being shared but on who was sharing it. Some teachers did not listen or try ideas simply because of who was sharing them. The teacher sharing the idea could have been from a different department, which may in itself erect a barrier that kept teachers from listening and/or trying what was discussed. Personal conflicts or dislike of teachers also created a barrier that inhibited ideas from spreading.

Other described this commitment to the status quo as reluctance to do more or extra work. When describing the barriers to teacher leadership LaVonne, a teacher at Lake High School, said:

I wouldn't say that it's the admin so much as some of the teachers themselves. They're not willing to put in the extra time and they don't want to... It's always the question of, "Am I getting paid for this?" There are not unlimited funds and I think that some people fail to see that. You have to be willing to do some of the things. It's not so much the

admin hindering the teachers being leaders as the teachers themselves... .It's frustrating sometimes; especially when you see some of the same people doing a lot of the work.

LaVonne agreed with the sentiment of many of the interviewees: teachers can themselves be barriers to teacher leaders. Improving classroom instruction took planning and work outside of the classroom time. It meant the possibility of changing teacher practice that has been consistent for years.

Each principal interviewed also described a group of teachers committed to the status quo. All three described a small group of teachers who were opposed to change. Mike, the principal at Valley, described this barrier to teacher leadership:

The second type of inherent barrier, when you talk about barriers, would be the attitudinal barrier. And just because we have a great ship metaphor that everybody can visualize and understand does not mean that everybody on the team gets on the boat or that everyone on the team fills a role as a crew member and is doing their job. I think attitudinal barriers or issues, because some people don't want to work that hard and they impact others around them.

Similar to the teachers above, Mike described a group of teachers not embracing the vision of the school and unwilling to work hard. He described it as an attitudinal barrier. Stan, the principal at Canyon, described it as "the person's own internal bias barrier, that can shut their ears off." Finally, the third principal, when asked about barriers also described a few teachers as a "factor right now that is really working against change" and against "promoting teachers to go above and beyond." Both teacher leaders and principals pointed to "other teachers" as a barrier to teacher leadership. Principals focused on these resistant teachers as having an attitude or bias

that provided a barrier to teacher leaders influencing the resisters' teaching practices. Teacher leaders described the resisters as being set in their ways or not wanting to put in the extra effort.

Finding 5: Teacher Leaders Believe There is a Need for Other Teachers to Become Teacher Leaders

Teachers from the three sites expressed the desire and need for other teachers to “step up” and be teacher leaders. In addition, teacher leaders from the three sites believed their administration would welcome more teachers engaging in leadership. When asked about barriers to teacher leadership, Stacy stated:

As I said, we've got a great administrative team who is constantly looking for people to step up to that plate. The problem is, we have an old and tired staff. You don't have a lot of people that want to do that. “My classroom, I spend enough time here, this is... I've been teaching 25-30 years, this is what I want to do and I don't want to do anything else.” And that's just kind of hard, when we don't get that infusion of enthusiastic, younger kids, it's a little bit difficult, then. It's harder, then, to find somebody who wants to step up to that plate. That's all.

A common theme among teacher leaders was the desire to see others step up. Teacher leaders believed that other teachers needed to take on the mantle of leadership. However, Stacy recognized that leadership took energy and not every teacher was open to the work and effort required to be a leader.

Debra, a teacher leader at Valley High School, described her desire to see more teachers take on leadership responsibility:

Sometimes you see the same people who don't want to do anything and the same people who want to do whatever it takes. Then you have a group of teachers who I think have a

ton of potential. We need to identify those people and start building them up so that they can start taking on more responsibility, which is what we started to do in English.

Debra identified a group separate from the leaders and resisters. This was a group of potential teacher leaders that needed to be identified and equipped to be leaders.

Many teacher leaders described teacher leaders as a group that gets tapped on the shoulder to a disproportionate amount of work. Tonya, a teacher leader from Lake High School, explained the phenomenon of the same group of teacher leaders taking on leadership responsibilities even when there was an open invitation to others:

I'll be very honest with you, it's like the same group, you have... Every time there's a committee of some kind I think it's like any other campus; you have a group. You have that group that comes at 7:30 and leaves at 2:30, that's it. And then you have that group who is over-extended, and sometimes you end up with the same people. They always throw it out there, "Is there anybody in your department that wants to do it?" It's always an open invitation.

Tonya shared a common theme among teacher leaders: Teachers leaders went above and beyond to lead but can become "overextended." Other teacher leaders described this phenomenon as "There are like three people in the math department who do everything... I wish they [the other teachers] would [get asked to lead] so they could kind of step up and we could have a little break" and "I would say that sometimes there's just too much on one person's plate. It gets to a point where people start shying away from roles because then they see someone feeling overwhelmed. I had felt like that a couple of times."

Some teacher leaders expressed concern that their leadership commitments could interfere with their own classroom responsibilities. When asked about barriers teacher leaders face, Javier talked about how busy he was:

You've got your own classes, your own grading, your own things that you're going to do. It seems like a lot of times, the best teachers, if you want something done, to ask a busy person to do it. It seems like the ones that should be leading are the most busy and maybe don't have time to do those kinds of things.

Another teacher talked about how busy she was and made a conscious effort to say no to some leadership opportunities. Vanessa, a teacher leader at Valley High School, reported, "I stepped back myself because I wanted to make sure I still focused on my kids." She described teaching an extended day class (a class instead of a preparation period) and having to reduce the investment she made in sharing strategies with or coaching other teachers because that took her away from her classroom and she felt she was letting her students down.

Teacher leaders recognized there was room for more leaders to "step up to the plate." They recognized the potential in others and the danger of a small group of teacher leaders getting burned out by taking on leadership opportunities. However teacher leaders did not only want other teacher leaders to "step up", but they wanted administrators to tap others on the shoulder and ask others beyond the smaller, predictable group of teacher leaders already involved in many leadership activities. Jill, a teacher leader at Lake High School, shared:

They ask me a lot of times to represent the math department at the district and we just had a cross-curricular [team training] so they asked a member from each department to go. I kind of notice the same people are the ones being asked to be the leaders.

Jill shared how she recognized the same people at district trainings she attended as evidence that administrators across the district were asking the same small group of teacher leaders to attend. Another teacher from the same school shared, “I think sometimes the administration likes to surround themselves with ‘yes’ people.” So, there were some leadership opportunities that required administrators to select or approve teachers in addition to the open invitations described earlier. Teacher leaders recognized the need for administrators to expand the group of teachers they offer these opportunities.

Finding 6: Administrators Are Key Supporters of Teacher Leaders

Teacher leaders interviewed for this study felt supported by the administration. When asked about what administrators do to cultivate teacher leadership, Jill, a teacher leader at Lake High School reported:

I just feel like our admin is really supportive of us to do what we want to do within our groups. I feel like they trust us. I think they know that we are going to do the task that they want us to do and I appreciate that feeling I get from them.

At the same time, the administration provided direction and autonomy for the teacher teams. There was a balance between providing guidance or tasks for the groups to accomplish and trusting the groups to accomplish their tasks without micromanaging. Teachers described how there was sometimes an item the administrators wanted discussed at the team meetings, but that the teachers created the agenda for team meetings, not the administrators. When given the autonomy to run meetings, administrators displayed trust in the professionalism of the teacher leaders and, in turn, teacher leaders felt supported.

Other teacher leaders shared examples of how the administrators showed trust in them. One teacher leader shared how the administrators weren’t asking to see all the work produced at

the team meetings. She said, “I know in the World History department, they come up with their own CFAs [common formative assessment]... at the administrative level, nobody’s saying we want to see it... I think there’s become a trust that is there now.” In the past, administration made all the teams meet in the cafeteria and administrators would rotate from group to group. Now they met in teacher classrooms, and the teachers noticed the trust the administration has in them. Another teacher leader shared a story of a team of teachers at a professional development conference in a different city. Soon after it began, the teachers realized the content was not going to benefit them, their students, or their school. One of the team members called the principal and he said, “That’s fine. I trust you. Come on home.” This leader then said, “That’s the kind of trust we have with him and I haven’t had that with a lot of administrators in terms of them feeling that confident. That’s always been true here at Canyon, but [not] at other sites I’ve worked.” The principal trusted their professional judgment and the teacher felt his support.

In addition, when asked how administrators support teacher leadership, teacher leaders discussed administrators who “encourage” and sometimes “push” teachers to lead. One teacher described how she was content to teach her Spanish 1 and Spanish 2 classes and not worry about things beyond the walls of her room. She shared in her interview:

I was fine with, ‘Just leave me alone. I’m okay. I’ll teach my -1s and -2s forever, I’m fine with that.’ Then I was forced. I think that’s sometimes the biggest thing; admin has to push some people because they are not willingly going to do it. When they’re pushed, they realize it. ‘Okay, I can do this.’

This teacher leader was not a leader until an administrator recognized her potential and gave her a “push.” Once she was leading, she recognized it was something she could do. She did not originally want to be department chair, but says she was “forced” to do it because when others

left the department she was the only veteran teacher. In her interview, she went on to explain all the Spanish department was able to accomplish with more course offerings. This happened because of her leadership and an administrator's support. She summed it up by saying "That is a huge change in our department. It's pretty much—from our department, that's completely teacher-led, and then obviously admin has to support it and put it into the master schedule." This is an example of an administration which encouraged teachers to lead and then supported their ideas and proposals.

In addition to being trusting, supporting, and encouraging, teacher leaders also recognized the importance of administration's recognition and acknowledgement of the work they do and the impact they make. George a teacher leader and Canyon, described it this way:

I think they're really good about rewarding teachers for their leadership. I'm going to say there's no monetary part in it, but I think the idea of the recognition, and also their personal affirmation of what we do for the school. I personally hear a lot from all of them on there [the administrative team]. I think it also really encourages teacher leadership on campus.

Another teacher at the same school shared about how sometimes this acknowledgment was as simple as a text message. He said, "I feel like I've been commended by [admin] even getting text messages. I don't know if they even know the results of [the academic competition] yet and I'll get text messaged 'Congratulations for your success.' " When asked about how administrators support teacher leadership, a teacher leader from another school also reported how administrators acknowledging teacher efforts helped them feel appreciated and supported. In her interview she shared, "The other day at our staff appreciation breakfast, they honored just

different staff members who had done different things. Some got the Teacher of the Year, they were acknowledged. Our coaches... Makes you feel like you're a little appreciated."

The principals interviewed also discussed showing appreciation when asked about the characteristics of their school that supported teacher leadership. Stan, the principal at Canyon High School, shared, "as much as possible, we try to be supportive, we try to be encouraging, and we try to applaud people for the right behavior whether they are teacher leaders or not. If people feel comfortable, they feel supported." He recognized that one form of support is encouragement and appreciation. Maria, the principal at Lake High School, explained how important it was to her to show appreciation to all teachers:

One thing that I've learned is that teachers are people; they're just like the kids. They want to be appreciated. There's a little bit of jealousy when people are put in the forefront, so you always have to make it... You have your children and you've got to show them all that you love them the same, that you appreciate them the same, regardless if one's winning all the awards or whatever. You have to do that same thing with teachers and you can't leave them hanging. You can never leave your leaders hanging. Both of these principals understood the importance of recognizing and showing appreciation to teachers. The teacher leaders interviewed reported these efforts as a needed element to feel supported.

Finally, administrators were supportive of teacher leaders by listening to them and supporting their ideas. Mike, the principal at Valley High School, reported one thing he did to support teacher leaders was "having open-access to the principal." Stan, the principal at Canyon High School, also had an open door policy. In addition to listening to teachers, Stan tried to act on and support teachers ideas. He said, "People come in and ask me to do things and here is my

philosophy: Try not to ever be the kind of person that always comes up with a reason you can't do something." Teacher leaders confirmed this finding by describing "open door policy" and shared how the administrators not only listened but also took the initiative to ask "What do you need?" and "What's going on with the process? What's your input? How are things going?" Supportive administrators listened and tried to support and say yes to teachers who took initiative.

Summary

The findings were organized by research questions and addressed the following categories: teacher leader credibility, opportunities for teacher leaders to share and lead, barriers to teacher leadership, and supports for teacher leadership. The teachers and administrators interviewed were eager and open to talk about the academic performance growth their school experienced and the impact of teacher leaders. This study probed their experiences in seeing teacher leaders influence others to use good instructional ideas, strategies, or practices. The findings indicate a lot was learned from these interviews. In the next chapter, I discuss the implications of these findings for schools interested in harnessing the power of teacher leadership to improve instruction.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The literature is clear on the benefits teacher leadership has on students, schools, teachers, and principals (Barth, 2001). School improvement cannot rest on principals alone but must utilize the “sleeping giant” of teacher leaders (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009). The purpose of this study was to examine how teacher leaders influenced instructional improvement outside the walls of their own classrooms and what factors cultivated or inhibited teacher leadership at their schools. The findings from this study add to the body of literature describing teacher leadership for school improvement.

In this study, I interviewed five administrators and sixteen teachers from three large high schools demonstrating academic improvement over multiple years. These three sites were chosen because they demonstrated the largest Academic Performance Index (API) growth out of the 18 comprehensive high schools in the school district over a four-year period from 2009 – 2013. Both principals and teachers selected teacher leader participants. Teacher leaders enthusiastically shared information about the progress their schools had made in recent years. The findings that emerged from analyzing data from interview transcripts helped describe the ideal conditions and factors which allowed teacher leaders to influence instructional improvement. In addition, the findings described how that influence happens.

This study adopted a conceptual framework of distributed leadership which recognizes the work of all leaders in an organization and focuses on the interactions between leaders, followers, and the context of their situation (J. Spillane, 2006). Following this framework, I focused on both teacher leaders who held formal leadership positions and those who did not have a designated position. In a comprehensive literature review of teacher leadership, York-Barr and

Duke found most conceptions of teacher leadership agree that it involves using the teacher's expertise to improve instruction and help student learning (2004). I specifically conceptualized teacher leadership using two components of Katzenmeyer & Moller's (2009) definition of teacher leaders as those who "lead within and beyond the classroom" and "influence others toward improved educational practice"(p. 6). This study sought to determine how teacher leaders influence this instructional improvement beyond their classrooms.

This chapter discusses the findings in relation to the literature on teacher leadership. First, I highlight the major findings and discuss implications for policy and practice. Then I discuss limitations for the study. Next, I discuss lingering questions and implications for future research. Finally, I conclude with my personal reflections on conducting this study and my hope for its impact on teacher leaders and the students they serve.

Major Themes and Recommendations for Policy and Practice

The major themes of the findings presented in Chapter 4 include teacher leader credibility, opportunities teacher leaders have to influence others, barriers to teacher leadership, and cultivation and support of teacher leaders. Within each of these themes, I discuss how the findings provide implications for high schools and school districts in leveraging teacher leadership to improve instruction and thus educational outcomes for students.

Teacher Leader Credibility

It became clear that credibility of teacher leaders is a necessary ingredient that enables teacher leaders to influence others. In teacher leader interviews, responses regarding how an idea, strategy, or instructional practice spreads from one classroom to another kept revolving

around the credibility of the teacher leader. It is the respect for the teacher leaders that enables them to influence the teaching practices of others.

While teacher leadership definitions from the literature refer to a teacher's expertise improving instruction, this study found that expertise was not enough. The responses indicated overwhelmingly that respect for teacher leaders is what enables them to influence others. However, no teacher leader interviewed referred to how much teachers knew about their content, curriculum, or pedagogy as the factor that generated respect. This respect is predicated upon the quality of teacher leaders' relationships with staff and students, their perceived work ethic and passion for the school, and their students' learning outcomes. Teachers begin to form opinions about the credibility of teacher leaders through their inter-personal interactions and seeing their students' results. These opinions will either strengthen or diminish the efficacy of a teacher leader's influence on other teachers.

Meaningful relationships. The importance of relationships and teachers' connections to others in establishing credibility was an important finding. Using the distributed leadership framework, this finding stands as an example of how effective leadership is found in the interactions between leaders and followers, not just a leader's actions. This study confirmed that no matter what leaders do to influence others, who they are makes a difference. Followers will not be influenced to use an improved instructional practice by someone who has not established credibility through positive rapport. Principals can create opportunities for teachers to establish relationships through planned activities which engage teachers in meaningful dialogue. These connections are the foundation for building the credibility that allows leaders to influence followers. A teacher on both sides of this connection can be the leader or a follower. For example, an English teacher indicated in her interview how she and a chemistry teacher shared

and implemented each other's ideas. In this case, the reciprocal influence positioned both teachers as a leader and a follower.

Students as mediators of credibility. One surprising part of this finding is the significant role students have in shaping the credibility of teacher leaders. Teacher leader interviews revealed that students shared stories about the innovative lessons or strategies that helped them learn. They talked about classes they liked. These positive stories helped increase the credibility of the teacher they were talking about. One English teacher said the students are a teacher's "best advertisement." If teachers aren't engaging students in meaningful instruction, other teachers are going to know by what students say about the teacher's classroom. Schools can highlight student voices by providing opportunities for students to share their stories and beliefs about what helps them learn in the classroom. These stories will highlight activities and teachers who students believe make a difference in helping them learn.

Successful Results. Positive student achievement results are an important factor in establishing the credibility of teacher leaders. Student achievement can be demonstrated in a number of ways. Teachers of one common course may give the same formative assessment and after looking at the results together, it becomes apparent that one teacher's students have performed better on a specific concept. It could also be the superb AP test results a certain teacher's students have year after year. Another area teachers referred to in the study were results from the California Standards Test (CSTs). When students achieve positive results, the teachers gain credibility because others recognize what they are doing is working. It is not uncommon for schools to recognize student achievement. Less common, however, is recognizing the teacher whose students consistently have positive achievement results. Such recognition helps increase a teacher's credibility.

The research literature shows that formal leadership roles can, in fact, inhibit teacher leadership through structural biases which determine who gets a formal leadership role or by taking good teachers out of the classroom (Anderson, 2004). This study confirms the effectiveness of informal teacher leaders influencing others not because of their position but because of their relationships with others. In addition, this study confirmed the importance of Day and Harris' (2004) 4th dimension of teacher leadership, which is creating relationships with other teachers to allow mutual learning. I found that credibility formed by relationships, student voices, and student achievement results was the foundation for teacher leadership.

Opportunities to Influence

Schools need to create opportunities for teacher leaders to share their expertise with other teachers in the school community. This study found that in order for teacher leaders to influence others, there must be opportunities for teachers to talk and share ideas. Without avenues for teacher communication about instructional practices and student learning, the opportunities for teacher leaders to influence instructional improvement decreases. Teachers can be isolated in classrooms unless structural and cultural aspects of the school keep this from happening. This isolation not only keeps teachers from learning from others, but it also inhibits teacher leaders, who have great classroom practices to share.

The three sites in this study provided many opportunities for teachers to lead, share, and be involved in decision making. The teacher leaders who were interviewed for this study shared a variety of examples of how teacher leaders were able to influence others when given the opportunity to share. These opportunities took place in many types of situations from one on one conversations to school wide staff meetings. Although the format varied between schools and

each teacher leader's experience, the common theme among teacher leaders was the opportunity to share with their colleagues.

Teacher collaborative teams. Each site had regular team meetings for teachers teaching the same course. For example, each week all the algebra, English 9, or biology teachers at the site met for an hour. These weekly meetings were designed to give teachers the opportunity to collaborate and plan their curriculum, instruction, and assessment together. The three sites implemented the weekly team meeting about five years prior to the study when they took steps to follow the Professional Learning Community (PLC) model. Since the advent of these meetings, teachers reported being more “cohesive” and having the “ability and availability to meet and share”.

These meetings have proved to be the primary instrument for breaking down the teacher isolation previously described. Teachers in the three schools have structured time built into the school day where they can discuss what works and what does not. Teachers who give common assessments can learn from colleagues who had more students learn a concept, because these collaborative teams provide the vehicle for open, honest dialogue about teaching and learning.

Interdisciplinary teams. In addition to teams of teachers who teach common courses, the teacher leaders in this study also described opportunities to share with colleagues from different departments. These opportunities allow effective instructional practices to be shared across departments. One school implemented monthly interdisciplinary teams due to a Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) accreditation visit the year prior to the study. However, after this WASC visit, they continued to meet in these groups to help break down barriers between departments and have a structure in place where ideas could be shared and interdisciplinary partnerships could form. Another school had the learning team leaders meet

regularly. For example the algebra team leader, biology team leader, and the U.S. history team leader met monthly to share best practices. This team, made up of one representative from each of the course teams, helped the effective instructional practices implemented in one team be introduced to other teams, even across departments.

Teachers leading professional development. Teacher leaders were a driving force behind the professional development at each site. Teachers shared many examples of themselves or other teachers sharing instructional strategies in front of the whole staff at meetings or planning summer professional development sessions. It was clear that the administration saw this as a priority and it was part of the culture of the school to have teachers up front leading professional development, rather than administrators. One teacher stated that over half of the faculty had shared in front of the staff some time within the last few years. The sites studied made a conscious decision to put teachers up front, realizing the increased probability of good ideas sticking with staff when a teacher discussed instructional issues instead of an administrator.

Inclusive Decision Making. Each principal interviewed expressed the vital role teachers played in leading the school improvement their school experienced in the previous four years. This statement was supported by their actions when it came to involving teacher leaders in decision making. All three schools held regular Guiding Coalition meetings with teacher leaders and the administration. These meetings included both formal and informal teacher leaders and tackled school wide issues when they met. They made decisions that modified the bell schedule, determined what instructional practices to implement school wide, and implemented grading policies that promoted student learning.

Barriers to Teacher Leadership

This study found that an attitude of resistance by and commitment to the status quo by fellow teachers were barriers to teacher leadership. This confirms the first and third of Reeves' (2008) three barriers to teacher leadership: blame, bureaucracy, and beliefs and convictions unburdened by evidence. When teachers blame poor performance on things they can't control, they place blame on others and resist change and teacher leaders' attempts to improve instruction. In addition, teachers' beliefs in a certain way of doing things or a learning paradigm without evidence leads to commitment to the status quo and resistance to teacher leaders' ideas. While there was evidence of these barriers, Reeve's third barrier of bureaucracy was not a finding of this study. All three schools displayed evidence of shared decision making which helped the teacher leaders embrace not only the process of decision making but the outcome. Although the three sites were bureaucratic organizations, the inclusive decision making helped to minimize the negative effects of bureaucracy on teacher leadership.

Attitude of Resistance. Both teacher leaders and administrators interviewed reported an attitudinal barrier. These were teachers who did not like other teachers providing leadership at the school. To these resisters, teacher leaders were on the dark side; they were catering to the administration. However, the teacher leaders had a passion for instructional improvement based on evidence. It was the resisters' attitude that was biased and based in unsubstantiated beliefs or convictions.

Commitment to the Status Quo. In addition to the resisters, teacher leaders described reluctant teachers as a barrier. These were the teachers who were not open to or suspicious of new ideas. There were also reluctant teachers who did not want to put in the time to make changes or implement strategies proved to be successful in teacher leaders' classrooms. For

these teachers, the easiest path was to continue teaching how they were used to teaching whether or not students were learning at high levels.

I was surprised to find that the barriers which emerged in this study were primarily other teachers. However, the research supports that the challenges teacher leaders face include peer relationships (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009). Resistance and reluctance of peers were the most common barriers reported in this study. The teacher leaders interviewed experienced the challenge of leading in a flat profession where, traditionally, teachers are isolated in their classrooms and don't provide leadership to other teachers. Teachers who do emerge to lead beyond the walls of their classroom will experience resistance from their peers.

In this study, teacher leaders experienced resistance from their peers as opposition to positive instructional change designed to improve student learning. Thus, resistance is portrayed in a negative light through the eyes of the teacher leaders sharing instructional practices. From a critical theory lens, resistance is an example of leadership. In this case, pursuing a vision of social justice involves resistance to the status quo (Dorfman, 2005). Others argue that resistance is neglected in mainstream leadership studies, but is an important issue (Collinson, 2005). Resistance is a potential form of leadership in transforming traditional structures (Zoller & Fairhurst, 2007). So, in fact, resistance can be a form of teacher leadership.

Cultivation and Support of Teacher Leaders

This study also sought to identify the factors that facilitate the development of teachers as leaders and support them in their efforts to improve instruction. I found that administrators were key supporters of teacher leaders. When asked about what characteristics at their school promoted, cultivated, and supported teacher leadership, many teacher leaders discussed the

administration. The responses varied but they were usually a belief, behavior, or decision of the administration. Administrators have a key role in cultivating and supporting teacher leaders.

Encouraging teacher leaders to lead. The teacher leaders interviewed believed more teachers should be leaders. They felt the leadership potential in others needed to be tapped into to help teacher leaders make a bigger impact on instructional improvement. Administrators have an important role in identifying and encouraging teachers to be leaders. Some teacher leaders interviewed describe how it was an administrator who encouraged them to engage in leadership. However, teacher leaders also recognized that administrators continued to depend on the same small group of teacher leaders. Administrators need to look for other potential teacher leaders to encourage and involve them in leadership and decision-making.

Supporting teacher leaders' ideas. At the three sites studied, teacher leaders described how administrative support for their ideas was important. This support came in the form of listening, saying yes, encouraging, and providing resources. Administrators need to be cheerleaders for teacher leaders. This includes encouraging teacher leaders to move forward with ideas that will improve student learning and providing resources to help implement these ideas.

Appreciation. Teacher leaders feel supported when administrators show appreciation for their efforts and accomplishments. After putting in the extra time and energy into a project, teachers like to know that others know about and recognize their efforts and the impact on student learning. In this study, teachers appreciated a text message from the principal or an appropriate amount of recognition at a staff meeting. However, it was also noted that too much appreciation at a staff meeting can be counterproductive.

Finally, the principal has a lot of influence on the structural and cultural components of the school. Both of these dimensions impact the ongoing development and support of teacher leaders. Principals need to design organizational structures to support teacher leaders in their efforts to make change. Teachers must be provided with sufficient time within the day for collaboration, participation in professional learning activities, and engagement in leadership activities. In addition, the principal's role in creating a positive professional climate is necessary to shape the culture that allows teacher leadership to thrive. This includes a culture that values teacher's leadership, shared leadership, and collaboration between administrators and teachers.

Limitations

While this study provides data to suggest how teacher leaders influence instructional improvement and the factors that cultivate or inhibit teacher leadership, there are several limitations to consider. Each school district has different cultures and policies that affect teacher leadership. The first limitation is the study's focus on schools in one district. However, this is a large school district that is representative of the larger student population in California. This study may have implications for other districts, but my hope is that the findings and recommendations make an impact in the local context of the district studied.

The second limitation is the sample size. Only twenty-one participants from three high schools were interviewed in this study. The findings at these three schools may not be reflective of teacher leaders and administrators from all schools that are showing academic improvement. However, the findings emerged through analyzing data from all three sites, which varied in socioeconomic and ethnic make-up, and geographic region of the city. The diversity of the sites studied strengthens the findings. While adding more schools to the study may have contributed

to the findings, the focus on three sites allowed me to conduct in depth interviews leading to a rich description of teacher leader experiences and examples to help answer the research questions. In addition, face-to-face interviews allowed probing questions to help participants to fully describe teacher leadership in their context.

Lingering Questions and Implications for Future Study

The administrators interviewed in this study attributed the growth in academic performance at their schools to teachers. They believed the work of teacher leaders helped improve classroom instruction and increased student learning. This study provides evidence that describe how a teacher leader influences other teachers. While this study interviewed teacher leaders, many of whom described being influenced by other teachers, it did not interview teachers who did not exercise leadership at all. A study with participants who meet this criterion could lead to more knowledge of how peers of teacher leaders view them, why they are not leaders, and how they perceive the influence of teacher leaders. A study of the teachers who don't lead can help identify barriers to leadership, not found in this study, which could help schools cultivate more teacher leaders.

This study did not focus on what instructional practices were adopted based on a teacher leader's influence. Future studies could examine what instructional improvements were more or less likely to take place based on a teacher engaged in leadership. Perhaps there are certain areas of instruction that teacher leaders are more likely to influence than others. This study could help with strategic use of teacher leaders in domains where they are most likely to make an impact.

Finally, I believe teacher leaders make not only an impact on their school but in their own classrooms. Future studies can examine the positive effects of teacher leaders on their own students. Perhaps more teachers should be leaders not only to help others beyond the walls of

their classroom, but because being a teacher leader will transform the instruction inside their classroom walls.

Reflection and Conclusion

It is clear from the literature that responsibility for school improvement cannot rest with one individual leader. The paradigm of one charismatic leader transforming a school community in sustainable school improvement is not supported by evidence. It takes many stakeholders to participate in improving schools. At the school site level, I believe no one will have a bigger impact in improving schools than the adults who students spend most of their time with: the teachers.

The teacher leaders who participated in this study were optimistic about the future of their schools, passionate about teaching, and always seeking to improve. Hard work and changing some long-term practices were involved in improving instruction, but they welcomed change if it was good for students. At times, their enthusiasm was contagious. I'm convinced schools in every city have potential teacher leaders who need encouragement and support to make a difference in their classroom and the one next door.

I hope this study provides schools and district leaders with recommendations that will help cultivate teacher leaders. Administrators will be one of the most important factors in creating an environment that enables teacher leaders to exert influence to improve instruction. Administrators should understand that without teacher leaders, sustainable and meaningful improvement will not take place. The teacher leaders I listened to in this study were not only leaders but also agents of change. Teacher leaders can be a powerful source of positive change in schools and student outcomes.

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix A: Study Recruitment Letter

Appendix B: Participant Consent Form

Appendix C: Administrator Interview Protocol

Appendix D: Teacher Leader Interview Protocol

Appendix A: Study Recruitment Letter

I am an assistant principal at and a doctoral student at UCLA. For my dissertation, I am conducting a research study about how teacher leadership influences instructional improvement and what conditions exist in schools that cultivate or inhibit teacher leadership. Your school has been identified as one of the sites to study due to the tremendous API growth over the last four years. I am emailing to ask if you would participate in the research study. Participation consists of one 30-45 minute interview. Participation is completely voluntary and interview responses will be anonymous. The study will use pseudonyms for schools and teachers in the study so readers will not be able to identify what schools or teachers were involved.

I will be on site Monday, May 5. If you are able to participate, please email me with a time that works and your room number. I can stop by your room during your prep period or arrange a conference room in the office.

Thank you for your consideration. I hope the results of the study will better inform the USD how to use teacher leaders to improve educational outcomes for students. Please call with any questions.

Thank you,

Kenny Seals

Appendix B: Participant Consent Form

University of California, Los Angeles

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

A Multi-Site Case Study Examining How Teacher Leadership
Influences Instructional Improvement

Kenny Seals, from the Graduate School of Education and Information Sciences at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) is conducting a research study.

You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you are a teacher leader or school administrator. Your participation in this research study is voluntary.

Why is this study being done?

This study is designed to determine how teacher leaders influence instructional improvement and what conditions exist at schools that cultivates or inhibits teacher leadership.

What will happen if I take part in this research study?

If you volunteer to participate in this study, the researcher will ask you to do the following:

- Participate in a 30-45 minute interview at your school site
- Interview questions will ask about instructional improvement and how teachers were involved in leading these improvements and what conditions at the school supported or inhibited these teachers

How long will I be in the research study? 30 – 45 minutes

Are there any potential risks or discomforts that I can expect from this study?

- Some questions may cause you to reflect on an experience at work where you or others were not supported in improving instruction in your classroom. This may lead to some discomfort
- The interviewer will keep the participant's comfort at the forefront
- The participant can decline to answer questions or end the interview if needed

Are there any potential benefits if I participate?

You will not directly benefit from your participation in this research.

The results of the research may increase the ability of teachers to lead instructional change in their school therefore increasing student outcomes.

Will information about me and my participation be kept confidential?

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can identify you will remain confidential. It will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of using pseudonyms for the school site and participants.

What are my rights if I take part in this study?

- You can choose whether or not you want to be in this study, and you may withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time.
- Whatever decision you make, there will be no penalty to you, and no loss of benefits to which you were otherwise entitled.
- You may refuse to answer any questions that you do not want to answer and still remain in the study.

Who can I contact if I have questions about this study?

- **The research team:**
If you have any questions, comments or concerns about the research, you can talk to the one of the researchers. Please contact: Kenny Seals at (661) 496-1665
- **UCLA Office of the Human Research Protection Program (OHRPP):**
If you have questions about your rights while taking part in this study, or you have concerns or suggestions and you want to talk to someone other than the researchers about the study, please call the OHRPP at (310) 825-7122 or write to:

UCLA Office of the Human Research Protection Program
11000 Kinross Avenue, Suite 211, Box 951694
Los Angeles, CA 90095-1694

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

SIGNATURE OF STUDY PARTICIPANT

Name of Participant

Signature of Participant

Date

SIGNATURE OF PERSON OBTAINING CONSENT

Name of Person Obtaining Consent

Contact Number

Appendix C: Administrator Interview Protocol

Administrator Interview Protocol

Date:

Place:

Interviewee:

Position of Interviewee:

Questions:

- 1) How do you define teacher leadership?
- 2) How do other teachers respond to teacher leaders? Why?
- 3) What formal leadership positions do teachers hold? How are they selected? How do these teachers influence instructional improvement?
- 4) What instructional or curricular changes have taken place in your school recently? How have teacher leaders been involved in leading or influencing these changes? What are some specific examples?
- 5) What is it about these teacher leaders that enabled them to influence their colleagues? Describe how their interactions and leadership practices influence others knowledge, attitudes, and/or behaviors.
- 6) Do teachers collaborate around ways to improve teaching and learning? Who leads these discussions? What is the impact of this collaboration on instructional practices?
- 7) How are teacher leaders involved in the selection and delivery of professional development opportunities?
- 8) How are teacher leaders involved in decision-making that affects teaching and learning?
- 9) What are the barriers at your school, if any, which inhibit teachers exercising leadership?
- 10) What are the factors or characteristics of your school that support or promote teacher leadership?
- 11) How do you support teacher leadership?

Appendix D: Teacher Leader Interview Protocol

Teacher Leader Interview Protocol

Date:

Place:

Interviewee:

Position of Interviewee:

Questions:

- 1) Your peers identified you as a teacher leader. Do you hold a formal leadership position? If so, what is your title and responsibilities? If not, why do you think your peers selected you as a teacher leader?
- 2) How often and in what ways do you share successful instructional practices you implement in your classroom with others? What are some examples? How do other teachers respond? Why do they respond that way?
- 3) What instructional or curricular changes have taken place in your school recently? How have you been involved in leading or influencing these changes?
- 4) How are you and other teachers involved in improving classroom instruction at your school?
- 5) Do teachers discuss ways to improve teaching and learning? Who leads these discussions? What is the impact of this collaboration on instructional practices?
- 6) In what other areas of the school do you influence others? How do you influence others? What is it about you or your actions that lead others to respond to your influence?
- 7) Besides the work that you do, what other teachers lead instructional improvement? How do they influence others? What are some examples?
- 8) How do social networks affect your influence on the teaching practices of other teachers?
- 9) How do you stay current on education research or best practices?
- 10) Who decides what professional development opportunities are offered at your school? Who leads these sessions and how were they chosen? How effective are they?
- 11) How are you and other teachers involved in decision-making that affect teaching and learning?

- 12) What are the barriers at your school, if any, which inhibit teachers exercising leadership?
In what ways do these keep you from leading progress?
- 13) What are the factors or characteristics of your school that support or promote teacher leadership?
- 14) How does the administration promote teacher leadership? What are some examples?
- 15) How does the administration inhibit teacher leadership? What are some examples?

REFERENCES

- Anderson, K. D. (2004). The nature of teacher leadership in schools as reciprocal influences between teacher leaders and principals. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement, 15*(1), 97-113.
- Angelle, P. S., & DeHart, C. A. (2011). Teacher perceptions of teacher leadership: Examining differences by experience, degree, and position. *NASSP Bulletin, 95*(141), 141-160.
- Barth, R. (2001). Teacher Leader. *The Phi Delta Kappan, 82*(6), 443-449.
- Beachum, F., & Dentith, A. M. (2004). Teacher leaders creating cultures of school renewal and transformation. *The Educational Forum, 68*(3), 276-286.
- Camburn, E. M. (2009). Allocating more experienced teachers to leadership positions in schools: a double-edged sword? *Journal of School Leadership, 19*(6), 680-696.
- Collinson, D. (2005). Dialectics of leadership. *Human Relations, 58*(11), 1419-1442. doi: 10.1177/0018726705060902
- Copland, M. A. (2001). The Myth of the Superprincipal. *The Phi Delta Kappan, 82*(7), 528-533.
- Coyle, M. (1997). Teacher leadership vs. school management: flatten the hierarchies. *The Clearing House, 70*(5), 236-239.
- Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research design: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Day, C., & Harris, A. (2003). Teacher leadership, reflective practice and school improvement. In K. Leithwood & P. Hallinger (Eds.), *Second International Handbook of Educational Leadership and Administration*. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic.

- DiPaola, M., & Tschannen-Moran, M. (2003). The principalship at a crossroads: a study of the conditions and concerns of principals. *NASSP Bulletin*, 87(634), 43-65.
- Dorfman, D. (2005). Educational Leadership as Resistance. *Journal of Curriculum & Pedagogy*, 2(2), 157-172.
- Firestone, W. A., & Matinez, M. C. (2007). Districts, teacher leaders, and distributed leadership: changing instructional practice. *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, 6(1), 3-35.
- Fullan, M. (2001). *Leading in a Culture of Change*. San Fransico: Jossy-Bass.
- Hallinger, P. (2003). Leading educational change: reflections on the practice of instructional and transformational leadership. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 33(3), 329-352.
- Hallinger, P., & Heck, R. H. (1998). Exploring the principal's contribution to school effectiveness: 1980-1995. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 9(2), 157-191.
- Hargreaves, A. (2002). Sustainability of educational change: the role of social geographies. *Journal of Educational Change*, 3(3-4), 189-214.
- Harris, A. (2003). Teacher leadership as distributed leadership: heresy, fantasy, or possibility. *School Leadership & Management: Formerly School Organisation*, 23(3), 313-324. doi: 10.1080/1363243032000112801
- Heck, R., & Hallinger, P. (1999). Conceptual model, methodology, and methods for studying school leadership. In J. Murphy & K. S. Louis (Eds.), *The 2nd Handbook of Research in Educational Administration*. San Fransico: McCutchan.
- Hewitt, P. M., Denny, G. S., & Pijanowski, J. C. (2011). Why teacher leaders don't want to be principals. *Journal of Scholarship and Practice*, 8(1), 13-23.

- Katzenmeyer, M., & Moller, G. (2009). *Awakening the sleeping giant: Helping teachers develop as leaders*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.
- Lambert, L. (2003). Leadership redefined: an evocative context for teacher leadership. *School Leadership & Management, 23*(4), 421-430.
- Leithwood, K., & Jantzi, D. (1999). The relative effects of principal and teacher sources of leadership on student engagement with school. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 35*(Suppl.), 679-706.
- Leithwood, K., & Mascall, B. (2008). Collective leadership effects on student achievement. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 44*(4), 529-561.
- Loeb, S., Kalogrides, D., & Horng, E. L. (2010). Principal Preferences and the Uneven Distribution of Principals Across Schools. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 32*(2), 205-229. doi: 10.3102/0162373710369833
- Mascall, B., & Leithwood, K. (2010). Investing in leadership: the district's role in managing principal turnover. *Leadership and Policy in Schools, 9*(4), 367-383. doi: 10.1080/15700763.2010.493633
- Maxwell, J. A. (2013). *Qualitative Research Design: An Interactive Approach*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Mayrowetz, D. (2008). Making Sense of Distributed Leadership: Exploring the Multiple Usages of the Concept in the Field. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 44*(3), 424-435. doi: 10.1177/0013161x07309480
- Merriam, S. B. (2009). *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation*. San Fransico, CA: Jossey-Bass.

- Muijs, D., & Harris, A. (2003). Teacher leadership - improvement through empowerment?: an overview of the literature. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 31(4), 437-448. doi: 10.1177/0263211X030314007
- Muijs, D., & Harris, A. (2007). Teacher leadership in (in)action: three case studies of contrasting schools. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 35(1), 111-134.
- Pellicer, L. O., & Anderson, L. W. (1995). *A handbook for teacher leaders*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Peterson, K. (1977). The principal's tasks. *Administrator's Notebook*, 26(8), 1-4.
- Phelps, P. H. (2008). Helping Teachers Become Leaders. *The Clearing House: A Journal of Educational Strategies, Issues and Ideas*, 81(3), 119-122. doi: 10.3200/TCHS.81.3.119-122
- Poerkert, P. E. (2012). Teacher leadership and professional development: examining links between two concepts central to school improvement. *Professional Development in Education*, 38(2), 169-188. doi: 10.1080/19415257.2012.657824
- Portin, B. S. (2000). The changing urban principalship. *Education and Urban Society*, 32(4), 492-505.
- Reeves, D. B. (2008). *Reframing teacher leadership to improve your school*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Spillane, J. (2006). *Distributed Leadership*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Spillane, J. P., Halverson, R., & Diamond, J. B. (2004). Towards a theory of leadership practice: a distributed perspective. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 36(1), 3-34. doi: 10.1080/0022027032000106726

- Stake, R. E. (1995). *The Art of Case Study Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Walters, T., Marzano, R., & McNulty, B. (2003). Balanced leadership: What 30 years of research tells us about the effect of leadership on student achievement. *McREL (Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning)*.
- Wilms, W. (2008). *Liberating the Schoolhouse*. Devon, UK: Triarchy Press.
- Yin, R. K. (2014). *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- York-Barr, J., & Duke, K. (2004). What do we know about teacher leadership? findings from two decades of scholarship. *Review of Educational Research, 74*(3), 255-316.
- Zoller, H. M., & Fairhurst, G. T. (2007). Resistance leadership: The overlooked potential in critical organization and leadership studies. *Human Relations, 60*(9), 1331-1360.
doi: 10.1177/0018726707082850