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From Following to Leading: Experiencing the Phenomena of Becoming a Teacher Leader

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**FROM FOLLOWING TO LEADING: EXPERIENCING THE PHENOMENA OF
BECOMING A TEACHER LEADER**

by

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FROM FOLLOWING TO LEADING: EXPERIENCING THE PHENOMENA OF BECOMING A TEACHER LEADER

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Teacher leadership is not a new idea. It has become popular in waves over the last century, and has been used primarily to make change in schools on a grassroots level. Though teacher leaders rarely gain degrees in this field of work or accept formal positions as teacher leaders, they acquire knowledge, skills, insights, and strategies that help change, shape, and mold their current school environments. Additionally, teacher leader positions, while normally informal, offer greater potential for influence than a normal classroom teacher may have or can offer to their colleagues.

The purpose of this study was to examine charter school teachers, enrolled in a teacher leadership development program, as they experienced their own leadership development and the early practice of their leadership. These educators learned leadership simultaneously in a two-fold manner: (a) in the form of attending classes in a teacher leadership development course, and (b) in the form of exercising their leadership duties, as learned from their course and then practiced within their school.

This phenomenological study examined the actual, lived experiences of seven teacher leaders who went through a year-long course of study and practice. By exploring their experiences of leadership training and practice, this study sheds light on the ways teachers draw upon their learning and practice of their own leadership. The knowledge of this phenomena may help schools, districts, universities, and aspiring teacher leaders

to better understand the experiences teacher leaders face as they grow into their new roles and can better support and plan for their success as teacher leaders.

A conceptual framework for understanding the process of how teacher leaders experience becoming leaders can be divided into three parts: (a) the teacher leader, (b) the teacher learning by studying, and (c) the teacher learning by doing. Several factors were identified within each category, providing a coding scheme to analyze the data. Two individual interviews were scheduled with a sampling of seven teacher leader candidates. The first interview was given close to the beginning of their time in the leadership course. The second interview was conducted near the end of the course. Each teacher leader program participant also kept a journal of their learning throughout the course. Journals were collected and analyzed. A final focus group interview was organized after the program was over. This interview was strictly for member-checking the analyzed data. Descriptive statistics and direct quotes from the participants were used to demonstrate key findings.

The findings reveal eleven major themes of influence as teachers become teacher leaders. One theme is in the teacher leader category, five themes are within the learning by studying category, and five themes are within the learning by doing category. There were several findings for this study in regards to these themes individually, as well as their inter-relatedness to universal teacher leadership preparation and practices. Several recommendations for future practice and programming concluded this study in hopes that these findings may be useful to future development of teacher leadership.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this project, the 10,000 hours (Haggerty & Lewis, 2012), and all that it represents to my wife, Elizabeth Lynne Carter. You are my best friend, my love, and the one who has been beside me as we made this road we are walking on together. I do not know or care to know where I would be today without your love, your confidence, your patience, and your forgiveness. Thank you for standing beside me as I continued my education to this peak. But more importantly, thank you for cultivating the valleys of life together. We have made a wonderful family in the midst of hard times and hard love (Rinehart, & Rinehart, 2016). I am excited to see where this road and journey may lead us even though we know the final destination. You are beautiful, smart, and I am damn lucky to have you by my side. And, this work is dedicated to you. I love you very much.

I would also like to thank my two wonderful children, Oak Lowell Carter and Isla Lynne Carter. You brighten my day and warm my heart in more ways than you will ever know. Thank you for letting me come home late and for always allowing me to miss an event or two, so that I could complete this work. I hope and pray that your life is as full and overflowing as you have made mine. And, I look forward to the next game we get to play, or walk we get to take, or joke we get to share. I love the both of you very much.

Finally to my extended family: Linda, Erica, and Brianna; Jim and Donna; Tim, Libbie, and Presley; and Shaun, Amanda, Wyatt, and a baby to be named. Each of you have filled my cup to overflowing throughout the years. I will never be able to say how much each of you mean to me. I hope and pray this dedication is one small way for me to tell you that I love each of you, and I am blessed to be a part of this family.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of Contents—Continued

CHAPTER

Table of Contents—Continued

CHAPTER

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

"I have come to believe that a leader is anyone who holds her- or himself accountable for finding potential in people and processes" (Brown, 2012, p. 185). Teacher leadership is important in today's schools. My study explored how teachers experience their own leadership development as they are simultaneously enrolled in a professional development (PD) course and while they are working within their school environment. This study helps to inform the literature about how teachers experience their own leadership learning and early leadership practices, and may help to further develop teacher leadership initiatives at multiple levels.

Background

Public education has been a major focus point since the founding of the United States of America. The success of its students means the success of America and the world as a whole. There have been several major pushes and emphases on education reform over the last hundred years.

One of the more recent initiatives of the early 1990's was the charter school movement that had gained momentum in almost every state and continues to gain traction today. The Center for Education Reform (2015) stated, "Forty-three states and the District of Columbia have enacted charter school laws, with Alabama being the latest in March 2015. The seven states that do not have charter school laws are Kentucky, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Vermont, and West Virginia" (Laws & legislation section, para. 2). There are significant studies in literature which explain the creation, nature, and structure of the charter schools (e.g., Adams, 2007; Ausbrooks et al., 2005; Garrison, 2005; Manno et al., 1998; Michigan Charter Schools - FAQ, 2014;

Molnar, 2007; Rix, 1999), but reflect little on the development of teacher leaders within such schools.

An additional movement was sparked at the turn of the century when the No Child Left Behind Law (NCLB) came into effect with its main goal to reform public education through high achievement and proficiency scores for all students. Because of NCLB, there has been a significant push to have highly qualified teachers in place to instruct students. The charter school movement has been able to grow due to NCLB and because of the need to fill these schools with these teachers. Retention of these teachers is paramount to the success of both charter and traditional public schools.

Indeed, there is quite a bit of literature that focuses on highly qualified and motivated teachers who work in the charter school realm and what they face on a daily basis (Adams 2011; Ausbrooks et al., 2005; Cannata, 2007; Lake, 2007; Margolis, 2005; Parks & Wallin, 2012; Rix, 1999), and the literature about teachers becoming leaders is growing (Calik et al., 2012; Danielson, 2006; Kiranh, 2013; Lieberman & Miller, 2004). Teachers can develop in a multitude of ways both formally and informally. These can be through university courses, professional development classes, or on the job training.

To help improve the modern day school, administration, principals, and school leaders have begun to realize the need to distribute leadership to the teachers within their schools. Research suggests this type of leadership should be servant based and authentic in nature. There are studies that define and explain the leadership qualities that teacher leaders should possess to meet the needs of their schools (Coldren, 2007; Danielson, 2006; Diamond, 2007; Gabriel, 2005; Halverson, 2007; Kouzes & Posner, 2002; Lambert 1998; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005). This need for teacher leadership is evident not only in traditional public schools but also in charter public schools (Beachum &

Dentith, 2004; Curtis, 2013; Davidson & Dell 2003; Lieberman & Miller, 2004; Mangin & Stoelinga, 2008; National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality, 2007; Ohlson, 2009; Ross & Gray, 2006; Schmerler et al., 2009; Stoelinga & Mangin, 2008).

Teacher leaders need to be given both support through professional development and time to develop into the leaders their schools need in order for them to meet the benchmarks set by the government. There are studies that have explained perceptions of teacher leadership (Danielson, 2006; Gabriel, 2005; Kiranh 2013; Lord et al., 2008; Manno & Firestone, 2008; Stoelinga, 2008; Supovitz, 2008; Suranna & Moss, 2000; Taylor, 2008; Wells, 2012). There have also been a few studies that have spotlighted teacher leadership preparation programs (Carpenter & Sherretz, 2012; Maynard & Dong, 2009; Millwater & Ehrich, 2009; Muchmore et al., 2004; Searby & Shaddix, 2008; Valli et al., 2006).

All of these studies have helped to define the current status of teacher leadership in our modern day schools, yet there are multiple areas that could be explained in order to gain a further understanding on this topic. The following section explains the problem upon which this study focuses.

Problem Statement

Education reform is not a new idea. Charter schools are not a new idea. NCLB laws are no longer new. Teacher leadership has been around for years. Two meta-analyses from Robinson (2007) and Witziers, Bosker, and Kruger (2003) showed that there are direct connections between school principal leadership and student achievement. Robinson examined 26 published studies that quantified the relationship between leadership and academic outcomes. While Robinson's study showed leadership

to achievement outcomes to be relational, it is limited to smaller studies, is school principal focused, and is over eight years old.

Like Robinson (2007), Witziers, Bosker, and Kruger (2003) also studied the quantifiable relationship between the school leader and student achievement. Their study focused mainly on principals and found it difficult to directly link leadership to student outcomes. Again, this study was limited to principals only and is over twelve years old. Finally, a study by Seashore, Dretzke, and Wahlstrom (2010) looked into shared leadership and trust building, provisions for instructional supports, and how they relate positively to student achievement. They found the notion that leadership variables positively relate to student outcomes.

Public schools today need to raise student scores. In order to raise student scores, schools need positive leadership. This type of leadership can and is being shared with teachers, both formally and informally. Teachers become leaders through a variety of avenues. One of the ways teachers move into leadership roles is through professional development. However, professional development programs geared to build teacher leadership capacity are relatively new, and there is little research to understand how teachers enrolled in these programs evolve into teacher leaders, especially in relationship to charter schools and their needs.

The phenomenon of teachers evolving into teacher leaders remains understood only in general and limited ways. Additionally, the wide variety of contexts and pathways for teachers to emerge as leaders suggests that this phenomenon needs to be studied both broadly and contextually. One particular pathway for teacher leadership development is specific training for becoming teacher leaders. Also, a particular context for studying the emergence of teacher leadership is the context of charter schools as a

distinct model for operating K-12 public schools. Thus, this study is concerned with the deficiency of understanding how professional training for developing teacher leaders within the charter school context is experienced and understood by teachers who engage in a specific charter school leadership training program.

Understanding how teachers experience their leadership development will help to inform and improve programs to better train teacher leaders, which may have a positive effect on student achievement. This study may be geared to study charter school teachers, but the findings may be relevant for all teachers in public and private schools and the programs that train them. This study may help inform the literature on ways to build student achievement outcomes through the direct and indirect influence of teacher leaders. The goal of education is fostering achievement in children and preparing those children for the world both today and tomorrow. This study hopes to help inform those who educate others in any way, shape, or form in order to better our world.

Purpose Statement and Research Questions

This qualitative study examined charter school teachers, enrolled in a teacher leadership development program, as they experience their own leadership development and the early practice of their leadership. These educators learned leadership simultaneously via a two-fold manner: (a) in the form of attending classes in a teacher leader development course, and (b) in the form of exercising their teacher leadership duties, as learned from their course and then practiced within their school.

This research study was designed to explore, examine, and create a fuller understanding of how charter school teachers, enrolled in a teacher leadership development program, experience their own early growth into teacher leaders. It sought to construct meaning from the lived experience of these participants in order to inform

educational institutions on how to effectively serve and develop future teacher leaders. In order to explore the lived experiences of these teachers and their leadership development two research questions guide this study. The following questions are:

1. How do charter school teachers, enrolled in a professional teacher leadership development program, experience and interpret their evolution as teacher leaders (i.e. the becoming a teacher leader) as they gain knowledge, skills, dispositions, and insights via the learning by studying (the training)?

2. How do such teachers, enrolled in a professional teacher leadership development program, experience and interpret their evolution as a teacher leaders (i.e. the becoming a teacher leader) as they gain knowledge, skills, dispositions, and insights via the learning by doing (the application of the training) provided by the teacher leader development program?

Methods Overview

This qualitative study design used interviews, focus groups, and journal analysis to examine the lived experience of seven charter school teachers who were in a formal teacher leadership development program. This study was conducted over a five month period within a year-long teacher leadership development course in one Midwest state. Each teacher had at least three years of experience within the classroom and had a desire to become a teacher leader within her school as evidenced by her enrollment in the program.

The data was gathered from these teachers via two semi-structured individual interviews, a focus group interview, and analysis of participants' journals. Individual interviews were semi-structured and occurred twice, once in the middle of the course work and one towards the end of the course. Each teacher was also engaged in one focus

group interview, involving three to four participants, at the end of the study. These groups were used for group discussion so that one participant's lived experience could spark ideas, thoughts, or reflection from the other participants. The participant journals, a required component of the leadership program, were utilized to record thoughts, reflections, and answers to assignments, and were collected as written documentation from the participants' points of view, capturing the mental processes and experiences as the participants engaged in their leadership within their schools.

Theoretical Perspective and Conceptual Framework

Spillane's distributive leadership theory (Spillane, 2006), Greenleaf's servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1977; Northouse, 2007) and the theory of authentic leadership (George & Sims, 2007) helped to lay the foundation for this study's framework for teacher leadership. A school's traditional approach to leadership is to have a principal leader who guides the school's mission, vision, and daily operations. Schools today face a great pressure to raise their student academic scores and demonstrate annual yearly progress. One way schools are facing this challenge is to use teacher leaders supported by the building principal for focused supports in the academic classroom. The distributive leadership theory states that leaders distribute their power to others in order to attain success in meeting their goals.

The authentic leadership theory (Northouse, 2013) focuses on four areas: (a) self-awareness, (b) internalized moral perspective, (c) balanced processing, and (d) relational transparency (p. 254). It is in the fourth domain that teacher leaders interact with their peers as they coach, mentor, and support those in their care. The other domains also help drive the programming and practices of developing teacher leaders.

Greenleaf (1977) developed the theory of servant leadership. It is here that he examined the idea of a leader who is willing to serve others to get them to a goal (p. 29). He went on to develop the ten characteristics of a servant leader as the leader helps others to meet goals. Northouse (2013) summarized the ten characteristics best. They are: (a) listening, (b) empathy, (c) healing, (d) awareness, (e) persuasion, (f) conceptualization, (g) foresight, (h) stewardship, (i) commitment to the growth of the people, and (j) building community (pp. 221-222). These characteristics help to frame what teacher leaders may become and how they may experience their growth through these characteristics.

It is important to note that there are other leadership theories such as path-goal theory and transformational leadership that may also play a role in developing educators into leaders. However, the conceptual lens focused on how teachers experience their early leadership as they relate to their learning in a professional development program and in their interactions of teacher leadership practice with their colleagues. For example, how did she experience relational transparency, or how did one see the characteristics of servant leadership in play as she receives and shares the leadership role distributed from her school leader?

The development and implementation of these three leadership theories help build capacity within schools (Danielson, 2006; Marzano, 2005; Reeves, 2006). The formalization of teacher leadership therefore defines the type of professional development program needed to produce both formal and informal teacher leaders. And, it is in the development program where teachers begin to interact with formal leadership training.

Building on these leadership theories, my conceptual framework helps to explain the subject matter a little more clearly and succinctly. This conceptual framework for understanding the process of how teachers experience becoming leaders can be divided into three parts: (1) the teacher leader, (2) the teacher learning by studying, and (3) the teacher learning by doing (see Figure 1).

My framework shows the interactions a teacher leader has as she gains understanding into her early leadership development. It is within this process that my study examined and explored the experiences of these teacher leaders. These rich explorations and details help inform better practices and programs that develop leaders within public schools.
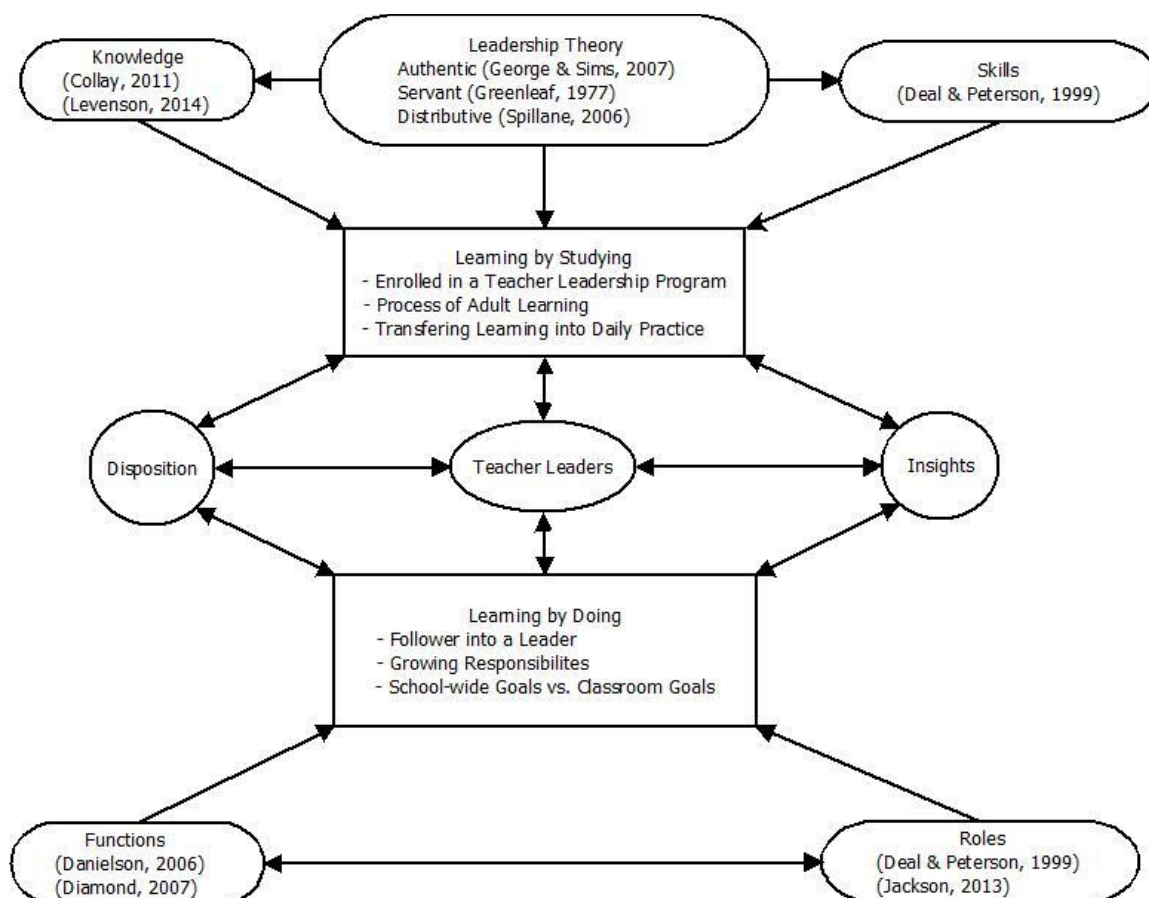
Figure 1. Conceptual Framework. The early framework for exploring teacher leadership as teachers experience early leadership opportunities grounded in theory (Carter, 2017).

The teacher leader is in the center of the framework. She is the focus as she engaged in her professional development through course work represented by learning through studying and practice represented by learning through doing. The teachers' experiences are the focus of this study, as are their early interactions with developing their leadership.

Teacher leaders learning about their development comes from multiple sources. The first source is professional development courses. In this framework, one can see that these courses are developed from theory, knowledge, and skills. Theories are ideas about how things work. Teacher leadership is grounded in multiple theories which include authentic, servant, and distributive leadership theories. These then inform sets of knowledge and skills which are taught with the PD course.

For the diagram, the underlying leadership theories lay the foundations for the knowledge and skills taught in the program. Spillane's (2006) distributive theory informs the participants that their work as leaders within their school is distributed from the school principal. One of the essential elements of the theory is the leader-plus aspect. This means, "Teachers take on leadership responsibilities, including mentoring peers and providing professional development" (p. 13).

Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) added to the servant leader theory in that teacher leaders are essentially servant leaders. They state, "instead of occupying a position at the top of a hierarchy, the servant leader is positioned at the center of the organization" (p. 17). Understanding the position of the teacher leader as being in the middle of the school community helps one to define the knowledge and skills essential to meet the variety of needs of the school.

Finally, Northouse (2013) offered that leaders should know their "True North," the authentic self which brings balanced processing, and finally relational transparency. These participants then approach their authentic leadership in two ways. First, the practical approach comes from their real-life examples and experiences. Second, the theoretical approach comes from the literature and research findings.

All three theories inform the structure of programming as well as the knowledge and skills one may learn. Together, the three aspects (theories, knowledge, and skills) make up the course work of the teacher leadership development program.

The second source is in the interactions that developing teacher leaders have with practicing the knowledge and skills they have learned. These interactions occur within their school in real time. They inform further practices and framework building in which the teacher leader grows her own leadership, and this may end in formal leadership positions. These interactions may manifest in a variety of ways as teachers learn how to function as teacher leaders and explore how their roles are defined within their school.

My study examined the interactions and experiences the teacher leaders had with (a) their program or learning by studying, and (b) their practice or learning by doing. These are represented by the two-way arrows touching the teacher leader circle. It is in these interactions and experiences that this study may inform the literature. If we understand the real-time, lived experiences of budding teacher leaders, then we may better support their growth, and in turn have a positive effect on student achievement.

Part (a) examines the part of becoming a leader through the lens of learning by studying. This part focuses on the classroom work that the teachers attended to in order to familiarize themselves with theory and frameworks, and how they exercised their leadership in a practical way. This study examined the experiences of these teachers as

they (1) decided to enroll into a leadership development program, (2) processed their own learning, and (3) transferred their learning into daily practice.

Part (b) explores the experiences teachers had by "doing" leadership. This component is where early teacher leaders began to practice their roles and functions. Here is where this study looked at (1) the perceptions of becoming a leader and no longer a "follower," (2) the growing responsibility a teacher leader takes on and the ripple effect of that extra responsibility, and (3) the exploration of how the teacher leader balances school-wide goals with their own classroom goals.

The final piece of the framework involves the disposition and insights the teacher leaders had and continued to develop as they evolved into teacher leaders. A disposition of a person is how she regards or views something, in this case her evolution into a teacher leader. Insights represent their personal learning and understanding of their learning and how it fits into their evolution into a teacher leader. Both disposition and insights aid the teacher by forming and molding her into a leader, and these are accomplished through learning by studying and by the application of her study.

Chapter I Summary

The literature points to teacher leadership making a significant impact on schools and school reform in public schools, both traditional and charter (Danielson, 2006; Marzano, 2005). While the notion of the teacher leader has been around for a while, its impact is needed even more in today's schools, including charter schools, to meet the outcomes desired by all. If teacher leaders are needed in our charter schools, then programs designed to increase this type of leadership are needed. There are studies that point to the positive effect leadership has on student achievement (Robinson, 2007; Seashore, Dretzke, & Wahlstrom, 2010; Witziers, Bosker, & Kruger, 2003). However,

there are very few studies about how teachers perceive their early development into teacher leaders. Through these development opportunities, teachers can change their classrooms, and in turn, their schools for the better. This phenomenology hopes to add to the literature as themes arise out of teachers making sense of their early leadership development.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This qualitative study examined charter school teachers, enrolled in a teacher leadership development program, as they experience their own learning and the early practice of their leadership. These educators learned in a two-fold manner simultaneously: (a) in the form of attending classes in a teacher leader development course and (b) in the form of practicing the duties of a leader, including instructional or non-instruction based activities, within their school.

This research study was designed to explore, examine, and create a fuller understanding of how charter school teachers, enrolled in a teacher leadership development program, experience their own early growth into teacher leaders. It sought to construct meaning from the lived experience of these participants in order to inform educational institutions on how to effectively serve and develop future teacher leaders. The idea behind this study was to understand the themes that arose as teachers enrolled in this program made sense of their learning and its outcomes in their schools and in their leadership roles. This phenomenology was qualitative in nature and resulted in (a) themes related to a charter school teacher leadership program and (b) the understanding of the concepts therein from the teacher leader's perspective.

The literature review can be divided into three sections: (a) charter school characteristics; (b) leadership theory; and (c) aspects of teacher leadership within schools including how one becomes a teacher leader. The deficiency identified concerning this researchable problem is there is not enough research on how teachers perceive their growth into teacher leaders while enrolled in a formal teacher leadership professional development program, and no studies at all could be found on a charter school district's

leadership program's capacity in building teacher leaders to meet the need of the public school. It is important to note that there is a significant body of research on charter schools. The goal of this study is to offer a snapshot of this work as it applies to the teachers working within these schools and to highlight the efforts to create teacher leaders. Thus, other research related to these public charter schools will not be covered.

Charter Schools

Public schools have been a cornerstone of the United States of America since the country's founding in 1770's. A public school is generally defined as a school which accepts federal and state money to fund its school, while private school is seen as an institution where the students enrolled pay tuition for the educational services of that institution. Charter schools fit into the realm of public schools and have only been around for a little over a score of years.

Berends (2015) described charter schools as "public schools funded by the government, but their governance structure differs from that of traditional public schools in that they are established under a charter run by parents, educators, community groups, or private organizations" (p. 161). As public schools, they are still held to the same federal and state regulations and accountability. The following section will focus on charter schools – their structure and their teachers and why teacher leadership is important within the charter school movement.

Why Charter Schools and Early Lessons

Charter schools have emerged nation-wide as a call and a tool to advance student learning. In the United States, they began more than twenty years ago, and the movement has grown since its induction in Minnesota in 1991. Today, 42 states and Washington D.C. have laws allowing the creation of these charter schools (Center for Education

Reform, 2015). Carey (2015) found in her phenomenological study of one group of teachers at an urban charter school that, "each charter school that has opened since that first charter legislation passed has been, to some degree, part of this postmodern shift in perceptions of public education" (p. 14). Carey went on to find that studying these perceptions and experiences of charter school teachers helps inform their schools and communities to better serve their students and therefore, education as a whole, by giving voice to charter school teachers.

Several studies provided background on the charter school movement. These studies (Adams, 2007; Ausbrooks, Barrett, and Daniel, 2005; Garrison and Holifield, 2005; Manno et al., 1998; Rix, 2012) combined to inform the literature about the needs and purpose charter schools fit for communities and families. Some of these reasons include schools having specific mission or vision to meet certain autonomy in raising student achievement. They also mention that charter schools were able to have innovation within the classroom through a variety of means. These studies also showed that some advantages of charters school are their differentiated programs, smaller student-teacher ratios, and the ability to have autonomy to meet student and community expectations for learning and student achievement. The studies looked at a variety of charter schools and their make-up for governance, programming, teaching, and learning.

Dobbie and Fryer (2011) added data on 35 charter schools located in New York City. They collected demographic data, interviewed staff, and gathered surveys from each school. Their reasoning for studying charter schools was to examine the effectiveness of charter schools on student achievement. They found two methods which charter schools use to boost efficacy and student achievement: (1) teacher development, and (2) professional development. They stated, "We provide new evidence on the

determinants of school effectiveness by collecting unparalleled data" (p. 1). They also

noted, "Our results suggest a model of schooling that may have general application" (p.

22). If parts of their model support effectiveness in charter schools, then a study could be

designed to focus on aspects of their model of schooling.

Structure of Charter Schools

Molnar and Garcia (2007) provided an overview of the privatization of schools

based on the NCLB laws. They described charter schools as smaller than traditional

schools according to their analysis of the 2003-2004 Common Core of Data. They

reported that overall student enrollments in charter schools are less than their traditional

counterparts both in K-8 buildings and secondary schools (p. 16). Smaller enrollment

numbers may mean more focus on individual students and their learning. NCLB

mandates that schools who receive funding and education aid must use standardized

testing to analyze student achievement scores, and due to this mandate, many charter

schools try to formulate nontraditional approaches to student learning through their

autonomy and school structure (p. 12).

An example of one state's charter school law: Michigan's legislation explained

the structure and policies for charter schools and how they are to meet the standards

given to all public schools (FAQ website, 2014). In this state, charter schools are called

Public School Academies (PSA) and they include kindergarten through twelfth grade.

They may not charge tuition and must have an open enrollment period followed by a

lottery selection if needed. Similar to traditional schools, they must employ highly

qualified teachers as well as be assessed annually by state assessments. Their funding

comes from the state based on pupil enrollment, but the charter schools do not receive

any property taxes from their district area.

Charter schools must also be chartered by an authorizing board which may include a state public university, community college, K-12 local education agency, or an intermediate school district. These schools are also required to adopt a model core curriculum approved by the governing school board (MDE FAQ Website, 2014). The schools are responsible for monitoring their activities and programs and for reporting to their authorizing board for assessment and public reporting. Charter schools are structured much in the same way traditional schools are, but they have more autonomy even though they receive less money.

The Center on Reinventing Public Education (2007) released a study using the 1999-2000 Schools Staffing Survey and found some early differences between traditional schools and their counterparts in the charter schools arena. First, they found that charter school leaders have less experience teaching before becoming a school head (p. 3). Second, charter school teachers tend to have a higher turnover rate (p. 4). Third, charter schools tend to adapt more quickly and continuously to meet their students' needs (p. 7). Finally, they found that charter schools are more likely to use interdisciplinary approaches to learning. They are more likely to offer more before or after-school programs as well as to use "special instruction" methods like Montessori, whereas traditional schools would be more likely to use a gifted/talented program to enrich their schools (p. 8).

Teachers in Charter Schools

Parks and Wallin (2012) reminded us that, "Essentially, charter schools are public schools, when it comes to funding and student population served" (p. 715). However, there is a sense of powerlessness felt by parents and teachers in traditional schools, causing them to create, enroll in, and be employed by charter schools. There are

similarities between traditional and charter public schools. So, teachers employed by charter schools are still considered public school teachers even though some differences may occur in the structure, funding, or networking between the two types of public schools.

Cannata (2007) used a quantitative study of the 1999-2000 Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) to compare teacher community in charter public and traditional public schools. Cannata (2007) reported, "Charter school teachers report having colleagues that share their beliefs about education as the most important reason for choosing to teach in their school" (p. 6). This shared belief system creates what Cannata calls "teacher learning communities" (p. 27). These communities help with empowering teachers to have more flexibility and input into developing school curriculum and collaborating with their colleagues (p. 6). This sense of community draws teachers to charter schools, and it is what helps to keep them there. However, Cannata also noted that these schools have a higher turnover rate and the teachers who are there have less experience. This instability and absence of senior staff creates an environment in which teachers may not feel safe to share their goals, trust each other, and be open to critique (p. 7). If teachers are looking for community within their schools, then charter schools must make teacher community one of their goals to attract and keep experienced teachers. Cannata stated, "Principal training and professional development should focus on developing leaders of teacher learning communities" (p. 23).

Ausbrooks, Barrett, and Daniel (2005) echo Cannata (2007) when they reported "[T]eachers in charter schools tend to not stay on the job nearly as long as their counterparts in non-charter public schools" (p. 9). They examined the characteristics of 159 open enrollment charter schools that were in operation in Texas during the 2001-

2002 school year. They noted that teacher turnover does not specifically relate to the disadvantaged student population of the school. Lake (2007) used a literature review which made note that based on existing data; experts cannot answer why many teachers leave charter schools after one to three years, what population of teacher turnover is initiated by school management, or what proportion reflects teachers' career plans.

Rix's (2007) case study of KIPP Academy in Philadelphia and Chicago's UNO Charter Schools noted that charter schools may not send teachers out to professional development, but might utilize master teachers on staff to provide ongoing feedback and training to school staff. Rix stated, "The best charter schools make more effective use of instructor's time and support them in their efforts to provide focused and differentiated programs for students" (p. 34). This difference may affect the way teachers perceive their growth and development. In order for charter schools to follow the master teacher model, they must have master teachers or teacher leaders in the structure to provide this development and build teacher community.

Adams (2011) noted in his case study of the Uncommon Schools that charter school teachers may be called upon to perform more acts of leadership, both within the classroom and outside of the classroom. His interviews showed that peer-to-peer influence is critical to meet the needs of the participants' schools, classrooms, and students. "One of the greatest powers is peer-to-peer influence of teachers" (p. 45).

Margolis' (2005) phenomenology based in the College Prep Academy (CPA) reported on some teachers' personal experiences within a charter school system. June, a teacher, felt like her personal philosophy aligned conceptually with the school; however, the structure of the school, along with a lack of support services, moved her to leave her school before Christmas break. Julie, another teacher, said "faith" was important for

teachers in charter schools to possess as they work within the structure of the school and move students to their learning goals. Another teacher, Susan, described as a "revolutionary" teacher in a "revolutionary" school, was worn down due to lack of community and supportive structures within the charter school.

Another study by Wei, Patel, and Young (2014) focused on the differences in school organization that contribute to experiences of teachers from both traditional and charter public schools. They used survey data from 2,273 teachers in Texas. Wei et al. found that charter school teachers potentially have unmet goals. They stated, "in addition to lower pay, charter school teachers may face additional challenges in their working conditions and evaluation processes that may underlie that turnover and represent opportunity for policy makers and school leaders to address factors that could improve teacher retention" (p. 18). The researchers also noted, "The environment from charter school teacher's perspectives then is one of focus on student learning but potentially in isolation and with inadequate supports" (p. 22). Such supports may need to be the training of teacher leaders or the establishment of instructional coaches to help diminish the perceptions of isolation.

Leadership can make or break a school. For teachers, leadership provides the support systems in place to meet the mission and vision of the charter school. The next section will look into the definitions of leadership and why teacher leadership is important to charter schools.

Leadership

Northouse (2007) begins his book on *Leadership* with this quote, "There are almost as many different definitions of leadership as there are people who have tried to define it" (p. 2). Basically, there is not a common definition for leadership. The purpose

of this literature review section is not to define leadership, but discuss the types of

leadership involved in charter schools, particularly in the field of teacher leadership. But,

for the purpose of a definition, Northouse states, "Leadership is a process whereby an

individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal" (p. 5).

Therefore, this section will discuss the types of leaders within the school, the need for

teacher leader in today's context, and the frameworks that teacher leaders use in their

practice of influencing their group of school stakeholders.

School Leadership

Sanocki (2013), in his grounded theory study of developing teacher leadership

and its distributed nature, employed a "retro" idea of using the dictionary to define terms

like teacher, principal, and leader. Using this method, he defined a teacher as, "one that

teaches, especially one whose occupation is to instruct" (p. 18). He defined a principal as

"a principal teacher" (p. 21). One can then assume that a school leader is a principal

teacher; one who instructs others or teaches the groups who are in their building.

To understand current school leadership and the need for leaders within public

charter schools, one must begin with the seminal work about leadership. In his ground

breaking work, Burns (1978) took the definition of leadership and focused on how

leaders interacted with their followers. He divided these interactions into two types of

leaders: transactional and transformational. He stated, "Transactional leaders approach

followers with an eye to exchanging one thing for another" (p. 4). He also defined

transformational leaders as "more complex" and "more potent." "The result of

transformational leadership," he stated, "is a relationship of mutual stimulation and

elevation that converts followers into leaders" (p. 4).

Meredith (1985) updated Burn's (1978) idea of leadership saying that there are certain characteristics of good leaders. Meredith goes on to state, "We can generalize that many leaders are made not born; the concept of leadership implies voluntary followership; most leaders have certain common characteristics, goal-centeredness being the most important; leaders share their visions with and get commitments from others" (p. 4). Meredith notes that there are capable leaders today and there will be more to come. Leadership, as noted above, will come as the need arises. Why, then, are teacher leaders needed today?

The Need for Teacher Leadership

Teacher leadership has been in the educational discussion for many years, receiving popularity in the 1970's and 80's and again more recently (Fairman and Mackenzie 2014; York-Barr and Duke 2004). Teacher leadership has now seen resurgence in the literature, with part of this reason due to the NCLB legislation and the push for higher student achievement. These teacher leadership roles may be seen in many ways, but one way they are being utilized is as tools for school improvement. Mangin and Stoelinga (2008) stated, "While much of the literature on teacher leadership trumpets the ability of all teachers, regardless of position, to contribute to school improvement, there has been a resurgent interest in the formalization of instructional leadership roles" (p. 2).

A group of studies (Beachum and Dentith, 2004; Davidson and Dell, 2003; Heller, 2004; Lieberman and Miller, 2004; Schmerler et al, 2009) discussed the importance and need for teacher leadership in the communal effort to increase student achievement and create positive school cultures. These studies show (a) the principal cannot lead alone, (b) leadership is a collective issue, (c) the changes facing schools

today call for teachers to lead the way in making effective change, (d) teacher leaders are powerful sources of effective and positive school change, and (e) teachers need other teachers to help lead them within their classrooms to support student achievement academically and socially.

Schools also need help from their community. Most community relationships are built from needs within the school, usually directed by the school board or school leadership. Teacher leadership is one way to build school community. Ross and Gray (2006) used the Path-Goal leadership theory to build a framework for increasing teacher leadership and efficacy. This building of teacher efficacy, they argued, will encourage teacher community through transformational leadership. This, they say, will help principals and school leaders to meet the accountability efforts for student achievement scores.

Schools not only face higher benchmarks for student achievement, but also, in line with NCLB guidelines, requirements that the school is safe and equitable for all students. Ohlson (2009) noted that teacher leadership, in a collaborative leadership relationship with administration, brings significant reduction in suspensions, an increase in attendance, and also an increase in achievement scores. Teacher leadership is not used just to raise schools' standardized scores, but to help create a safe and inclusive school environment.

Each school will need to examine the structures it has in place and determine how easy growing teacher leadership will be in order to meet its needs. One must remember that designing a teacher leadership structure will not be the "end all" to a school's problems. However, Curtis (2013) reminded readers, "The promise lies in defining the processes that are most critical to student learning and then designing teacher leadership

in service of them, rather than defining teacher leadership roles first and then figuring

how they can support the most important work" (p. 2). The support system (teacher

leadership) must meet the need (student achievement, behavior, community, etc.).

The National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality (2007) noted that

districts and schools can reach their goals for "enhancing" teacher leadership. These

goals may include: improving teacher quality and student learning, establishing grounded

reform, retaining the right staff, increasing professional development, and building

capacity in school staff. The needs of schools are great, but there is substantial support

within the literature that teacher leadership is not only needed, but is also a great tool to

meet those needs.

If schools have areas of growth and those areas need to be filled, then school

reform and improvement is a must. Stoelinga and Mangin (2008) stated, "The aspirations

of school reform have become more demanding and the expectations for teachers leaders

have increased in parallel" (p. 191). In the next four sections, these needs will be

discussed generally or specifically, and the section will conclude with an examination of

how teacher leadership is a fitting solution to those contemporary problems.

Student achievement. Lambert (1998) stated, "The central focus of any school

must be teaching and learning" (p. 23). There are as many ways to direct teaching and

learning as there are schools in the world. One way to assess if the teaching is

appropriate and effective and if learning is occurring is through analyzing student

achievement. With the NCLB mandates, every public school is accountable for

achieving and sustaining high performance results. Teacher leaders are needed to build

this capacity within schools through collaboration and guided development. Kouzes and

Posner (2013) added, "Collaboration is critical for achieving and sustaining high performance" (p. 242).

There are a lot of studies surrounding student achievement including how to make it higher, close the gaps, and make high student achievement long lasting. A group of studies (Danielson, 2006; Gabriel, 2005; Gaffney and Faragher, 2010; Halverson, 2007; Joannon-Bellows, 1999; Marzano, Waters, and McNulty, 2005) focused on teacher leadership and its effects on helping students achieve higher scores on academic measures. These studies each concluded in their own way that school leadership, in all types and forms, has a substantial effect on student achievement. More specifically, teacher leadership is a promising solution to a variety of educational issues facing communities today. The studies also reported that teacher leaders can use their influence within the classroom to develop strong relationships of supports with students, and that working this influence can be more far reaching when teacher leaders work with other teachers to help make changes that support higher academic achievement. Finally, the studies suggest that teacher leaders bring about positive change in their school both with administrative and collegial supports that enhance the student learning culture.

Student assessment and achievement scores are only a part of the data puzzle. The second part of reaching and sustaining high student achievement scores is in the analyzation of the data. Coldren (2007) argued, "Increasing school leadership helps to ease the burden of assessment analysis which frame interactions between leaders and teachers" (p. 25). This type of school leadership is done through teachers who have classroom impact and have developed analytic tools to read their schools data.

Berry, Daughtrey, and Wieder (2010), as well as the other authors, noted that teacher leadership is an effective and necessary tool for schools to use to meet the need

for student achievement. They stated, "Teacher leadership is a critical component of effective teaching and school success" (p. 2). Students need to learn. School principals cannot meet all the demands alone. Therefore, teacher leadership is key to the success of high student achievement for all public schools.

Professional development. Professional development (PD) is defined as any program or initiative designed to build capacity of school stakeholders to meet the needs of current school policies, curriculum, or mandates. PD is critical to maintain school growth and change throughout the years. Spillane (2006) stated, "Expecting one person to single-handedly lead efforts to improve instruction in a complex organization such as a school is impractical" (p. 26). School leaders need the help of teacher leaders to assist in PD through developing programs, imbedding practices, and analyzing strengths and weaknesses of the PD programs. Spillane further noted, "Teachers take on leadership responsibilities, including mentoring peers and providing PD" (p. 13). Teacher leaders are needed to move PD forward within the school community.

A series of studies (Diamond, 2007; Heller, 2004; Raspberry and Mahajan, 2008) looked into how professional development improves teachers in their practice. This type of professional development may encourage educators to teach other educators where master teachers can help implement mandates and initiatives. Professional development led by teacher leaders allows for colleagues to have sounding boards and support for their own work within the classroom. Also, the authors note that teacher leaders are integral in developing PD for their own schools to boost current practices to support student learning. A final piece to teacher leaders giving PD is that trust can be built and grown as the teachers follow their colleague teachers as they lead.

Hickey and Harris (2005) offered a few important points about improving PD through teacher leadership. Their empirical study used a Likert-type scale of teachers who had leadership roles during professional development. Their study showed, "63.4% of the teachers had positive feelings about professional development when teachers were used within the district to share expertise" (p. 15). This feedback is critical to know in improving PD for schools' development. The authors went on to recommend six steps for schools to improve PD through teacher leadership: (1) identify teacher strengths; (2) match teacher strengths to PD needs; (3) develop PD programs with these strengths and needs in mind; (4) provide teachers with time to prepare for their presentations; (5) provide opportunities for informal presentations to reduce the anxiety and stress of presenting; and (6) provide time throughout the year to take advantage of collaborative opportunities (p. 15). Hickey and Harris ended their study with this statement: "Clearly, there appeared to be a positive impact among many teachers toward seeing their peers share information in professional development" (p. 15).

School reform. Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) wrote that the right leadership doing the right work leads to better student performance and creates effective schools. They note that there are two orders of change for school reform and school improvement: (1) first order change which is incremental and (2) second order change which is anything but incremental (p. 66). Teacher leaders are needed to move and imbed change whether it is first or second order change.

School reform happens on many levels and the teacher leaders have access everywhere from the basic classroom level to school-wide improvement efforts. In part two of Danielson's (2006) book *Teacher Leadership that Strengthens Professional Practice*, she discussed that teacher leadership is demonstrated in three areas. These

include involvement in (1) school-wide policies and programs, (2) teaching and learning, and (3) communications and community relations. Additionally, Danielson noted that teacher leadership also breaks new ground within the school culture.

It is important that teacher leaders are involved with school reform. The Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement (2005) stated, "Research during the last two decades has emphasized that teacher leadership is integral to successful whole school reform" (p. 2). The authors went on to emphasize, "Teacher leaders not only create and implement reform, they are crucial to sustaining it" (p. 3).

Weathers' (2011) quantitative study of the School and Staffing Survey (1999-2000) data looked at the effect of leadership and accountability policies on teachers' sense of community. Weathers wrote that a strong sense of teacher community has a positive effect on student achievement, teacher practices, organizational learning, and schools changing and being effective. He noted, "It follows that teachers who report greater levels of control and influence have a stronger sense of community" (p. 23). This stronger sense of community is a sense of ownership. This ownership led by teacher leaders may lead to schools reforming to become effective.

Finally, Bierlein Palmer (2013) reminded us in her literature review that leadership is directly linked to strategies that build capacity and impact teaching and learning. Teacher leadership is a tool that schools can use to implement much needed change and reform. More often than not, administrators are focusing on the finances and marketing initiatives needed to secure enrollment and funding for the schools. Teacher leaders fill the gap in reform where school administrators may not be able to fill the need.

Financial stress. Margolis (2005) pointed to the financial stress that most public charter schools face, and the fact that administrators must focus on marketing to bring

students to the school. In order to enroll students, charter schools must market in a unique way as compared to traditional public schools, and such marketing attempts take more of the school leader's attention. When Margolis explains a school in her study, she draws a parallel facing charter schools noting, "Administrators were so focused on marketing the school's vision, they did not pay close enough attention to what made actualizing that vision difficult during the first two years: lack of curriculum, materials, time, and relational support structures" (p. 105). Along those same lines and concerning the teachers, Margolis stated, "Secondly, because of pervasive marketing of and within the school, administrators either ignored teacher concerns or associated teacher problems with deficiencies in the teacher" (p. 106).

In charter schools, teacher leaders are needed to fill the gap for responsibilities traditionally held by school administrators. Student achievement, professional development, school reform, and financial stress are four areas where teacher leaders are needed and can be stop gaps. This type of leadership is crucial for schools. The next section will discuss the frameworks and theories in which teacher leadership can be developed within public charter schools.

Teacher Leadership Frameworks

The next section identifies articles within the literature review that discuss what leadership theories and frameworks are employed in teacher leadership. As noted earlier, there may be many leadership theories which may apply to teacher leadership, but for the purpose of this paper, only four from the findings of the literature review will be discussed. The four theoretical frameworks are: 1) Transformational Leadership, 2) Distributive Leadership, 3) Servant Leadership, and 4) Authentic Leadership.

Transformational leadership. Transformational leadership is described as leadership that seeks to change the motivation and the intrinsic reasoning of the follower to engage in a higher calling. This goes beyond the mere exchange of duties for money or privilege. Burns (1978) reminded us "Leadership is the reciprocal process of mobilizing, by persons with certain motives and values, various economic, political, and other resources, in a context of competition and conflict, in order to realize goals independently or mutually held by both leaders and followers" (p. 425). He also stated that teaching is a vital part of the transformational leader. As a teacher leader, one can, as Burns described, help unite separate factions of a school community and "realize" the pursuit of higher goals for the school and community (pp. 425-426).

Webb, Neumann, and Jones (2004) reminded us that school reform and effective schools do not come from a designated leader, but that change comes from any member within the organization. They argued, "Without teachers' participation in formulating and implementing change, most reform efforts fail" (p. 254). Therefore, transformational leadership is crucial not only for recruiting teacher leaders, but also for developing their skills to share in the leadership activities and roles.

Anderson (2008) studied transformational teacher leadership. The author's justification for his research was that transformational leadership was rare and transformational teacher leadership was near non-existent. One place it was present was Tableland schools, the site of the research, showed that leaders could exert enough influence from their peer groups to change school goals. "The creative utilization of informal teacher leadership roles may be more likely to take advantage of transformational teacher leadership as well as allow for the development of the talents of

more teachers for more success" (p. 16). Clearly, transformational leadership is needed to build teacher leadership capacity.

Distributive leadership. A distributive practice of leadership is another framework for utilizing teacher leadership. The leading expert, Spillane (2006) described distributed leadership as a "practice stretched over multiple leaders" (p. 15). It is where the positional leader spreads out the decision making power and implementation of change to many followers which in turn become leaders in their own right. This type of leadership depends upon: leadership function, subject matter, school type, school size, and developmental stage (pp. 34-38).

In their work, *Taking a Distributive Practice*, Spillane and Diamond (2007) noted, "This distributive view of leadership shifts focus from school principals and their other formal or informal leaders to a web of leaders, followers, and their situations that give form to leadership practice" (p. 7). They go on to note, "People in schools move in and out of followership and leadership roles depending on the situation" (p. 9). Finally, they reminded us, "Leaders do not need to see eye-to-eye in order to distribute leadership and accomplish goals" (p. 11).

In schools of all types, principals must allow their leadership to be shared in certain situations that allow teacher leaders to grow, develop, and encourage the change needed within their schools. Another group of studies (Baloglu, 2012; Dinham, Aubusson, and Brady, 2008; Lambert, 1998; Sheppard, Hurley, and Dibbon, 2010; McPherson and Borthwick, 2011; Supovitz, 2008) focused on the distributive leadership principles that may help teachers and schools incorporate teacher leadership within their buildings. They found that not only does shared, distributive leadership have a positive correlation with effectively supporting the organizations with their program

implementations, but they also found that distributive leadership allows for the whole organization to grow in their respected focal points. In the case of charter schools, teacher leaders may have a positive effect on school structures and student achievement. They even note that teacher leadership is a promising strategy for schools in need of significant change.

From the literature review, distributive leadership is a framework schools must apply when building teacher leadership capacity. Not only does school leadership for teachers need to be transformational and distributive, but it also needs to incorporate a servant leader aspect and an authentic approach. Teacher leadership within public school academies will grow and develop into an effective strategy with the use of all four leadership theories nested into the professional development of the school teachers.

Servant leadership. Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) discussed the aspects of servant leadership as it pertains to school leadership. They stated, "It is attributed to Robert Greenleaf (1970, 1977), who believed that effective leadership emerges from a desire to help others" (p. 16). They continued by explaining that servant leaders are positioned within the organization, not from the top spot, but in the center of the organization. "This implies that the servant leader is in contact with all aspects of the organization and the individuals within it" (p. 17).

It is this servant leadership that Northouse (2007) described as: putting followers first; helping followers grow and succeed; behaving ethically; empowering; and creating value for the community (pp. 228-229). More specifically, he stated, "Empowering refers to allowing followers the freedom to be independent, make decisions on their own, and be self-confident" (p. 229). He added, "Servant leadership emphasizes that leaders be attentive to the concerns of the followers, empathize with them, and nurture them" (p.

219). Finally, Northouse concluded that servant leadership influences follower performance and growth, bolsters organization performance, and has a societal impact. Teacher leaders are by nature servant leaders as they are influencing and empowering others to achieve the goals set before them and their school.

Page and Wong (2000) defined a servant leader as, "A leader whose primary purpose for leading is to serve others by investing in their development and well being for the benefit of accomplishing tasks a goals for the common good" (p. 2). Yu (2007) added to that definition by emphasizing the act of service to others and sharing power in decision making. Servant leaders also bring a sense of community by building trust with others. They are also interested in serving others and not just in self-interest areas.

Black (2010) completed a correlational analysis between servant leaders and school climate. This mixed method used interviews and surveys in which 246 teacher from twelve schools participated. The author found a significant positive relationship between the use of servant leaders and a positive school climate. Black adds, "Twenty-first-century scholars presented the servant leader as one moving beyond being transformational" (p. 438).

Wenig (2004) reported, "an effective teacher-leader can raise the learning level of his/her student by 15% to 25%" (p. 24). Wenig's study used interviews and surveys from one school district that was implementing a technology initiative and how school leadership including teacher leadership effected classroom performance. Wenig goes on to attach the servant leader to the effective teacher leader. The author used Spears' (1995) work saying, "At the core, servant leadership is a long-term, transformational approach to life and work…a way of being that has potential to create positive change throughout our society" (p. 4).

The servant-teacher-leader is effective in meeting the needs of schools in achievement, community, and professional development. Another aspect of leadership frameworks is the authentic leader. The next section examines the literature that deals with authentic leadership.

Authentic leadership. George and Sims (2007) described an authentic leader as one who is self aware, has deeply held values, is motivated both externally and internally, has a support team, and enjoys an integrated life. They studied this by interviewing and surveying 125 leaders, from prominent CEOs to lower-profile leaders within companies. They noted, "To become authentic leaders, we must discard the myth that leadership means having legions of supporters following our direction as we ascend to the pinnacles of power. This shift is the transformation from 'I' to 'We'" (p. 44). They also noted that authentic leaders, "viewed themselves as people who wanted to make a difference and inspired others to join them in pursuing common goals" (p. 8). Teacher leaders display authentic leadership when they are intrinsically motivated to help their community to improve. They know their strengths, and they know their weaknesses. Finally, authentic teacher leaders use their stories to empower others to achieve higher results (p. 151).

Lambert (1998) echoed George and Sims by stating, "Leading needs to be viewed as authentic" (p. 23). Lambert then connected this leadership with student learning. He stated, "Student learning is the content of leadership" (p. 23). In order for student learning to improve, Lambert connected authentic leadership as the impetus for high achievement. In order to reform school improvement through teachers, Lambert stated, "The goal that focuses a principal's choice of behaviors is to enable more and more individuals to build their own informal authority and demonstrate leadership behaviors" (p. 28).

Intrator and Kunzman (2006) reminded us, "Effective reform and personal growth begin when individuals work to develop a deep understanding of their own thinking and when an organization comes together to foster a sense of shared purpose" (p. 390). They argue that effective teaching and learning begin when one starts with his or her soul. An inner reflection leads to authentic leadership and an authentic leadership leads to a sustained growth for the leader and the followers.

Reeves (2002) leaves us a final note on finding authentic leaders. He notes that there are five areas for leaders to focus on in their lives. The fifth area is identifying the next generation of educational leaders and beginning their mentoring through leadership frameworks. Teacher leaders are the next generation of educational leaders. It is important to build their capacity for leadership through these frameworks.

The Teacher Leader

This section examines the literature surrounding who and what a teacher leader is in the modern school. This section has six parts: (1) characteristics of teacher leaders, (2) roles of teacher leaders, (3) perceptions of teacher leaders, (4) formalizing teacher leaders, (5) the identity of teacher leaders, and (6) programs designed for professional development of teacher leaders.

Characteristics of the Teacher Leader

Danielson (2006) studied teacher leadership and building a practical framework for schools and leaders to use as a resource. She used interviews and narratives to examine themes that may arise as useful for school leadership to use as a tool. She discussed five characteristics/skills of teacher leaders. She said they are collaborators and facilitators of groups and discussion. She explained that they are planners, problem posers, and problem finders. Finally, she noted that teacher leaders are evaluators who

take action by setting goals, determining evidence and planning actions through to implementation.

The following studies (Fullan, 1994; Gabriel, 2005; Lieberman and Miller, 2004; Pate, James, and Leech, 2005; Stone, 1997) are but a few of the reports in the literature that discuss the characteristics of teacher leaders. They explain that teacher leaders are able to communicate, increase morale, and make decisions. They are creators and innovators, and are motivated. They have a sense of duty, a passion for their students and school, and bear a servant's attitude. These are but a few of the characteristics of teachers who lead their schools from within the classroom.

The Education Commission of the United States (2010) noted that teacher leaders aspire to be leaders. They are wanting to "stretch" beyond their classroom and step into the many formal and informal roles available. Sanocki (2013) added that teacher leaders have a sense of moral purpose in what they do and how they lead (p. 4). These characteristics lead the person, the teacher, into his or her role as a teacher or as the teacher leader.

What Makes the Teacher Leader

In her book, Teacher Leadership that Strengthens Professional Practice, Danielson (2006) stated that teacher leadership is an informal role (p. 15, 19). Any positional or formal role is very much like that of a school principal or vice principal, dean of students, or any other title/job within the school where someone is paid for leading others. Teacher leadership is informal in the ways and means of meeting the needs of the school environment. Lieberman and Miller (2004) noted teacher leadership provides opportunities and roles in which teachers can practice leadership within a professional community.

Gabriel (2005) listed the roles (both informal and formal) a teacher leader might play within her school. These roles may include grade/level/subject area leader, vertical leader, backup leader, mentor, coach, note-taker/recorder, parliamentarian/timekeeper, presenter, conference attendee, and speaker/writer (pp. 3-14). Gabriel also added, "Teachers can be integral agents of change when involved with interviewing" (p. 26). Teacher leaders' roles seem to include everything from daily classroom/school issues serving as a leader in hiring the right staff to do the right work.

The Education Commission of the States (2010) also discussed the formal and informal roles teacher leaders play. Teacher leaders mentor new and current teachers. They help design and implement teacher professional development. They serve as department chairs, union representative, committee members, staff developers, and curriculum specialists. They lead professional learning communities, assist colleagues in selecting appropriate strategies, and engage in reflective dialogue to improve instruction and student achievement. The Commission reminded us, "The notion that teacher leaders want to stay in the classroom and stay connected to students are critical points. Teacher leaders are 'teachers' first and 'leaders' outside their classrooms second" (p. 2).

Stoelinga and Mangin (2008) added information regarding the role of teacher leaders. They stated, "…teacher leadership focuses increasingly on instructional improvement: leading district initiatives, designing and offering professional development, analyzing data, creating learning communities, and negotiating complex mentoring relationships" (p. 192). These roles vary per school and are even situational in nature. Bierlein Palmer (2013) added that the role of the teacher leader is a shared-leadership role with the administrator. Whatever the teacher leader does is in a shared leadership environment.

While certain roles of teacher leaders are informal and other are defined, there is no one characteristic or role that fits all teacher leaders. The needs of the situation are what teacher leaders are called in to analyze and meet the goals. Camburn, Kimball, and Lowenhaupt (2008) reminded us of their related finding, "…that teacher leaders are often drawn into other leadership roles, such as de facto assistant principals, grant administrators, or test administrators" (p. 141). The roles of a teacher leader then seem boundless which is the case represented by the literature.

Teacher leaders must be able to have a set of (a) knowledge and skills, and fill a variety of (b) functions and roles. However, in this nested model where knowledge and skills give form to functions and roles, there is a larger area where the teacher leader must first begin. This is the area of "will." Willard and Johnson (2006) described will as coming "from nothing but us" (p. 102). They go on to say the will's primary purpose is for humans to have the power to select what we think about and how intently we focus on it. They wrote, "From this, our other decisions and actions flow, more or less. Character develops from will" (p. 102).

Jackson (2013) also addressed that leadership is about working with other people to accomplish goals. She wrote, "Leadership is not so much getting people to follow you as it is working through other people to accomplish the vision and goals of the institution" (p. 14). Jackson continues to highlight the need for teacher leaders to understand the will as well as the skill of others in order to accomplish goals. She introduces the Will/Skill Matrix as a tool for teacher leaders to identify the areas of need in certain coworkers and to begin giving supports (p. 15). She goes on to say, "Teacher will is what drives teachers to improve their craft and persist with students" (p. 72).

Part of the teacher leader's job is to understand the will of the teachers they are working with and then begin giving them support in their areas of need. Therefore, in a nested model, a person's will encompasses all other areas (i.e. knowledge and skills, roles and functions) in a teacher leader's tool box. From understanding will comes knowledge and skills, and from knowledge and skills flow the roles and functions of the teacher leader. A teacher leader, as Jackson wrote, can then begin to, "develop professional development that leads to mastery" (pp. 42-55). Finally, if the teacher can create an understanding of will and make sense of the concept of will as others use it, then they shall be able to make sense of their own leadership abilities (i.e., knowledge and skills) and how they manifest in their schools (i.e., roles and functions).

Knowledge and skills. Knowledge is when one has an understanding of something else. It is accumulated data used to identify and compare and contrast against other forms of data. Teacher leaders must gain knowledge in a variety of forms if they are going to lead others within their school to impact a student's learning. Collay (2011) wrote that one must have an understanding of her own personal history in order to better inform her decision making process as she serves her school (pp. 66-70.) She also wrote, "Teachers learn about leadership throughout life and from many sources – but begin careers as school leaders in the classroom" (p. 36). Therefore, teachers must know their own personal history in order to better inform their own leadership within their schools.

Levenson (2014) wrote, "Just as it takes time to learn how to be an effective teacher, it takes time and knowledge about how the school works to become an effective institutional teacher leader" (p. 71). She goes on to write how this knowledge helps to

inform teacher leaders in their relationships, functions and skills as it relates to their leadership.

Finally, Deal and Peterson (1999) stated that knowledge of the school culture is the basis for understanding the function and role of teacher leaders within their school communities. This type of knowledge Deal and Peterson wrote, "may even be more meaningful harbingers of action and sustained progress" (pp. 8-9). This type of cultural knowledge may lead to a better foundation of addressing the wills and skills of fellow teachers and their classroom student achievement.

Skills are a set of specific abilities a person has in order to accomplish a goal or task at hand. In relation to teacher leaders, skills help the teacher leaders to navigate their school culture to raise low wills and low skills of fellow teachers in order to improve student achievement both specifically and as a community. Collay (2011) emphasized that collaboration across roles is a key skill for a teacher leader to have. This type of collaboration is not just between teachers, but also between administration, parents, and even the students. She wrote, "Teachers who can reach through these barriers are leaders for equity and weave a stronger web of support for their students and families" (p. 137).

Levenson (2014) wrote that the skill of reflection is also key for teacher leaders to use as they experience their own leadership. She noted that reflection as a skill not only helps guide informed leadership, but it also retains a spirit of inquiry and passion for teaching and learning (p. 30). Reflection as a skill allows for teachers to hone and sharpen their understanding of their own will and the will of others, thereby allowing for further supports in leading others in student achievement.

Deal and Peterson (1999) noted that leading in schools requires the leader to have tools that help overcome the uncertainty of change. Many school cultures battle the

uncertainty of the future by doing what they have always done whether it works or not. Teacher leaders will need to have the ability to address the uncertainty and move their schools into change with energy and motivation. This skill set will help teacher leaders begin collaboration and bolster the community culture (p. 8).

This set of knowledge and skills is but one of many sets of those mentioned in the literature. However, it is important to see that as teachers experience their leadership, they must also begin to formulate their knowledge and their skills and put them into practice addressing their own wills and those of the colleagues. These pieces of knowledge and the appropriate skills offer a foundation for teacher leaders to experience and practice their leadership as they form their own functions and roles within their schools.

Functions and roles. As the teacher leadership experience their own influence, they will begin to understand their own "will" and the "will" of others within their schools. As they experience their will in action, the teacher leadership will grow in knowledge and skills. From their knowledge and skills, teacher leaderships will begin to explore different functions and roles of their leadership.

Deal and Peterson (1999) noted that addressing negativism is a major function for teacher leaders. They offer several antidotes for negativism and write, "Leaders must sometimes resort to extreme measures," to transform a negative culture (p. 127). They note that the leader must be able to function as a culture builder.

Levenson (2014) explained several functions of teacher leaders. First, they function as learners and gatherers of information. Second, they function in building relationships among adults. Third, they function as energized dedication builders. Fourth, they function as informal leaders who can support other teachers without the

professional evaluation process impeding growth. Finally, they function as culture builders and maintainers (pp. 71-73).

As for roles, Collay (2011) said that the first and foremost role of teacher leaders is that they are a teacher. Their own teaching should be seen as leading. And, their school-wide leadership is founded on them being above all a teacher (p. 3). Levenson (2014) supported the role of a teacher leader first being a teacher within the classroom. But, she also added that the teacher leader plays the role of a mentor to other teachers. This role involves teaching and learning with other teachers (p. 72).

Deal and Peterson (1999) go as far as to list eight roles that teacher leaders play within their school communities. These include historian, anthropological sleuth, visionary, symbol, potter, poet, actor, and healer. They go on to mention that a school leader will play a variety of roles throughout his/her leadership. Cooper et al (2016) make note to broaden the role of a teacher leader to not be a singular role, but one that is created to meet the context in which the teacher leader is working. They stated, "The role of the teacher – what it is and how it is defined – is varied, however depending on the school context" (p. 87). What is important to know is that a teacher leader will experience her own leadership in a variety of ways.

Perceptions of the Teacher Leader

The following section discusses the perceptions of teacher leaders from the literature review. Manno and Firestone (2008) made two notes about how teacher leaders are perceived. They stated, "Teacher leaders bring human capital that has face validity to the teachers with whom they work" (p. 52). They also wrote, "When selecting future teacher leaders, it is important to recruit teacher leaders who already have content

expertise" (p. 52). Therefore teacher leaders are perceived as being experts who bring important, valid points of view into the situation.

A series of studies (Kiranh, 2013; Lord, Cress, and Miller, 2008; Supovitz, 2008; Suranna and Moss, 2000; Taylor, 2008; Wells, 2012) focused on the perceptions of teacher leaders and how those perceptions may frame how teachers lead. They noted that teacher leaders are perceived as experts and a resource. They are seen as people who can help students achieve higher scores, and it is assured that they have a wealth of experience to share. They are seen as influencers and masters of their profession. They are also seen as people who take a stand for their schools and students and then help others to support students in their academic learning.

Stoelinga (2008) encapsulated what the literature states about the perception of teacher leaders. She noted, "Informal teacher leaders can be extremely powerful and, if applied to school goals, they can be a strong force in the school environment" (p. 117). This final viewpoint is a meta-perception in that teacher leaders are a powerful tool for all school improvement.

Formalizing the Teacher Leader

The definition of formalizing the teacher leader is the idea of schools making teacher leadership positions a reality within their walls. They have taken steps and utilize teacher leaders in a variety of ways to solve real school dilemmas. Mangin and Stoelinga (2008) noted, "Instructional leadership comes more informally from colleagues and peers," and "different leaders emerge depending on the nature of the expertise needed" (p. 6). Liljenberg (2016) argued, "the potential for teacher leadership has not been fully exploited" (p. 37). This means that while teacher leadership has been around for a while and it has much potential in multiple spheres, it still has not been used to its potential.

With this in mind, a process may need to be in place to find and fix the expertise within the school so that staff can draw from that teacher's leadership.

Lambert (1998) provided six actions to build leadership capacity. They include: (a) hire the right people; (b) assess the school for leadership capacity; (c) develop a culture of inquiry; (d) organize the school for leadership; (e) implement plans to build capacity, and (f) develop policies supporting leadership capacity building. These active steps help to guide schools to begin making teacher leaders a reality. Lieberman and Miller (2004) remind schools that this formalizing of leadership takes place with learning in practice. There is evidence of reflective practice and situated learning and professional learning within communities of practice (pp. 21-24).

Stoelinga (2008) said that communication is important for formalizing teacher leadership positions. Alignment and values of teacher leadership fall within the parameters of communicating the aspects of the teacher leader. Stoelinga stated, "The alignment between formal and informal leadership positions, the values they represent, and the extent to which pathways of communications exist between them are critical factors in the enactment of teacher leader positions" (p. 116).

Not only is communication important to formalize teacher leadership but so is the support of administration to see the initiatives through to implementation. Camburn, Kimball, and Lowenhaupt (2008) stated, "It was also evident that the effectiveness of teacher leaders in our study depended on the support of school principals" (p. 141).

Jackson, Burrus, Bassett, and Roberts (2010) concluded their literature review on formalizing teacher leadership by suggesting using valid and reliable assessments. They noted, "If teacher leadership is to become formalized into another level of the teacher profession, valid and reliable assessments of teacher leadership are needed" (p. 29). They

go onto to suggest, "Research on teacher leadership requires much more definitional clarity with which researchers can create precise operations and measurements" (p. 29). In the interest of formalizing teacher leadership within schools, there must be assessments or evaluations of needs and growth in order to see the potential and true nature of utilizing teacher leadership.

Identity of the Teacher Leader

The identity of the teacher leader arises out of the formalization of the informal positions as defined by the literature. Identity is defined as how other teachers see the teacher leaders and how teacher leaders see themselves. Mangin and Stoelinga (2008) suggested, "Instructional leadership comes more informally from colleagues and peers than from top down" (p. 6). The teacher leader is more likely distinguished.

Intrator and Kunzman (2006) suggested that Maslow's pyramid be inverted as teacher leaders identify first with their intrinsic needs before their physical needs. They stated, "Without laying the groundwork that creates purposeful, resilient teachers, any benefits of training centered around new procedures, techniques, and strategies will eventually fade" (p. 42). Fairman and Mackenzie (2015) stress the importance that teacher leaders desire their improvement and thus move into learning what is needed from them. They stated, "We found that teacher leaders are galvanized by the desire to improve and thus ensure learning for all students" (p. 65). The identity of teacher leader is first found within, followed by a motivation to work on school reform and the implementation of best practices.

Fullan (1993) reminded the reader that teacher leaders identify with their situations "differently" than their peers (p. 91). It is this strategy that separates the

teacher leader from teacher. They are able to identify their situation, stress, issue, or problem and handle each uniquely. They think differently.

Teacher leaders identified themselves in and through collaborative groups and in shared decision making. Fennel (1999) suggested that principals give teacher leaders space to move and to discuss issues, solutions, and ideas. The author noted, "Emphasis on planning in collaborative groups and involvement in shared decision making were two main ways which were discussed by principals" (p. 24). However, it is important to remember that the author notes the teacher leader works within a set of parameters.

Lashway (1998) stated, "Because teacher leaders seldom have positional power, they must operate through influence rather than formal authority" (p. 2). The teacher leaders' identity contains influence. Lashway also stated, "Teacher leaders receive support (not just at the beginning of their leadership roles) to help them address these concerns" (p. 3). The identity of the teacher leaders needs support continuously from principals.

Calik et al (2012) stated, "Another finding of the research was that principals' instructional leadership behaviors have a positive and significant effect on teachers' self efficacy" (p. 2503). Also, the authors noted, "Teachers' perception about their own self efficacy grew stronger" (p. 2503). The identity of the teacher leaders is tied to their own self-efficacy, which may also be influenced by their administration.

Collay (2006) reinforced that teacher leadership identities are constantly being shaped. The author stated, "Teachers continue to shape their professional identities through interactions with others in the workplace" (p. 132). This workplace can be in form or style. The situation may have some resistance to authentic participation or there may be space to discuss and share leadership (p. 136). Collay shared one final thought on

identity. He stated, "Professional identity of teacher leaders is everyone's business from peers to schools to faculty in educational administration programs" (p. 142).

Xu and Patmor (2012) added to the literature with their discussion and findings on fostering leadership skills in pre-service teachers. They noted, "Teacher preparation programs can help shape beliefs about teacher leadership among pre-service teachers" (p. 255). Goodwin, Low, and Ng (2015) stress the importance of learning skills and practicing those skills. They said, "for teacher leaders to be successful, they need to have the skills and space to exercise leadership" (p.116). Teacher leaders can be identified and self-identify as early as pre-service courses or in student teaching assignments. These types of pre-service and professional development programs will be discussed in the next section.

Programming for Teacher Leadership

This section discusses the need for programming to build capacity for and in teacher leaders. Some authors discuss the need for programs and professional development, and some authors discuss their findings in current teacher leadership programming. Kiranh (2013) stated, "Teachers should receive in-service trainings on teacher leadership combined with trainings on school culture, school improvement, and school climate" (p. 192).

The following group of studies (Barton, 2011; Carpetner and Sherretz, 2012; Maynard and Dong, 2009; Millwater and Erich, 2009; Muchmore et al, 2004; Searby and Saddix, 2008; Valli et al, 2006) researched the development programs for teacher leaders. They found that programs from around the country are active in raising instructional leaders to help their schools. These programs showed that teachers enrolled in these programs already saw themselves as leaders. These teachers were determined to be

effective in their own classrooms as well as push their schools to achieve higher educational outcomes. While most of the studies found these programs to be effective with the teachers and their outcomes, some of the studies did not have clear positive outcomes from the programs in their relation to student achievement. It is evident that these programs differ from each other and have different outcomes. Therefore, in order to better inform the literature, more research is needed to see how teachers experience their development as leaders.

Curry (2015) studied charter schools and drew a comparison of novice and experienced teacher beliefs about professional development and administrative support. She used a survey of seventy questions given to forty-eight teachers. She noted, "When planners in charter schools create opportunities for professional development and collaboration, they must have an understanding of teachers' perceptions within the charter school setting" (p. 5). It is here that understanding charter school teachers' experiences in their own leadership development may help inform the literature for further development of programs designed with charter school teachers in mind. There may need to be more research in this area of programming for teacher leadership and the implementation of the teacher leadership practices.

<div align="center">**Summary of Findings**</div>

Hole in the Literature

The literature gives an idea of the areas for further research for teacher leadership: its development, its implementation, and its sustainability. Several authors note the need to encourage and study teacher leadership programs and their effectiveness in meeting the needs of public schools. This section discusses the author's point of view and the hole in the literature.

Cannata (2007) stated, "If teacher professional communities are to be a goal of schools, then principal training and professional development should focus on developing leaders of teacher learning communities" (p. 23). Here Cannata states that professional development is needed to begin the change in schools in order to make space for teacher leaders and their work.

Curtis (2013) made two distinct statements regarding the need to develop and implement teacher leader development programs. Curtis stated, "The promise lies in defining the processes that are most critical to student learning and then designing teacher leadership in service of them, rather than defining teacher leadership roles first and then figuring out how they can support the most important work" (p. 2). Curtis ends his work with, "In this time of unprecedented expectations, public education needs a talent development and management strategy that enables it to recruit, develop, mobilize, and retain the best possible educators" (p. 16).

Sanocki (2013) echoed Cannata and Curtis in his dissertation. He stated, "Teacher leadership is still emergent in schools and more professional development is needed in order for these teachers to truly accept their roles and carry them out" (pp. 29-30). Professional development programs are needed to support the emerging teacher leader. These programs are vital and need to be developed and evaluated for effectiveness.

Lord, Cress, and Miller (2008) make note that school leaders are turning to teacher leaders as a strategy to meet the need for math and science achievement for their schools. They stated, "The nature of the work is only loosely defined, and often teacher leaders are left to their own devices to establish the focus and the means for accomplishing broad goals" (p. 71). There is a need to support teacher leaders in their

work. Mangin (2008) agreed by stating, "Thus willingness to do the work of the teacher leader is not enough; rather, teacher leaders must have skills and knowledge necessary to be recognized as a valuable resource" (p. 93).

Bierlein Palmer (2013) stated, "Teachers often feel they do not have the knowledge and skills to lead other adults. Their formal university programs, both at the undergraduate and graduate level, rarely include leadership-based courses nor does the professional development they receive" (p. 116). The areas within the literature to drive future studies on teacher leadership is the programs designed to form teachers into teacher leaders. How do teacher leaders make sense of a teacher leadership program and how do they move through the process of becoming a teacher leader with the guidance of a professional development program?

Lieberman and Miller (2004) concluded this literature review with a final thought. They stated, "We do not imply that teacher leadership is fully integrated into the teaching culture, nor do we want to gloss over the difficulties that await professionals who seek to change the very concept of what it means to be a teacher" (pp. 91-92). They conclude their work with, "Our study of teacher leadership imbues us with hope; it helps us envision a future in which teachers lead toward more democratic and enlightened schooling" (p. 92).

Maas and Lake (2015) also used a literature review to focus on knowledge gaps about the characteristics of effective schools and how these findings compare to the characteristics of effective schools more generally. They used this literature review to report implications and what future research is warranted. They added that, "unlike charter schools research, traditional school effectiveness literature is extensive and includes an exhaustive number of studies and correlates" (p. 168). It would seem

advantageous to add to the literature the shared experiences of charter school teachers

experiencing their early leadership. Berends (2015) reminded, "we have learned a great

deal about charter schools over the past 20 years, especially the past 10 as longitudinal

student data systems have increased, and there is still much to learn" (p. 174).

Conceptual Framework

After extensive literature review, three categories emerged in the understanding of

how teachers experience their leadership. They are: the teacher leaders themselves, the

learning by studying about teacher leadership, and learning by doing or practicing teacher

leadership. As stated previously, these categories and the relationship among them form

the conceptual framework. See Table 1 for a complete listing of the three categories and

their respective factors.

Table 1

Conceptual Design Factors on Teacher Leadership Development

Concept	Factors
Teacher Leader	Dispositions
	Insights
Learning by Studying	Leadership theory
	Knowledge
	Skills
	Enrolled in a teacher leadership program
	Processing adult learning
	Transferring learning into practice
Learning by Doing	Functions
	Roles
	From following into leading
	Growing professional responsibilities
	School-wide goals with classroom goals

Overview of teacher leader. The teacher leader is the central area studied within

the framework. She has her own (a) disposition and (b) insights to her own learning

which helped inform this phenomenology.

Overview of learning by studying. The resulting traits of learning by studying involve: (a) leadership theory, (b) knowledge, and (c) skills. The process of learning by studying require: (d) being enrolled in a teacher leadership program, (e) processing adult learning, and (f) transferring learning into daily practice.

Overview of learning by doing. The resulting factors of learning by doing involve: (a) functions of a teacher leader, and (b) roles of a teacher leader. The process of learning by doing also includes: (c) transforming following into leading, (d) growing professional responsibilities, and (e) managing school-wide goals with classroom goals.

Typically, as shown in the literature review, research has focused almost primarily on the need for teacher leadership, what teacher leadership looks like, or teacher leadership programs. There is little known about how teachers experience their growth into teacher leaders. While this chapter discusses the need for teacher leadership in all schools in order to meet the goals for public schools, there is very little in the literature about how charter school teachers experience their own leadership within professional development and practice leadership within their public charter schools. This study aims to help fill the hole in the literature in order to spotlight charter school teachers as they have early experiences while becoming teacher leaders, and Chapter III discusses the methodology used to reach this goal.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

This qualitative study examined charter school teachers, enrolled in a teacher leadership development program, as they experienced their own leadership learning and the early practice of their leadership. These educators were involved with learning about leadership in a two-fold manner simultaneously: (a) in the form of attending classes in a teacher leader development course, and (b) in the form of practicing the duties of a leader, through instructional or non-instruction based activities, within their schools.

This research study was designed to explore, examine, and create a fuller understanding of how charter school teachers, enrolled in a teacher leadership development program, experience their own early growth into teacher leaders. It sought to construct meaning from the shared, lived experience of these participants in order to inform educational institutions on how to effectively serve and develop future teacher leaders. Two research questions guided this study during the exploration of the lived experiences of these teachers and their leadership:

1. How do charter school teachers, enrolled in a professional teacher leadership development program, experience and interpret their evolution as teacher leaders (i.e. the becoming a teacher leader) as they gain knowledge, skills, dispositions, and insights via the learning by studying (the training)?

2. How do such teachers, enrolled in a professional teacher leadership development program, experience and interpret their evolution as a teacher leader (i.e. the becoming a teacher leader) as they gain knowledge, skills, dispositions, and insights via the learning by doing (the application of the training) provided by the teacher leader development program?

Research Approach

Marshall and Rossman (2011) defined a phenomenology study as one that, "seeks to explore, describe, and analyze the lived experience" (p. 19). They go on to describe this approach as one where the researchers typically use in-depth interviews with individuals to explore the experience or phenomenon that one is studying. They also include that these experiences give understanding of a developing or developed worldview (p. 148). One difference that defines this study as a phenomenology over a narrative study is that within a narrative there only needs to be one who is interviewed. In this study, there were several participants who were interviewed, and it is from their individual experiences that a common phenomenon was explored.

Creswell (2013) described a phenomenology to have philosophical underpinnings, more specifically a "philosophy without presuppositions" (p. 77). This study explored the meanings and essence of a teacher leadership program and how teachers experience their time and growth into teacher leaders while enrolled in a teacher leadership program. There were no predetermined assumptions. There was only finding out what was experienced by the participants. Creswell also noted that the "essence" of an experience has both a textural description and a structural description (p. 80). This study's design looked at both what the participants experienced and how they experienced it in terms of the conditions, situations, or context.

This study looked at the experiences of those enrolled in this program and explored this phenomenon through both the "what" and "how" of their experiences. This created an understanding of the essence of one's growth as a teacher leader while enrolled in a teacher leadership program and how each interacted with her colleagues while practicing her leadership. This phenomenological study helped tease out the

essence of the experience of the participants and helped inform the literature about how teachers experience leadership training, particularly in the context of public charter schools.

Population, Sample, and Site

The context of this study is one teacher leadership program designed for teachers at charter schools in one region of a Midwestern state. This context provides an opportunity to study the phenomenon of becoming a teacher leader within a framework where the pathway to this experience is a formalized training program. This context also provides the opportunity to study the phenomenon within the charter school setting. The goal of this program was for teachers to extend their leadership within their current teaching positions in order to become informal teacher leaders or to possibly enter formal school leadership positions. This program was designed by the charter school management company that oversees thirteen charter schools, and its founders envisioned its use as a way to acculturate and guide participants through research on leadership theory, the practicalities of working in charter schools, and how to best apply relevant theories to practices.

This program begins in October of each school year, after a selection process that includes an application and interview that take place in September. The course enrolls between ten and twenty teachers each year. Participants meet once a month for nine months at a selected location where coursework is provided and assignments given. Each meeting lasts six hours during a school day, i.e., the first Wednesday of the month. The course ends with a final project geared to not only show the accumulated knowledge of the teacher, but to also act as a tool the teacher leader may use within her school and share with others as needed.

The leadership program's monthly meetings span a school year's length. These monthly meetings, occurring during the school year, are conducted by several of the management company's leaders, as well as a few outside sources, to cover a range of topics. Before every meeting, there is an assignment given that the participant must complete in order to fully participate in the meetings. These assignments include readings, visitations, writings, and small practice pieces in which participants have to complete certain projects and reflect upon their experience within their journals. This program has been in place for six years.

Creswell (2013) described a phenomenology as a study that examines the experiences of individuals as they interact with the phenomenon (p. 82). In this study, this phenomenon is the participation in this formal leadership development program which involves the formal study of leadership via class, readings, reflections, and the actual practice of the teachers' leadership in their schools between class sessions. This setting allows for this phenomenon to occur wherein the participants and the researcher collected data (via interviews, focus group discussion, and journal reviews) to arrive at the essence of this phenomenon.

Marshall and Rossman (2011) described the importance of the site selection or setting to be an important guide for the researcher. It can be determined by the research questions either specifically or globally (pp. 99-100). They also go on to describe the positive and negative aspects of researching in your own setting. For the purpose of this research design, the setting was indeed in "my own back yard." My school, in which I am the school leader, participates in this leadership development program by sending one to two teachers for teacher leadership training each year. The setting criteria matches that recommended by Marshall and Rossman in that it (a) allows relative ease of access, (b)

affords a reduced time expenditure, and (c) fosters a built up trust with the participants (p. 101).

Ease of access means that I was able to go to the class meetings and collect data from participants as needed i.e., collect and copy journals for review and analysis. The reduced time expenditure means that I did not have to spend a lot of resources to collect data from those within this program. Finally, there was trust with the participants in that I am a colleague from a sister charter school. There was already a relationship of trust built in from former professional development opportunities. In addition, I have completed this specific leadership training program for my management company. The ease of access and my own bracketed experience allowed for more analysis of this experienced phenomenon. Access to the site/setting had already been provided verbally.

The participant pool included the entire program's enrollees for the 2015-2016 school years, with the exception of any teachers from my school. From the pool of fifteen teachers, a purposeful selection of the six to ten participants occurred. To insure a diverse group, my selection process considered the number of years of experience, previous teaching history outside of the charter school system, grade levels and subjects taught, and possibly whether the teacher came from a preschool to sixth grade or a preschool to high school background.

Teachers accepted into the leadership development program were required to have had at least a minimum of three years teaching in a classroom, including a minimum of one year teaching in their current assignment (i.e., school, grade level, subject, etc.) and were identified as highly qualified teachers.

The recruitment process included an email to those already participating in the program for the 2015-2016 school years (see Appendix A). This email included

information about the study including duration, data collection, and, to maintain

confidentiality, an assurance that the participants' information would not be made public.

Those interested in learning more about participating had an opportunity to talk by phone

about the study, and all the program participants were given time to consider or share any

questions before deciding to participate or not. A consent document was provided to

potential study participants who were interested in learning more. After reviewing the

consent document, if the potential participants agreed to participate, then the consent

document was signed and returned. No data collection occurred until the signed consent

document was received by the researcher. The criterion selection focusing on grade level

and other teaching characteristics could occur only if more than six to ten desired

participants responded. For individuals who agreed to participate and signed the consent

document, an interest survey was sent and an initial interview time was established. The

study began while the teacher leader development program was currently running, and

my study continued over five months in conjunction with the program. In order to meet

the threshold of six participants, had there been fewer than six participants who consented

to this study, recent graduates of the program would be invited to learn more about

participating in this study. These recent graduates would also be invited via email (see

Appendix A).

Data Collection Procedures and Instrumentation

Marshall and Rossman (2011) described the phenomenological study as one that

often includes the use of in-depth semi-structured interviews. For the purposes of this

study, there were two in-depth individual semi-structured interviews completed

throughout a three-month segment of the leadership development program. These two

interviews were used along with a focus group interview and journal review to find the

essence of this lived experience. A pilot test of these interview questions was given to two past program participants who were not in my study.

The first individual interview occurred early in the first month of my study, while the second interview took place one month after the journal analysis which began one month after the initial interview. These interviews were recorded and conducted in person or by phone, whichever was more comfortable for the participants. Both interviews can be found in Appendix D.

Another means of data collection was via a focus group interview. These focus group interviews were conducted over lunch during one of the final monthly meetings. Three to four participants were interviewed at one time to bridge the shared lived experience. These interviews were designed to see if the experience of one participant connected with another participant or triggered more experiences that were then shared. These focus groups were used to member check the overall analysis of themes and sub themes. The focus group was used only for member checking with the understanding that using a focus group moves this phenomenology from a constructivist to a constructionist stand point, but it also helped to bracket the data for member checking the individual interviews as well as reflections within the participants' journals.

Table 2

Research Questions and Interview Questions Correlation

Interview Questions	Research Question #1	Research Question #2
Interview #1	1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, & 9	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, & 9
Interview #2	1, 2, 3, 5, & 7	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, & 7
Focus Group Interview	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, & 6	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, & 6

The participants were required to maintain personal journals throughout the program, and these were also analyzed for my study. The journals allowed the teacher participants to take notes and reflect on their journey through the teacher leadership program. Journals were turned in to the program leader every two months for review and for the extraction of discussion items for future class meetings. They did not receive a grade, but the writings were used for reflection and to drive discussion within the monthly meetings. These journals were also a place for "program assignments" and for participants' reflections on the assignments to be recorded. The review of these journals provided the researcher with insight into the participants' thoughts and their reactions to their learning, both within their meetings and while they were at school. For this study, the researcher reviewed all journal entries spanning the duration of the leadership program for each participant in this study.

The interviews, focus groups, and journal analysis were the combined data collection set analyzed for common themes. DeDoose, an on-line web-based program, was utilized for gathering, synthesizing, and analyzing the data. It was warehoused for the transcribed interviews, observational notes, artifacts, and my bracketed experience. DeDoose will be explained more in the next section of this research design. Dedoose organized the data from the timeline into themes that illustrate the essence of the phenomenon described.

This sequence of events included the first semi-structured interview in the first month of the study. The interview was audio-taped and transcribed. Journal analysis then occurred in the second and third month of the study. This analysis was used to gather more information about the participants' evolution into a teacher leader, particularly in the written form in a way that the participants could write down their

thoughts while practicing their leadership. The second semi-structured interview occurred within the third and fourth month of the study and was designed with the first interview and journal analysis in mind, and efforts were made to tease out a more complete picture of the essence of the phenomenon. Finally, the focus group interview was conducted in the last month of the study for member checking of the data analysis and discussion of the themes and sub-themes.

Data Analysis Procedures

Creswell (2013) stated "data analysis in not off-the-shelf," but rather "custom-built, revised, and choreographed" (p. 182). He goes on to state the importance of organizing the data, reading and memoing, and interpreting data into codes and themes (pp. 182-184). This analysis continues into "abstracting out beyond the codes and themes to the larger meaning of data" (p. 187).

Creswell (2013) noted that a phenomenology, specifically, includes creating and organizing files for data as well as reading through text, making notes, and forming initial codes. Phenomenologies describe personal experience through epoche, and they described the essence of the phenomenon. Once the data is gathered and coded, a researcher develops significant statements and groups those statements into meaning units. The data is then interpreted by a textual description and a structural description. Both of these will aid in the development of the essence (pp. 190-191).

For the purposes of my study, the data was gathered, organized, and analyzed using a web-based qualitative program called DeDoose. The program helped to collect and manage large pieces of data as well as connect phrases and ideas expressed from the interviews and journals. DeDoose helped meet the need of organizing, coding, and cross checking for groupings of significant statements and meaning units. Using DeDoose,

theme/findings were based on repeated phrases, metaphors or analogies used, or ideas expressed repeatedly between the two interviews, the focus group, and the participant journals. These first stage codings of the data were connected and combined in to larger groupings which then were connected to create concrete themes. Some of these themes included: (1) moving from classroom to building leadership; (2) changing interpersonal communication; (3) academic improvement; and (4) mentorship.

Findings from the data and from the use of DeDoose were displayed in a variety of ways. Tables, diagrams, and references to the original framework helped to give visual context to the findings of the study. The conceptual framework even changed due to the findings of the study. Quotations and answers to the interview questions were used to give voice to the lived-experience as well as to answer the research questions. The visual display, the quotations, and the correlation to the codes and themes helped to provide the answers to the research questions.

There are no prefigured templates for coding, but an editing analysis was used for coding, which Marshall and Rossman (2011) defined as "less prefigured" (p. 208). The editing analysis within DeDoose allowed for me to frame and reframe pieces of data into codes that assisted in identifying emerging themes. These codes were then grouped and regrouped to find themes and main ideas of the essence of the experience. This editing analysis may be closely related to a grounded theory (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p. 208). However, the data analysis approach was well suited for the phenomenological study.

The Researcher and Reflexivity

As the researcher, I have had some experience with teacher leadership and its effects on a school. I have also completed the leadership training that is the setting of this

study. Since I entered into education professionally in the fall of 1999, I have been a part of four different schools. Each school is different from the others. I have been in a public middle school for gifted and talented children. I have taught at an international private school. I have taught at and led a strict discipline charter school, and I have led a Montessori charter school. My experience has been within the full spectrum of public primary and secondary schools.

I have seen teacher leadership up close and personally as a beginner teacher through mentorships, team meeting leaders, and school improvement initiatives. I have also been a teacher leader within my schools where I have led other staff members informally through issues and problems that needed attention and resolution. As a school principal, I encouraged teacher leaders to grow, develop, and establish cultures that aid the school in learning. I have noticed, especially in charter schools, that teacher leaders are one of the reasons that a charter school is effective. This has also been supported by the literature.

The school I am currently employed at sends teachers to participate in the leadership development program featured in my study. I was asked to participate in this program in my first year of employment even though I had been, and still was, a current school leader. I attended the meetings, completed the readings and exercises, and finished all the projects given to us for completion of the course.

Being connected with the program and with those fellow educators allowed me, the researcher, ease of access and data collection. I knew these participants professionally and was highly familiar with the design and workings of the program itself. I have been in the setting as a participant and then became a participant observer. However, this study is significant in that it informed the literature about how and what

the participants experienced as they completed this leadership program. Therefore, necessary steps were taken to ensure trustworthiness and validity of the study during the data collection and analysis.

One point of interest is that some teachers may have felt pressure to do this study because they know me and are in the program. The invitation email and the consent form clarified that there was no pressure to be a part of this study, and the invitation email was not sent to any of my current staff enrolled in the program. Also, the information email and consent form had the lead investigators and Human Subjects Institutional Review Board's contact information, should potential participants need to ask questions or discuss any issues.

Because of my personal and professional background, and because of what I have learned in the literature review, I assumed that teacher leadership is needed in K-12 schools today more than ever before. Teacher leadership has been around for some time, and there is vast research on what it is, what teacher leadership does, and how to build capacity to allow teacher leadership to emerge within schools. I assumed, and the research shows, that most people see teacher leadership as an amorphous thing with very little definition.

However, teacher leadership is needed to meet expectations in today's school system, not only in America but around the world. To build capacity of teacher leaders within the school environment, there have been different programs created to instruct current, effective teachers to become leaders within the school but these programs do not necessarily address positional leaders. These programs include university courses, university-district compacts to build teacher leadership, professional development

courses both local and non-local, and inclusive district programs to grow leaders within their organization.

I assume from the research and from my own background that these programs aim to extend teacher knowledge on leadership and leadership practices. And I believe that these types of programs will continue to do so as professional development for teachers and schools. Therefore, studying how teachers experience their own leadership within the backdrop of a teacher leader development program is necessary and needed to inform the literature.

There are multiple leadership theories, but due to my assumptions I, the researcher, have narrowed the leadership theories to distributive, servant, and authentic leadership theories. The expertise and practice shared with teachers allows them to serve and lead their school in a non-positional place of leadership.

The assumption is that teacher leaders, who have completed training and are committed to school improvement, help schools improve through their leadership and guidance and they can help resolve matters ranging from classroom instruction to organizational analysis. Professional Development becomes more meaningful for the school. Student achievement improves. Professional learning communities are enhanced, and more needs are met and fulfilled so that others may share in the planning, work, and celebration of worthwhile outcomes.

I believe I learned that teacher leadership is important to charter schools and may be of use to schools of all types. Therefore, as a school leader, I am responsible for building capacity within my school by using teacher leaders as a first-change agent. In my attempt to grow this capacity, I relied on this study to learn what experiences

encourage the growth of early teacher leadership within schools are viable in raising current teachers into teacher leaders, as well as into future school (positional) leaders.

Trustworthiness

Marshall and Rossman (2011) described trustworthiness as having four criteria from which the "soundness of qualitative study was judged" (p. 39). These four criteria are reliability, validity, objectivity, and generalizability (p. 39). As for generalizability, this study created parameters not so much for generalizability but establishes parameters for transferability. That is, this study suggested that there may be some potential for transferability of these findings to teachers who participate in a similar teacher leader training program within a charter school context. Therefore, study had components that answered these criteria and held up ideals of trustworthiness.

For reliability, this study used triangulation (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p. 42). Triangulation occurred through a literature review of teacher leadership, charter schools, and leadership theories as one aspect to uphold rigor. This study also incorporated data sources from the participants' interviews and the researcher's memos that occurred over a five month period of time. Finally, to help triangulation, this study used a phenomenological approach to discern the essence of the experiences and fact check the findings with the participants.

For validity, this study used both transactional and transformational validity approaches. Marshall and Rossman (2011) described transactional validity as, "involving participants in the research project to validate themes, interpretations, or findings" (p. 41). In this study, participants had an opportunity to examine the themes along with their quotes to check for accuracy. This is called member checking. This member checking allowed for the participants to review the transcripts for accuracy of their words and

intentions. This feedback is important to help bracket and check for validity of my study's results and discussion.

As for transformational validity, Marshall and Rossman (2011) explained, "writers in this category take quite seriously the notion that multiple perspectives, including those of the writer exist" (p. 42). Therefore, this study includes the researcher reflexivity memoing and a developed memo trail. Both of these approaches helped to inform and solidify the trustworthiness of this study.

As for objectivity and transferability, I used several methods to build trustworthiness. First, a rich data set and description helped to bring objectivity, but also helped in transferability for other leadership programs that possess a desire to grow teacher leaders within their district, schools, or organizations. Second, limitations and delimitations of the study also helped define the study and its findings which can help the trustworthiness of the study. The limitations and delimitations of my study will be discussed in the next section.

Limitations and Delimitations

Rossman and Marshall (2011) stated, "limitations derive from the conceptual framework and the study's design" (p. 76). They also stated, "The study's limitations demonstrate that the researcher understands this reality – which he will make no overwhelming claims about generalizability or conclusiveness about what he has learned" (p. 76). The limitations of this study included: this study identified as a phenomenology; it occurred within a charter school setting; and it dealt with the essence of growing teacher leadership skills within individual teachers engaged in a formal leadership development program. Some other limitations include "problems" within my study I

cannot control (i.e., participants dropping out of the program midway through the study or participants telling me what they think I want to hear, etc.).

This study delimits its scope to only one setting, to a few participants within that setting, and only to their experiences in that setting. This study is not of several sites nor involves hundreds of responses to a survey. It is specific to a small site and a group of specific participants. The setting directly involves charter school teachers which excludes traditional public school teachers and private school teachers. The purpose of studying charter school teachers was to add to the current literature a new body of information regarding experience of these teachers growing their leadership skills within charter public school settings, especially since these schools are growing across the nation, particularly in urban areas with high at-risk populations.

Finally, there is expansive literature dealing with multiple aspects of teacher leadership and teacher leaders. The hole in the research delimits this study to a specific group and a specific training program. Due to this delimitation, one may not be able to apply the same themes to other educational settings or other organizational settings. However, there may be some results that can be generalized to the larger populations and literature as a whole.

Chapter III Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine charter school teachers, enrolled in a teacher leadership development program, as they experience their own learning and the early practice of their leadership learning. These educators learned in a two-fold manner simultaneously: (a) in the form of attending classes in a teacher leader development course and (b) in the form of practicing the duties of a leader, and completing instructional or non-instruction based activities, within their schools.

A qualitative, phenomenological approach allowed for multiple in-depth interviews of participants with the shared experience of enrolling and participating in a teacher leader development program. Also, this approach allowed for themes to arise as the phenomena was experienced and described by the participants in their own words and later analyzed and interpreted by the researcher. These themes then helped to create the "essence" of the lived experience which informs the literature both specifically and broadly.

During the analysis section of this study, the researcher followed the six steps Creswell (2013) bullet-points for phenomenological studies. The analysis was completed in the order the data was collected: from demographic information, to the initial in-depth interview, to the ranking exercise, and finally, with the story-telling exercise. These procedures were completed in order to full-fill the "textual" and "structural" descriptions to arrive at the "essence" of the phenomena (pp. 193-194).

This chapter outlined the role of the researcher, the research setting, and the steps taken to ensure validity and reliability of the findings. The next chapter, Chapter IV, discusses the participants of the study. Chapter V displays the results of the study. Finally, Chapter VI concludes with the recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER IV

PARTICIPANT PROFILES

The intent of Chapter IV is to provide an introductory profile of each of the study's participants. The purpose of this chapter is to illustrate how each teacher experienced and grew into teacher leadership, from the early decision-making process to enroll into a teacher leadership preparation program to the occurrence of their making sense of their practice of leadership. The participants of this study later agreed to the constructivist idea of developing their own leadership in different phases, stages, or as we will call, them the planes of development. Additionally, these profiles were used as vignettes for the later focus group in which each participant reflected upon her story as recorded by the researcher.

Participants were selected from a group of teachers enrolled in a charter school district's teacher leadership program that began in September and ended in May. An application process was conducted to select participants from thirteen schools and over 500 teachers. Nearly seventy teachers applied for the program and a selection process was conducted to narrow down the participants to fifteen. These initial fifteen teachers became the pool from which this study selected its participants. Out of these fifteen program participants, seven agreed to become a part of this study. Their identities were protected in keeping with the confidentiality agreement. Their names and other details, such as employers, titles, location, previous occupations, and situations were masked to further protect each participant's anonymity.

It is important to note that all of the participants were Caucasian and female. While the teacher leadership program only had female teachers enrolled, it did have teachers teaching different ethnic backgrounds enrolled in the program. Out of the seven

study participants, five have attained a Master's degree and two have attained a

Bachelor's degree.   As for the participants' experiences in the education field, the next

four figures display the information. Of the seven participants 42.9% (3) of the

participants had taught in at least three different grade levels. 28.6% (2) had taught in

two grade levels, and 28.6% (2) had only taught in one grade level.

Grades Taught

Three different grades 43%

One grade 28%

Two different grades 29%
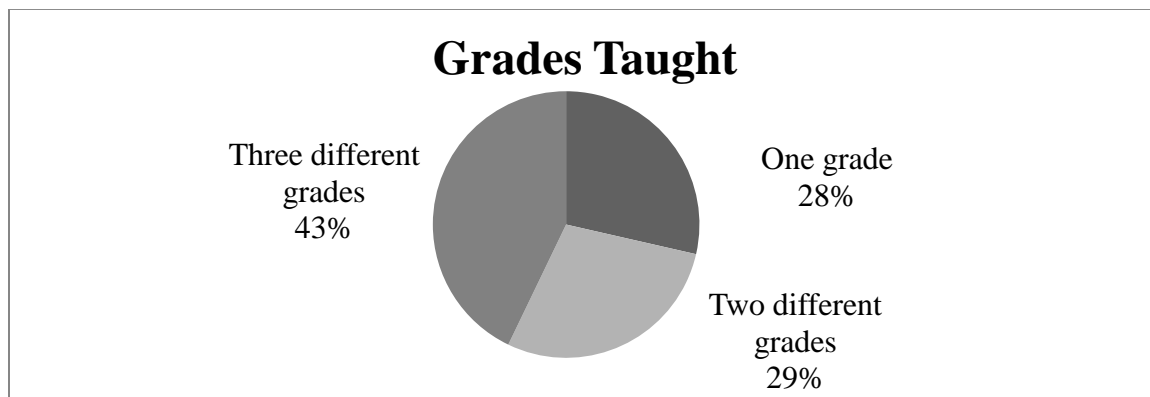
Figure 2. Grades Taught

Figure 3 illustrates the different subjects that the participants experienced teaching

throughout their career. As one can see, 57.1% (4) of the participants had taught or teach

elementary level curriculum. And, 14.3% (1) had experience teaching in one special

education area. 14.3 (1) of the participants had only experienced teaching social studies,

and 14.3% (1) of the participants had experience in teaching only mathematics.

Previous Subjects

Special Education 14%

Social Studies 14%

Mathematics 15%

Elementary subject 57%
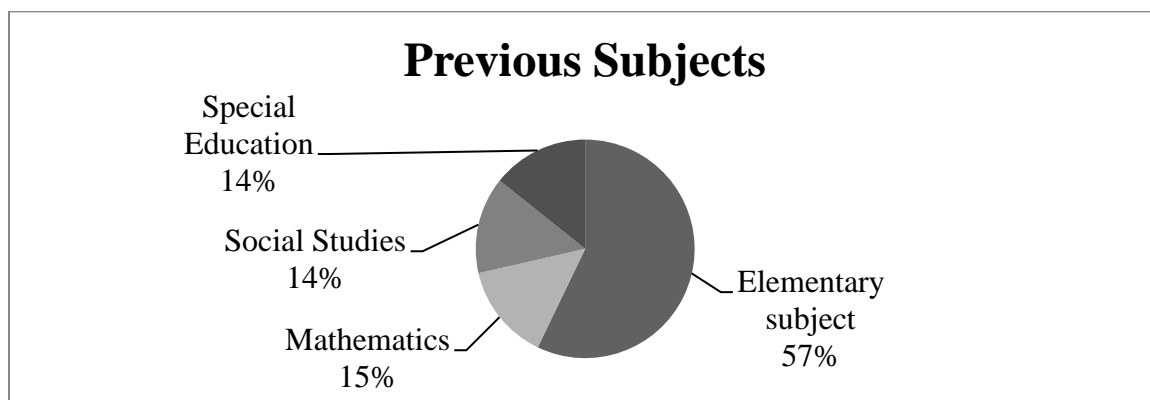
Figure 3. Previous Taught

In Figure 4, the participant's current teaching grade level is displayed. Here one can see that 28.6% (2) of the participants currently taught in preschool, while 28.6% (2) of the participants taught in the first grade. One participant (14.3%) taught in the second grade, and one participant (14.3%) taught in the third grade. Finally, one participant (14.3%) taught in the eighth grade.
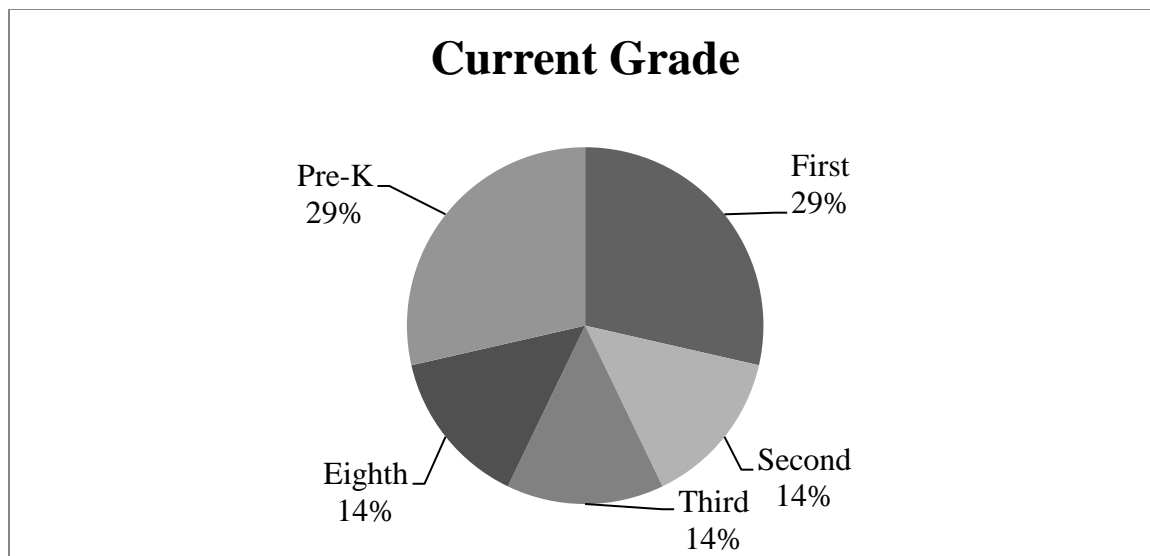
Figure 4. Current Grade

As for the schools themselves, Figure 5 and Figure 6 display the type and location of the school. In Figure 5, 57.1% (4) of the schools had grade levels from preschool through eighth grade. 28.6% (2) of the schools had grades ranging from preschool through twelfth grade. 14.3% (1) of the schools had grades ranging from preschool through fifth grade. In Figure 6, 57.1% (4) of the schools were located in an urban environment. 28.6% (2) were located in a suburban environment. And, 14.3% (1) of the schools was located in a rural environment.

School Grades

K-5
14%

PreK-8
57%

PreK-12
29%

Figure 5. School Grades

Location

Rural
14%

Urban
57%

Suburban
29%
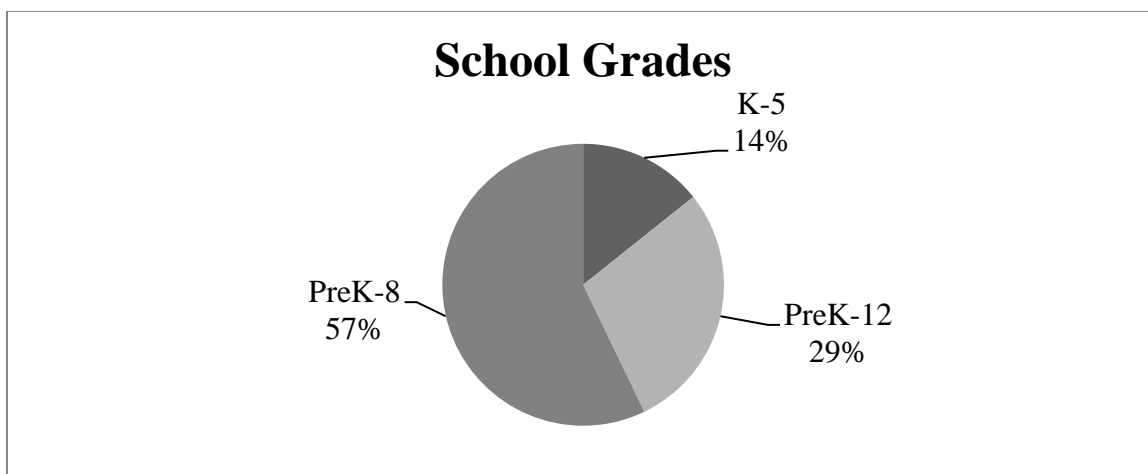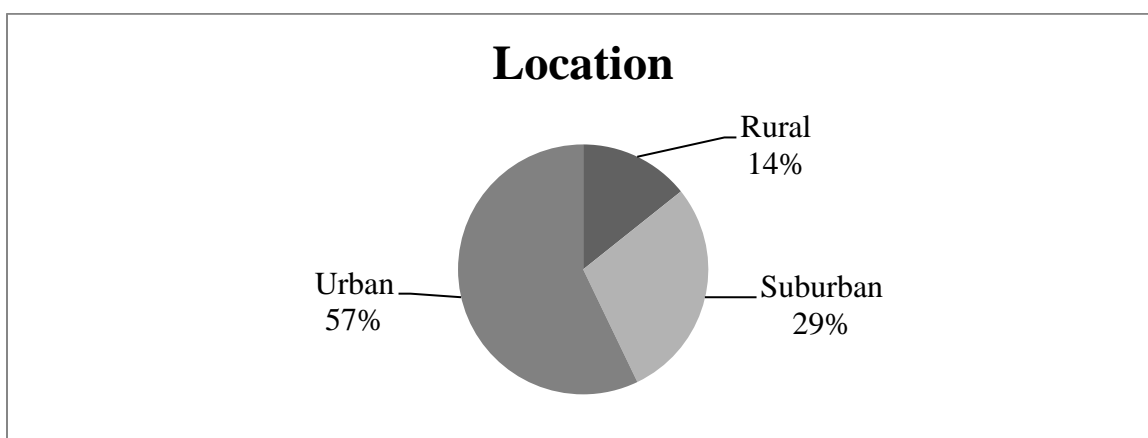
Figure 6. Location

The previous section discussed the overall participant pool as a whole group compared to each other. The following sections will introduce each participant as an individual and will highlight her experience growing into teacher leadership. Each introduction is divided into four sections: Entry into Teacher Leadership; Early Learning and Doing; Adjustments to Learning and Doing; and Future Planning and Thoughts.

Teacher Leader #1

Melody was a teacher of seven years and has taught in two different states. She has taught preschool, first grade, and second grade. She loved to help people and watch things grow. She was the director of a preschool program that feeds into a K-12 charter

school. She relished when her leader opened up opportunities for her to learn and grow.

She had no problems giving of her time outside of school to help struggling students

learn. She still remembered the time her former school leader told her she was giving a

student false hope to learn to read. Yet, she worked with her student and saw the child

learn to reach her goal.

Entry into Teacher Leadership

Melody was drawn to teacher leadership because of her earlier experience with

her principal who did not support her work to help her student grow in reading. She

remembered:

"When I was first teaching second grade in South Carolina, I had an older

principal who I want to say was stuck in her ways. And, I had a first grader who

was struggling with reading. Her mom came to me and asked if I would tutor her

outside of school. I told her she didn't need to pay me and I would tutor her after

school. I can do a half an hour on Mondays and Wednesdays. I want to help her

as much as you do. So I told her to not pay me. I helped the little girl for a

marking period, and towards the end of the marking period the principal pulled

me into the office and ask me if I have been helping this girl. And I said yes I

was helping her. The principal told me that could not take any money for that and

I said no, no, I am not taking any money for that. I am just helping her. The

principal then says that I am giving her mom a lot of false hope. Those were her

exact words. I will never forget them."

During the time of this study, Melody had a school leader whom she would have

liked to emulate as she developed her own leadership qualities. She noted, "Here at my

school, my school leader has been nothing but gracious and helpful to me. When I did

my internship with administration for my degree, she gave me so many opportunities to learn and follow her." Melody enrolled into this teacher leadership program to not only emulate those school leaders who supported her, but to also support those she works with on a daily basis.

Early Learning and Doing

Melody enjoyed her early networking with others. The book studies gave her energy as they gave her ideas and tools to nurture her own professional growth and allowed her to share with others new resources who struggled. Melody enjoyed the learning that supported helping others grow. She found that the resources and tools available from her program allowed her to think, practice, and debrief with others so she could grow and support her own learning. She notes:

> "I enjoy hearing other people's experiences. It kind of gives me insights. I also enjoy doing the book studies. The one chapter that has stood out to me, I actually talked to Kristin a lot about this, is the chapter on blaming. You know how teachers will blame other people. You know, it's not their fault. I had to put a teacher on a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) and eventually she ended up being fired. But when I put her on the PIP and she would blame others. It was her assistants fault because she wasn't doing this or that. She wasn't collaborating, her co-teacher wasn't working with her, etc. And, eventually when I sat down with her it was now time to blame me. It was my fault because I had something against her and it was a constant blaming of everybody else. She wouldn't take accountability for herself. That has stood out to me most so far."

The ability to learn and practice her leadership enabled her to experience her own leadership, see the outcomes, and then return to her learning to adjust her practice,

moving her mentees through their areas of struggle (i.e. blame) into further supports of instruction and classroom management.

Adjustments to Learning and Doing

As the year went on, Melody found herself enjoying her experiences. She found that as she practiced her leadership and adjusted to her new experiences, she wanted to be a leader who worked alongside her coworkers and not above them in a traditional sense. She notes:

> "Myself, I already enjoy being a leader. I like to watch people evolve. When I was offered this position of director of the Pre-K, I approached the staff and told them that I don't want you to think of me as a boss. I want to be right beside you with whatever you need. I don't want you to think that I am coming along saying you aren't doing this right or that right. I would rather us to work towards that common goal. If anything else, this program and these experiences have reinforced my passion for being a leader and using all these different tools and techniques to help teachers to help make the classroom better."

Future Planning and Thoughts

As a preschool director, Melody was a part of multiple professional development opportunities to learn and stay up-to-date with State requirements and guidelines. Even though she was away for multiple meetings, Melody was confident that her learning had in turn helped others to grow and develop, and this brought her joy and personal happiness. On the other hand, Melody didn't enjoy when blame was used and people she was serving were unwilling to change. It is also important to note that Melody wanted to be a leader who was right alongside her peers working with them hand in hand. She did not want to be seen as one who had all the answers but one who could help find the

answers and learn alongside those teachers who may have struggled. Networking was vital for Melody as she navigated her own teacher leadership and served those within her program, school, and those of sister programs and schools.

Overall, Melody had a positive disposition towards her own study and practice of her teacher leadership style and skills. One main insight she noted was working on and with others to move through their "blame game" and move into active solutions to answer areas of struggle.

As her time with her teacher leadership training concluded, Melody enjoyed the experience of studying and practicing her own teacher leadership. She has really enjoyed the network she is now a part of with other teacher leaders in different schools and present positions. She said:

> "One of the big insights I am gaining is connecting with other teachers and staff from our sister schools. They have the same mindset as I do like how can we improve our schools, how can we raise test scores, how can we help our teachers. And, I feel networking is a huge part of being a leader. Because, as a leader you are not going to have all the answers and you need to rely on others or just [look to them for] venting too. It allows you to build confidence in yourself, in your team. I think I have said before that my biggest fear is when people come to me and expect me to have all of the answers. And I don't have all the answers. So having the network of people to reach out to is important."

Melody was excited for her future as a teacher leader. She looked forward to continuing her personal growth as well as growing her network of resources to better build relationships, rapport, and student achievement within her own school program. A big reason for her success in learning and practicing teacher leadership had been the

understanding of the idea of vulnerability and "sitting on the same side of the table" when she was serving those who needed her help.

Teacher Leader #2

Jennie was a teacher with over seven years of teaching experience, which included a Title 1 math specialist position, and at the time of this research, she served as the preschool director in a suburban school environment. She held a Master's in Special Education and had always wanted to be a teacher even from her childhood where she enjoyed playing school in the basement of her house.

Entry into Teacher Leadership

Jennie did not aspire to be a school principal but relished opportunities to leave her classroom to mentor and help other teachers. This program and its curriculum offered the next step in her path to becoming a teacher leader. She felt grateful for the program and admitted that other schools would be jealous to have an option like this program to raise their own teacher leaders. She was intrigued by the possibility of, "one day leav[ing] the classroom but staying in the school to be a peer coach where I am learning how to be a coach, gaining strategies and learning to be confident in my practice, to learn to be confident and assured in my work as I coach those who need it."

Early Learning and Doing

Jennie enrolled in the teacher leadership program and immediately began to love the opportunity to bounce ideas off of other peers and network to learn from multiple experiences. She believed that networking lessens the anxiety of leadership and solving problems. The strategies presented through the meetings had also found meaning for Jennie through her own teaching in her classroom and with those she mentored. She used "fresh eyes" to help mentor staff that she visited and looked to the resources she had

gained from the program or from others' experiences to help assist and serve those teachers in her school who were struggling. She said:

> "I really just like the conversations and the bouncing ideas off of each other. Everyone's school is in such a different place, different sizes, structures and different characteristics and we share our experiences and ideas that work in each of our schools."

She also noted that being a preschool teacher did not mean that she was limited to working with only preschool, but she could mentor and add value to teachers in other grade levels. Some of the resources may not have been grade level appropriate for her, but Jennie stated, "Just getting taught that knowledge, I know that the resources are there and I know I can point it out to someone who needs it."

Adjustments to Learning and Doing

Jennie enjoyed her mentoring and as a result of her participation had a place (the program and its participants) to go to for resources, networking, or sharing thoughts to help her coach others more effectively. Jennie found that consistency in practicing leadership was a must to have when mentoring or leading teachers not only with peer interactions, but also in helping to establish classroom routines for student achievement. She noted:

> "If I go in (the classroom), I kind of feel like I am the middle man. I am less intimidating than the principal or the final evaluation or official review. I am like the helpful, practice observation. So I feel like it is less intimidating for me and them. I feel like I go in with an open mind because I haven't been in their classroom formally at all. Sometimes, right now in the beginning, I don't really

know the back story, if they have had problems before, so I go in with fresh eyes, a new book to start fresh with them."

As a mentor, she felt that other teachers were more open to her in expressing their doubts or any questions they had in a way that they would not feel comfortable using when interacting with their school leader. She also noted that because of her own practice and experience with this program, her own eyes were opened to different possibilities for future roles.

Future Planning and Thoughts

Jennie experienced issues of concern when it came to her future plans of being a teacher leader. She found that not only in mentoring and observing those she went to coach, as well as the overall experience also grew her own leadership. As to the future, Jennie saw herself as a director or consultant and planned to use this experience to build her skills and knowledge to help be a resource to others. She felt good about her future as a teacher leader within her school. She stated:

> "As for my own future, I am learning different, new things in which other
> teachers may do or roles they play. My eyes are opening to different possibilities
> for possible roles. I don't know if I could do preschool my whole life, but I am
> also a creature of habit. Some I am both excited and nervous."

Teacher Leader #3

Lucy was a teacher with over five years of experience. Her current position was as the special education director of a kindergarten through fifth grade school. She looked forward to the opportunity to learn and develop professionally through the teacher leader development program. Her current school leader gave her opportunities including being a part of the teacher leadership program. She felt that she had a voice when change

needed to be made and her voice was heard. She also relished seeing when her suggestions were received and implemented. Lucy enrolled in the teacher leader program to continue to develop her skills and knowledge about how to better provide assistance in working with coworkers and to see if a possible new role might come from the experience.

Entry into Teacher Leadership

Lucy confided that she would love to be a teacher consultant or a special education teacher trainer. Not only was she using this program to further her education, but she was also going back to school to attain credentials to be a special education director. She enjoyed her learning and felt that the program meetings helped to rejuvenate her and her colleagues' work in their respective schools. She was able to use her learning within her own classroom and also she served as a mentor to other teachers. She loved using proven methods discussed in the program within her classroom and then enjoyed sharing them with her coworkers. She noted:

> "I also felt like I had a voice when I wanted things to be changed if I saw that there were things that needed to be better. Or better supports in place were needed. I feel like an expert in special education but there are other areas in the school where I may not have expertise so I felt like it would be good to learn about those other areas so that I can feel comfortable leading in those areas."

Early Learning and Doing

Networking seemed to be the best part of the program for Lucy as she could draw resources from other peers in different schools and use their expertise and experience to help solve her school needs. Her early learning stemmed not only from the resources given but also from the stories shared by others experiencing this learning and practice of

teacher leadership. She has found that several strategies shared in these meetings were useful within her own classroom as well as for sharing with others. She also found that communication was a very important skill required to being an effective leader. She stated,

> "It's also good to network with other teachers from different schools from all over the state. I've enjoyed the different behavior intervention models, different behavior modifications that we've talked about I've been able to bring our discussions in the tips and stuff back to the classroom so it's been helpful. I've been able to apply these things that we talk about whether the behavior or even how it looks when you teach may seem simple but it's just a simple change that can that can change the whole classroom culture like the voice stuff we talked about."

For Lucy, modeling best practices followed closely behind clear communication as important as she practiced to be a teacher leader. She also found many correlations between her leadership program and her practice with her graduate school classes.

Adjustments to Learning and Doing

Lucy found her year in the Special Education program to be an intense, packed year with information, practice, and growth. She experienced that having her school leader support was valuable to navigating the "tricky" situations involved with observing and mentoring struggling staff. On the other end of the spectrum, she enjoyed how her interactions with her colleagues blossomed as they initiated conversations with her about practical tools and strategies that she could help them implement. She remarked that flexibility and open communication would really affect one's leadership. She noted,

"As leaders, we need to find that it's important to be flexible in our style and how
we approach others to better support others and encourage others. And, I find that
it's really important that we don't see our way as being the only way over being
flexible to support who we're leading."

She also saw that her leadership style needed to be strong and team oriented. As a leader,

she needed to have a vision that empowered her team to work on their own to fulfill the

needs of their students.

Future Planning and Thoughts

Lucy still desired to be a leader, in some capacity, and had relished both the

program and the practice of becoming a teacher leader as it gave her a voice and helped

her to come out of her shyness. She felt confident in asking questions, seeking help, and

being willing to network with others of expertise. She loved gaining resources and filling

her toolbox, which she in turn used to serve her colleagues so they could better meet

student achievement goals, not only in the special education realm, but within the culture

of her urban K-5 school. One area of confusion that arose from her experience was the

desire to answer the question of what was the next step. She asked, "How is this all going

to work? How is this going to apply to what I'm going to be doing? How's all the

learning going to be put together?"

<div align="center">

Teacher Leader #4

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Serenity had 11 years of experience teaching all subjects in kindergarten and

second grade. She had a Masters of Arts in Teaching and worked in an urban charter

school which had over 75% turn over in staff around the time of the study and was

considered Title 1 school-wide. Because of the recent leadership and staff turnover, there

was a lack of leadership within the school. Serenity stood in the gap and began

mentoring her peers, and maintained school processes. From that experience came many other leadership opportunities, including the invitation to act as the school leader for a couple of days.

Entry into Teacher Leadership

Serenity had much practice and experience in teacher leadership duties before enrolling in this program. Her experiences came from the opportunity to fill various needs within her school. She enrolled in the teacher leadership program because she wanted to help people and have people come to her for help. She acted as the school leader in the absence of her principal. Filling this role as needed had "opened her eyes" to the many facets that she may not have been able to see while cloistered in her own classroom. She felt like she was on a trajectory into formal school leadership, yet wrestled with if this was what she wanted to do. Serenity enrolled because of these experiences and the need to help her high staff-student turnover school. She stated:

> "One of the many things, I want to be somebody that people can come to for help. I want to be a resource for them, to help them in areas that they need help. Just because I feel like we are each other's greatest asset and resource, and so I want to be that for other people in the building."

Early Learning and Doing

One aspect that she was seeing as helpful in her experiencing and studying of teacher leadership was the aspect of vulnerability and how that can motivate changes or at least start a discussion or relationship of trust. Serenity loved to be a resource for others; especially for new teachers to her school. She loved to be a part of the transparency and disbursement of information to her colleagues and in turn saw a huge benefit to schools for having teacher leadership roles (both formal and informal) to better

help their school environment and student achievement. Communication was a must for her to and she saw it as a means to be transparent and also encourage vulnerability within school cultures and colleague interactions. Vulnerability through clear and open communication was the early understanding of Serenity's experience. She stated:

"One thing that I found really helpful in one of our readings that deals with vulnerability. That helps a lot with one of the people that I am mentoring this year. I am used to my mentees being pretty open when they need something, but (one person) has been a little different. I think it is a trust issue. I think he doesn't want me to think that he doesn't want me to think he doesn't know something. He doesn't ask for things that he needs. So the readings have been helpful to encourage me to develop that relationship so that I can help him so he can be vulnerable to come to me when he needs something. That reading and discussion has been really helpful to me."

Adjustments to Learning and Doing

Serenity found that when she reflected upon her experience with teacher leadership, the studying and practicing of it was positive overall but could come with some negatives too. She realized that while she enjoyed being a resource for others, there were a few who might push back, react poorly, or fail to not acknowledge the help and service she provided for them in the long run. This could create poor, awkward collegial interactions and could sour a school's culture. Serenity reported:

"It has been a difficult year so far with my mentoring because both of them were put on PIPs (Performance Improvement Plans) at the beginning of the year and both of them were struggling. And one of them has been able to turn it around, well; both of them have been able to turn it around quite a bit. The reading

materials we have used, I have used a lot with both of them. I made copies of parts of the book for them and the other person went and bought it for herself and devoured it over the break. So that has been really helpful in helping them because they need so much help."

Serenity found that her time was even more limited as she practiced her teacher leadership within her school. Staff and coworkers approached her throughout the day with needs and requests. It had gotten to the point that she had to be transparent about her time and space requirements. Serenity wanted to be available to fill their needs, but not at the expense of her own classroom and students. She then saw that her colleagues respected her boundaries as reasonable, and she was still available to meet with them but at a time and place convenient for the both the mentor and mentee.

Future Planning and Thoughts

Serenity noted, as she neared the end of her training, that she loved and desired to be a teacher leader. She wanted to serve her students, school, and community by being a teacher leader, but she had no desire to be a school administrator. Serenity wanted to continue to be in the classroom and grow her leadership as she helped her colleagues navigate the modern charter school classroom. Serenity explained,

"I am thinking a lot about my future. I feel like I am on a trajectory to move into a school leader position, but I do not know if that is what I want. And, so, I have been wrestling with that lately because I feel like there is a push for me to do it, but that may not be the path I want to go on."

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Teacher Leader #5

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Katie had been teaching for seven years, all of it within the same suburban school setting. She taught first grade and earned a Master's degree in the Art of Teaching. She

had many opportunities to lead within her school as a teacher, and each one came from a

point of necessity. These roles included formal mentoring and chairing the school

improvement team, as well as serving as an informal resource to new teaching staff.

Entry into Teacher Leadership

There was high teacher turnover within her school, which led to many teachers

having less than three years experience. Therefore, Katie had become the school's

teacher mentor. These opportunities made her feel valued and useful. She joined the

teacher leader training program to meet the needs of her school and to also share her own

knowledge on the subject with other participants.

Early Learning and Doing

Katie desired to someday become a curriculum director and to have some say in

the "mandates" given by administration and carried out within the school. She added, "I

feel a sense of honor when people say we would like you to be a part of this or lead that

and they value my opinion. And that makes me feel valued in what I am doing." In her

experience, she found that vulnerability and humility were key features in her teacher

leadership.

Katie wanted to lead from a standpoint of helping and serving and not from

judgment. She found that clear and transparent communication was necessary to use

when working with peers, especially those new to the school or in different grade levels

than her own. Her school's need, the need for clear communication, and her personal

desires eased her entry into formal leadership development. Katie clarified, "So I came to

pursue this opportunity from a sense of need but also to share my collective knowledge."

Adjustments to Learning and Doing

Katie went on to note that learning to be a teacher leader is an act of learning by doing. She concluded that one must jump in and begin in order to truly understand the complexities of practicing one's leadership. Her mentorship of other teachers gave her opportunities to find and apply strategies and methods that others were using to better the classroom environment for student leadership. She loved to be that trusted person, the "go-to" person for principals and teachers alike. However, she was not excited about the extra work being a teacher leader involves and the responsibility that came with the leadership role. Katie stated, "It has been trial by fire being a leader every week in that meeting. I am learning by doing as I am being a leader." The learning by doing led Katie to several "Ah ha" moments.

Some "Ah ha" moments from her experience had given Katie an abundance of tools and resources to take back to her school to use as she mentored and guided her peers through the school improvement process. She realized mistakes will be made in her practice, but that is part of learning. She saw the potential in each teacher she worked with. And, seeing that potential opened communication with her teachers, allowing them to speak and converse openly without fear of reactions. She identified that a teacher leader could be that soft voice that is in there to help in the teacher's corner, and for Katie, teacher leaders were needed in schools for many different reasons.

Future Planning and Thoughts

During this year, Katie had several important experiences that helped her understand a couple of things about teacher leadership. First, Katie found that her teacher leadership was built upon years of previous experience particularly in her own school where she was the longest standing teacher. She realized that her coworkers were

watching her to see how she handled the pressures of teaching as well as what expertise she brought to the classroom.

Second, she found that by nature of academia alone, she was not a leader no matter how much she studied. She was only a leader when she began to lead and others followed. And it was that idea, others trusting and following, that moved Katie to experience and grow her own leadership. She stated, "By being a teacher leader you are not necessarily administration but you are in that leadership inner circle. That aspect of being trusted and being a person your colleagues come to appeals to me." Katie experienced her teacher leadership precisely because she led her fellow teachers through difficult school situations, chaired committees, met state requirements, and encouraged best classroom practices that developed higher student achievement. Her experiences were based in her "doing" teacher leadership.

Teacher Leader #6

Ruby had five years of teaching experience and was currently enrolled in graduate school at a Midwest University. Her first year teaching came in the form of being given a classroom and being told to figure it all out. She was grateful for that experience because it taught her resilience and how to lean on others for help. She wanted to pass on her learning to others and help teachers who needed some extra assistance to excel with their classrooms. For her, that meant showing and modeling best practices for new or struggling teachers and by assisting them in how to organize their classrooms so their students met or exceeded achievement expectations.

Entry into Teacher Leadership

Ruby enrolled into the teacher leadership program because of her early experiences of success and struggle within her own classroom, and due to the desire to

assist others as they worked in her school. Ruby did not have any aspirations to be a principal at the time of the study. But, if she could lead as a peer, then she could see how her leadership could help her make change with less of the negative connotations or feedback that could hinder or stop the process of change. She found that being a personal resource to other teachers was very appealing.

She could be a guide to help with classroom management or curriculum issues and that in itself was rewarding. She wanted those who were struggling to realize their potential and to, in turn, use that potential to help grow others personally and professionally. She added, "For me, as a teacher leader (my job) would be showing new or struggling teacher how to get it together and address these areas of growth and make their classroom function as it should."

Early Learning and Doing

Ruby was excited to experience her teacher leadership and put what she learned into practice. One area for her to personally address was how to navigate difficult conversations. She wanted to be a help, not a hurt, to struggling teachers, to move them into positive changes with minimal discomfort. This process of studying and practicing her teacher leadership made her more reflective about her own abilities and classroom environment. She said,

> "What I found most helpful is the how to approach difficult situations or how to give constructive criticism. How to give it to them and minimize the worry without making them feel bad but still address the issue. There are ways to do this and I am very non-confrontational and for me in a role like this, it is very difficult for me to address issues like this even when it is obvious to everyone around. I would want to say this in a way that is not hurtful but more helpful."

Part of Ruby's early learning to be a teacher leader was about how to give constructive criticism in a way to effect change while minimizing the discomfort teachers felt about their abilities or processes. She found that the leadership program and her graduate program aligned in a lot of ways, especially in the strategies offered to help support best practices.

Adjustments to Learning and Doing

Ruby recognized that she was still working hard to have positive interactions with those she was mentoring or peer coaching. It made teacher leadership a little awkward when she was trying to help be a resource to her coworkers who were struggling and they saw it as an administrative move for improvement. Ruby worked hard to remain on the same level as her peers since no formal role was created for her. She still navigated and maneuvered in the tricky waters where a colleague needed immediate help, but she didn't know her specific role in assisting the teacher or when the school principal should come into the picture to make formal adjustments. In her reflections, Ruby added:

"It has made me more reflective looking at my own teaching, my own classroom management and practice. If I am going to be giving someone else advice on what works then I need to be practicing the same thing and it better be working. My suggestions better be working for me first. I am also learning to see the potential in people. And not just saying oh man that classroom is a mess or kids are cutting up in the hallway and saying that this teacher has no clue. Maybe the teacher doesn't have the tools to run the classroom smoothly. Maybe I can be that person to give them the tools."

Future Planning and Thoughts

Ruby enjoyed the knowledge gained from her experiences, but saw herself as a learner by doing. The resources gained from the program were helpful, but the most important learning for Ruby was the practice of observing, conferencing, sharing and implementing resources, and participating in follow-through conferences with her colleagues. She added,

> "Really this has been a very helpful experience. This is the way I wanted to go in my career – a coach or a teacher leader. The fact that there is this program for people who do not want to go into administration, but maybe they do not want to stay in the classroom forever. It is a step in between. It is perfect for me and for those like me."

She felt that while there were aspects of the program and practice she already knew from her years of teaching, she enjoyed the year of adding to her learning and practice and was eager to see where the "position" could lead to the following year. Would it be informal again, or would there be a more formal establishing of her teacher leadership role within her school?

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Teacher Leader #7

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Liz had four years of teaching experience at a highly rated and recognized K-12 charter school. She had earned a Master's of Arts in Teaching degree and worked mainly with middle and high school students in the area of social studies. She had always been ambitious. Her enrollment into the teacher leadership program and the practice of her teacher leadership felt like the next step in her journey in the future. She saw herself somewhere in either corporate training, educating adults, or in curriculum development.

She knew that she did not want to be a school principal, but she knew that her plans and ideas might change.

Entry into Teacher Leadership

Liz enrolled into the teacher leadership program because she felt that she could help be a buffer between the administration of the school and staff who might not understand the direction or intent of various policies, programs, or initiatives. She believed she could help her colleagues understand the underpinnings of what was going on at an administration level in order to increase student achievement in the school. As a teacher leader, she felt that her role did not waste time in the work place, but improved the communication processes, which increased her school's overall productivity. She noted, "I have always been ambitious and looking into the future and going into teacher leadership and going into this program was the next step. I don't know if I want to be a principal, but this is a step into my future."

Early Learning and Doing

Liz's early learning and experiences revolved around how to be a peer coach through the practice of observing, giving suggestions, and following through on serving mentees in their classrooms. Although she was young, she gained confidence by growing her expertise even though she was not in a formal teacher leader role within her school. She gained this confidence by taking the lead on being a department head and leading a PLC group at her school, which in itself was a form of teacher leadership. She noticed that due to her work in these roles and as a result of her heading this change in her school, the communication about school-wide best practices among her coworkers developed more than it ever had before she had these positions. Liz confirmed, "I am more

confident in offering more suggestions when situations come up and maybe that is a role in itself."

Adjustments to Learning and Doing

Liz enjoyed the learning from her experiences, specifically the strategies that were discussed to help struggling teachers with their students. She did not enjoy that awkwardness or resistance to change that some staff had towards new shifts in policies. However, Liz had positive thoughts and feelings towards her own leadership practice and believed that with these changes she could be an extra level of support for her school. That extra level of support may have caused her to be seen as a middle man, but it was an extra level of support regardless of the presumptions. Liz explained,

"The aspects that appeal to me the most are the strategies, teaching strategies, are there for me to use to guide teachers who are struggling in the classroom. Some things that appeal to me the least, probably, let me think about this, having to deal with the awkwardness and resistance to change. This change is in anything in staff, school policy, anything that is different than what has currently been the norm. I feel like that is always a tough thing to maneuver around."

Future Planning and Thoughts

Liz wanted to continue her evolution as a teacher leader and she felt vulnerability was important in her growth. Her vulnerability was leading her to learn and grow and in turn help others grow and learn, thus benefiting the students in her school in terms of academic achievement. She felt that the role of a teacher leader was needed to help schools, especially in areas of student and teacher success. She stated:

"My attitude towards my own future as a leader is definitely positive. I can definitely see the benefits of, I don't want to call it the middle man, between

administration between teachers and school leaders, but it that is what it is. So far having the extra level of support has been positive for me and my work but also for the school."

She noted that the program training was a good aid for her to learn and gain resources. She hadn't had much of an opportunity to practice her leadership in a more formal role. Most of her leadership practice had been informal with not much change in her daily routines and responsibility. Liz was looking forward to seeing how the next year would go and if her role as a teacher leader could be more fully recognized and therefore more useful in a broader sense.

Liz saw how teacher leadership could help improve her school specifically with peer coaching focused on student achievement. However, she also said that there was no one set way to be a teacher leader, and every situation and school was different and therefore needed different versions and embodiments of teacher leadership. It is important to note that, in Liz's view, teacher leadership may have been different for her than for other teachers. She also believed that teacher leadership needed to be more formally recognized in her school so that her leadership would be more effective.

Chapter IV Summary

These seven teacher leaders were each interviewed twice and submitted their journals for data analysis. Chapter IV introduced and summarized each participant individually. Chapter V offers an inductive, constructivist analysis of the collected data gathered from all of the participants in order to discuss the major themes and sub-themes of this study.

CHAPTER V

DATA ANAYLSIS AND FINDINGS

The purpose of the phenomenological study was to examine the lived experience of

teachers working in charter schools while enrolled in a teacher leadership program where

they studied and practiced their leadership. This chapter offers the results of the

interpretative analysis obtained from (a) two in-depth interviews and (b) analysis of

journals from seven participants over the five month period of study within the nine

month program term. A focus group interview was given at the end of the study, not for

the purpose of being constructivist in nature, but to member-check the data and its

interpretations. The focus group interview acted only as a constructionist way to check

for efficacy of the interpretive data in a group setting.

The coding schemes used for the results analysis were created based upon the

literature review and the frequency of ideas, vocabulary, and discussions raised within the

interviews and journals. The following decision rules were established to arrive at the

main themes and emergent themes pulled from the data and with which each participant

member checked her experience through her interviews. The construction of the themes

is as follows: (a) at least 71% or five or more out of seven participants who agreed

equaled a theme, and (b) 57% or four out of seven participants who agreed equaled an

emergent theme. The researcher recorded no theme emerging nor was it otherwise

considered where three or less participants agreed.

The following two tables display the themes and emerging themes (see Table 3) and

the themes with participant creation and agreement (see Table 4). Table 3 displays the

eleven themes with two of those themes emerging. The theme code is explained as

follows. The first number of the theme is related to the research question to which it

corresponds. The second number corresponds with the theme order assigned randomly

by the researcher.

Table 3

From Following to Leading Themes

Themes for Research Question 1
Theme 1.1   Aspiring Teacher Leaders Desired More Knowledge.
Theme 1.2   School Needs Drove the Need for Teacher Leadership.
Theme 1.3   Aspiring Teacher Leaders Wanted to Expand Prior Leadership Experience.
Theme 1.4   Books Were Needed as Great Resources for Aspiring Teacher Leaders.
Theme 1.5   Aspiring Teacher Leaders Found Learning to Translate Easily into Practice.

Themes for Research Question 2
Theme 2.1   Aspiring Teacher Leaders Used Networking.
Theme 2.2   Aspiring Teacher Leaders Needed Clarity from School Leadership.
Theme 2.3   Aspiring Teacher Leaders Practiced Peer Coaching and Mentoring.
Theme 2.4   Aspiring Teacher Leaders Found their Collegial Interactions Changing.
Theme 2.5   Aspiring Teacher Leaders Found their Confidence Growing.
Theme 2.6   The Practice of Teacher Leadership Varied.

Table 4 lists the theme codes along with the participants who created and agreed

upon the themes. The theme is listed in the first column by its identification number.

The corresponding columns are headed with the participant's pseudonym. The "X"

indicates participant agreement that she lived this experience as she grew into a teacher

leader.

Table 4

Themes and Emergent Themes with Participant Creation

Theme	Melody	Jennie	Lucy	Serenity	Katie	Ruby	Liz
1.1	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
1.2		X			X	X	X
1.3	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
1.4	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
1.5		X		X	X	X	X
2.1	X	X		X	X		
2.2		X	X	X	X	X	
2.3	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
2.4	X	X		X	X	X	X
2.5	X	X		X	X	X	X
2.6	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

The remainder of this chapter will discuss the findings of the research for each theme and how they related directly to the research questions. The chapter will conclude with a discussion of the inter-relatedness of the categories

Research Question 1: Learning by Studying

Research question one asked; how do charter school teachers, enrolled in a professional teacher leadership development program, experience and interpret their evolution as a teacher leader (i.e. the becoming of a teacher leader) as they gain knowledge, skills, dispositions, and insights via the learning by studying? The following are the findings grouped into five major themes. Each section begins with an overall

description of the theme with direct participant quotes or writings, and then concludes with reasons why each of the themes is considered important or emerging as a lived experience of these growing teacher leaders. It is important to note that some identifying information has been masked to safeguard the participants.

1.1 Aspiring Teacher Leaders Desired More Knowledge

The first theme to emerge from all participants' experiences was that each and every participant wanted to gain more knowledge both personally and professionally. A few of the participants had been able to practice different leadership roles within their school in the past, but when the opportunity to participate in a teacher leadership program became available, each teacher wanted to enroll to understand and use more tools to build her own leadership. Ruby began by stating,

> "Sometimes, I'm one of those people where when you have like college courses or whatever and it's like you feel like a lot of it is just going to be a huge waste of time to be perfectly honest, and I've actually learned things that are applicable, whereas going into it, it was just kind of like, oh there are hours of either stuff I already know, or stuff that doesn't apply to me, things that I'm never going to use. So it's been nice that it's actually been applicable information."

Katie, having had years of teaching experience and having served as one of the constant teachers in a school with high teacher and leader turnover, was looking for some new ways to manage her classroom and lead other teachers. She said,

> "I am open to learning new things. And I am not a classroom management person and every year I have one or two students where I have tried all my tools on them and they don't work. So I am always wanting to hear new things."

Katie was also one of the participants who held some leadership roles with her school. She was the School Improvement Team chair. A big part of her gaining knowledge as a teacher leader was through her experience in this role. She stated:

"As the School Improvement chair, I had no idea how much stuff went into that document and those plans. As the chair, I have been privy to a lot of behind the scenes information that is needed for running the school. I am learning as I go and I think that is one of the most effective ways to learn."

Melody, the preschool director, began to experience her teacher leadership through her studying because she wanted to continue to better herself as a teacher and leader of her program. While she may have been a part of a lot of learning through her career, Melody didn't mind hearing valuable lessons over again. She said, "All knowledge is good knowledge, even if I have to hear it a couple times." For her, experiencing her leadership meant that she might hear the same principles a few times. From her experience, Melody meant not only studying the material, but also listening to other teachers and gaining knowledge from their experiences, too. Melody said, "…as in building myself, my knowledge of how to become an instructional leader I am using other's teachers as resources as well."

Lucy, a special education teacher in an urban charter school, joined the teacher leadership program to grow her own leadership. She experienced that her wanting to know more about teacher leadership and its potential effects on her own school drew her to enroll and study teacher leadership. She stated, "I wanted to have a deeper understanding of what the expectations would be as a teacher leader." She noted that her experience of wanting to become a teacher leader was "really enlightening" and "I've wanted to learn a lot, I think, from the training of different ways of, I guess, how to work

better with people when…I don't necessarily have that leadership title, but I have to do the leadership duties."

One constant thread with each of the participants was that they saw teacher leadership as the next step in their professional lives and goals. Liz stated, "I have always been ambitious, and looking into the future and going into teacher leadership and going into this program was the next step." Jennie concurred with her own statement:

"I guess I have always wanted to be a teacher. I grew up playing teacher in the basement and taking home extra assignments from school and playing with my chalkboard and everything. That was the path I was going on. I have always had friends and colleagues inside and outside of school come to me for advice or [to] vent. This is my seventh year of teaching, and the last three years I have been a mentor, so I thought becoming a teacher leader was the next step on the path, my journey."

Finally, Ruby, a teacher with many years of experience in an urban charter school, had this experience in her career:

"We had a very young leader so it felt very much like a sink or swim situation. Not that we weren't supported but it was kind of like here's your class room, figure it out sort of thing. As scary as that was, I am very thankful for that experience because it made me the teacher that I am today. It made me very self-sufficient in a lot of ways, but I also learned to lean on people in certain ways."

She went on to say that this experience was why she wanted to enroll in a program and become a teacher leader within her school. She knew she was self-sufficient and could handle a lot of difficult situations, but she wanted to learn to be the person who could come alongside a new or struggling teacher and assist them with their own classroom.

For Ruby and with the other participants, her lived experience showed that gaining more knowledge to better their own personal and professional leadership was an important motivator for them to grow into teacher leadership, and this occurred specifically by studying within a teacher leadership program.

1.2 School Needs Drove the Need for Teacher Leadership

The second theme to arise from this study was an emergent theme. While all participants discussed ideas about their school needing teacher leadership or struggling to have high student achievement, only four teachers out of the seven responded that their experience was impacted greatly by the needs of their school. Three issues are evident from the data. First, teachers who struggled, whether in classroom management or academic achievement, inspired these participants to grow in their leadership. Second, high teacher turnover led these participants to study and practice teacher leadership. Finally, school leaders helped to lead participants to grow and experience their own leadership abilities. School leaders either opened up opportunities for their teachers to experience their leadership, or the lack of good leadership led the teachers to seek out and experience teacher leadership. Although is wasn't the initial motivator, the schools' needs became a driving factor in motivating teachers to make and adopt changes that ultimately drove them to learn, and eventually experience their leadership.

Struggling school teachers were evident in each participant's school. These struggles included both classroom management and student academic success. Liz noted:

"We have a few teachers struggling here at school. So my interactions with them have been trying to softly help and guide them through their issues. And, the things they are taking from me seem to be helping and working. So that has validated my learning and what I am gaining."

Ruby added that seeing struggling teachers made her want to help them through whatever challenges she saw them going through. She said:

"There [are] a lot of teachers who struggle with that and it is not that they don't know they have a problem, that they are not capable to handle it, but it is that they do not know how to apply steps to help this area other than a 3 minute YouTube clip. For me, as a teacher leader I would be showing new or struggling teacher[s] how to get it together and address these areas of growth and make their classroom function as it should."

She also stated, "I have seen quite a few teachers where you see their potential and they have lost their way. Or maybe they are lost in the curriculum or management or like at my school I see teachers struggling with specific behavior issues and I want to help them through it."

These struggles seemed to push these teacher leaders to grow in their knowledge, skills, and abilities to assist their coworkers. Ruby added, "I really would like to help teachers, newer teachers or teachers who are struggling in certain areas." Ruby was not the only teacher leader to experience this internal desire to help. Others had similar experiences. Serenity said, "I want to be somebody that people can come to for help." She added, "The most appealing aspect is being able to help other people within the school." Liz also noted, "What I am learning the most from is being a peer coach, relating to them and offering suggestions to help them growing their classrooms."

The second area that moved these teachers to experience their leadership was the issue of teacher turnover. High teacher turnover led to new teachers with little experience entering classrooms and finding little support to lean on while attempting to

meet the needs of the children in their room. Teachers who stayed in high turnover

schools became the de facto leaders for their peers. Katie explained,

> "I think to be completely honest, I became a mentor and the school improvement
>
> chair and the leadership positions from a necessity stand point. Because, I know
>
> this sounds kind of bad, but there was no one else to do it. There was high teacher
>
> turnover which is unfortunate. So because I was one of the few teachers with
>
> three years experience, I had to be a mentor. And now it is just part of my job."

Jennie agreed that high teacher turnover pushed her to explore her leadership abilities. At

the end of her time in the teacher leadership program she stated,

> "And something that really stuck out to me was when it mentioned how I had said
>
> something about high teacher turnover. Because we've had even more people
>
> leave since I said that. So we do, so that's really rung really, really true to me."

High teacher turnover was not an issue for all of the teacher leaders. Liz worked

in a school with low teacher turnover but noted that she experienced her leadership role

in a different capacity. The teacher leaders would still be providing leadership to their

schools but with new faces a lot of the time. She explained,

> "One thing that was different was the high turnover rate mentioned. You talked
>
> about that, I guess. Uh, we don't, I don't have that or we don't really have that
>
> very much. So I can imagine that that's a completely different situation and your
>
> role as a teacher leader would be different in that sense. Because uh it would, it
>
> would just be different. I mean you would be dealing with brand-new faces all the
>
> time, I guess, whereas we wouldn't at our school as much yeah."

Finally, school leadership played a part in pushing these women to grow and

experience their leadership abilities and roles. This happened in two ways. In Lucy's

case, she had a school leader who opened up and allowed for her to experience her leadership. She said,

> "My current school leader also gives me a lot of opportunities to go ahead and take the lead on things that I saw that could be improved. I've been able to change things that in our school like the child study process or change our functional behavior plans [it] has been really nice to have that support from a leader to take on different leadership roles within the school to make effective change."

Serenity, on the other hand, experienced a lack of school leadership. This also pushed her into experiencing her leadership with her urban charter school. She remembered, "There was a lack of leadership or the leadership was unstable. So then I started mentoring, and lots of opportunities started to develop from that lack of leadership." In both cases, the teacher leaders experienced that their own school's leadership might have created opportunities for them to grow into teacher leaders.

1.3 Aspiring Teacher Leaders Wanted to Expand Prior Leadership Experience

The third theme to arise from this phenomenology showed that all of the teacher leaders in this study desired to grow into more leadership roles in their school or that they were already in some leadership roles. The idea here was that these teachers brought into their study of leadership a desire to study and learn about teacher leadership. And, those who were already in leadership roles brought into their learning their experience of what teacher leadership is all about. The first half of this section will talk about those who desired to be teacher leaders and what they experienced while becoming teacher leaders. The second half of this section discusses what those who were already in a position of leadership experienced and learned by studying teacher leadership.

Katie realized she had a desire to be a teacher leader when she began noticing that her coworkers were coming to her for information as opposed to going to the principal for help. She noted,

> "I think the first moment where I realized that people were coming, like the newer teachers were coming to me as opposed to going to administration for things. And I was like "Oh, OK, so I guess I'm that person." I would feel like I'm still someone that needs to go to other people for help, but other people are coming to me. So that was kind of an important moment where I had to realize that I have to, you know, I have a responsibility to other people, so I can't always be looking to other people. I have to self-help so I can help others. Kind of the big moment."

This big moment for Katie helped to push her into studying what a teacher leader was and how she could become a teacher leader for herself and to help others.

Several other teachers agreed with the experience of wanting to become a leader in some fashion in order to drive and feed their learning and studying of teacher leadership. Serenity stated, "I feel like I am on a trajectory to move into a school leader position, but I do not know if that is what I want. And, so, I have been wrestling with that lately because I feel like there is a push for me to do it." Liz also added that maybe she didn't want to be a principal but desired to become a teacher leader at that point in her career. She said, "I don't know if I want to be a principal, but this is a step into my future."

Ruby offered insight into her learning to be a teacher leader and why she wanted to study teacher leadership. Ruby thought that she may not have wanted to be in the classroom forever and that a classroom coach would be more to her liking. She noted, "I would like to be some kind of coach, not necessarily a classroom teacher forever. But I

think studying teacher leadership is a step in the right direction." Ruby also shared her realization of her desire to become a teacher leader; she said, "Administration is too much managing of grown-ups. Whereas a teacher leader, you still get to be in the classroom with the students. You are still working with other students but it's not coming from a place of authority."

Three of the participants were currently in some sort of leadership stipended role with their school. The other four participants had acted as leaders on committees, in departments, and with mentoring. Of the three with stipended leadership roles, two of them, Melody and Jennie, were preschool directors. One, Lucy, was the special education director of her school. All participants brought their current experience of leadership and their desire to be formal teacher leaders into their learning and studying of teacher leadership.

Melody enrolled in the teacher leadership program to better her own leadership practices. Her previous experience of leading and mentoring other teachers felt disconnected from really helping struggling coworkers. She wrote in her journal about her experience, "I felt rushed and there was little time to discuss improvement. It was more like, here's a piece of paper with your ratings, read through it, and sign please. There was no connection." Melody's learning and studying of teacher leadership helped to clarify her work as a director. She said this about her learning to be a teacher leader;

> "I think that is a huge part of being an instructional coach is [understanding] how
> do I be on the same page as this new teacher and what skills that I have that I
> could share with her that wouldn't come across as being arrogant or demanding."

For Melody, she found it important in her learning to experience the connectedness of evaluating, critiquing, and helping others by sitting on the same side of the table as those she was leading.

Jennie was also "stipend out to be a preschool mentor" which meant that not only did she teach with her own preschool, but she also got paid to help mentor other preschool teachers within her school and in sister charter schools. The primary goal of her enrollment into the teacher leadership program was to boost her own leadership abilities to better serve those she worked with. She stated that her experience with learning about teacher leadership helped her look to future positions like, "something in early childhood development or even [becoming a] peer coach or instructional leader or [serving in] positions like that."

Finally, Lucy experienced her growth as a teacher leader from an already established position within her school, and this helped inform her study and learning. She stated this about her current position:

> "I have taken on the lead as the Child Study coordinator person for our school for Special Ed. And I don't know because of how everything we've gone through this year; I have been the like the coordinator working with the ISD, having conversations with them, pulling in behavioral consultants from the ISD and planning really everything when it comes to like the service providers and working a lot with our Detroit Institute people, which I have been very hands-on, just because we haven't maybe had that support, but it's been a really good leadership experience for me and you just had to take the initiative."

Even though Lucy was already in a teacher leadership role, she also had desires to grow into a more formal role. She said, "I definitely want to get into like more of an

administrative role or a consultant role for Special Ed where, and I think for consulting, like you're training teachers. My dream would be something like Adult Special Ed or doing something like a behavioral consultant." Because of her desire to be a more formal leader one day, Lucy sought to add to her learning as a teacher leader. Here are two observations from Lucy about the importance to her experience and learning: "one thing that has been really helpful I would also say that seeking out trainings and going to those trainings to pinpoint some of the things that I'm interested in and it has also been very helpful in my opportunities," and "[I] was always asking for opportunities to go to professional developments."

The participants of this study came into their studying of teacher leadership due to either a desire to become a teacher leader and/or because they were already in a position of leadership. These experiences and desires helped to inform each person as she participated in a program designed to grow her into more formal leadership roles.

1.4 Books Were Needed as Great Resources for Aspiring Teacher Leaders

The fourth theme to arise from this study revolved around the books and guides used for study and reference as the participants studied teacher leadership. Lucy stated, "The books that we have read in the group in the program have been very helpful." And she captured sentiments expressed by other participants. Not only were the books insightful in the study of teacher leadership, but they established a rhythm to practice personal leadership. All of the participants noted that the books were helpful to them in their own classroom but also as they coached their peers, networked with other study participants, and worked within their own schools. The following section will discuss the participants' views about the resources given in their leadership program. The section will conclude

with a figure showing that the resources were important for every participant, regardless of her years of teaching experience.

Serenity, like her fellow participants, found her books to be useful not only in what she gained from reading them but also in sharing them with her colleagues within her school. She stated,

"The reading materials we have used, I have used a lot with both of them. I made copies of parts of the book for them and the other person went and bought it for herself and devoured it over the break. So that has been really helpful in helping them because they need so much help."

Melody also found that her coworkers thought the books she read in the program were important for their own growth. Melody relayed, "One of our kindergarten teachers actually took [the book] home with her. She actually borrowed it over spring break." Melody also added that the books were just one of the resources she found to be helpful and powerful. She would gain resources from a variety of sources, "it could be a book, it can be a web site, and it can be a speaker."

Ruby found her study of teacher leadership to be empowered by reading books and sharing those books with others. She related this story,

"Teachers approach students and have issues and they do not use very nice words. One book called Choice Words has helped me in my own classroom and how I talk to and with students. And I have also helped some friends with tips from the book. I want again to be helpful and not hurtful. This book helps me with me words and making them helpful."

Ruby shared her thoughts on another book she read and studied as it helped her grow her leadership specifically through trouble shooting classroom issues with her colleagues. She reported,

> "We've gotten a lot of really good resources. The books are pretty...they're good resources, they're good things to look.... You know, if you have a question, you can kind of look back, especially [the one book]. I found that to be a really good resource, because I mean pretty much any issue, classroom issue, that a teacher's having whether it's, you know, anger management or student engagement, you know, there's an answer for that, so that's been really helpful."

Both Melody and Jennie added that they found the books to be valuable resources. Melody stated, "The most beneficial thing that I've gained from being an instructional leader is resources." Jennie added, "I like the resources that we were given, like the books, and being able to go through and explore them to find new tips for ourselves and other teachers." Liz also noted that her reading led to her applying her leadership by using the books as a resource. She stated,

> "I just mentioned, just using things from [the books], just different random strategies, you know, like the wait time or the no opt out, or whatever, just giving other teachers or talking about that, reflecting on that with other teachers informally probably was my biggest application so far."

Serenity also mentioned several times through her learning and practicing of her leadership that the books were important to her growth into a teacher leader. She stated early in the study,

> "I found especially like the reading materials to be really helpful. And I used a lot of it with my mentees as well, which has been really helpful, because since the

last time we spoke, I have two new mentees. So I'm up to four now. So it's been really good to have those extra resources."

Serenity reiterated, "I think more than anything like the reading materials that we've had in the teacher leader program have really helped me. Because a lot of the stuff like I use in my classroom, and like I said I've been sharing it with my mentees and I just feel like it's helped me to grow a lot." Serenity also added that as she practiced her leadership, "I've just been trying to give them as many resources as I possibly can."

Finally, Katie added that she also enjoyed the books she read and they were helpful in her study of teacher leadership as well as the practice of leadership. She said, "I loved the books. And I think it's an amazing resource. And there's a lot of stuff in there that I either didn't know it had a name or hadn't heard of before." She also shared these books with her colleagues. She gave this story:

> "So when I talked to my mentees...I only have one now, one of them quit. But when I talked to my remaining mentee recently, she had an issue with her students not remembering. And I just, well rather than just be like, "All right, keep practicing," I have that book. And just like a lot of strategies in there had to fall back on and as we just put it together, came up with a couple of simple things that she could to do to try to help."

Katie also noted that she enjoyed the books because they were a resource that she could look back upon and not have to remember all of the nuances for her to practice leadership.

1.5 Aspiring Teacher Leaders Found Learning to Translate Easily into Practice

The fifth and final theme that emerged while exploring research question one was that most of the teacher leaders found that their studying of teacher leadership translated

relatively easily into the practice of teacher leadership. Questions arose early in their study about how becoming a teacher leader would translate into their daily lives or if their study would actually work in practice. The following section discusses the shared lived experience of this study's participants as they learned if their study would apply to their practice.

Early on in her studying of teacher leadership, Lucy wondered how studying and growing her own leadership would work for her in her school. In short, she wondered how what she learned would apply to her practice. She relayed:

"How [is] this is all going to work? How is this going to apply to what I'm going to be doing? How's all the learning going to be put together? I have discussions with other teachers in the school [and] they really don't understand what instructional coaches or a teacher leader is and maybe even school leaders don't fully understand what that is. So I wonder if everybody knows what this is all about. I try to explain or show the textbooks or to try to explain the conversations we've had. That would be the one thing is how to apply everything there were learning so that everybody is aware of what's going on in and the purpose of the teacher leader or instructional coach and then to take it back to the school."

As Lucy's time in the study concluded, she found that her concerns for how she would apply her learning were sated. As she experienced her learning translating into practice, she found she became more at ease with her own teacher leadership. She experienced a level of comfort as she put her learning and studying into practice, specifically in the act of creating professional development for her school staff. She said, "I feel comfortable with [my studying]. And sometimes it's just nice to have that tool kit for people, even those types of resources for PD (professional development)."

Liz was another participant who found her study to fit her practice. She said:

"So I am in this newly created role and I have opportunity to make suggestions

during our PLCs, leading PLCs based on what we want to talk about based on

student achievement. So I see how what we are learning in the program fits with

my experience at being a department head."

Ruby experienced how her study connected with her practice of teacher leadership. She

added, "A lot of the conversations we have had and books we have read have been very

helpful and they intersect on a lot of points. That may happen, but it hasn't yet.

Everything that we have talked about so far is connected." She had to make sure what

she was studying would work in her own classroom before sharing with and leading her

fellow teachers. She noted,

"It has made me more reflective looking at my own teaching, my own classroom

management and practice. If I am going to be giving someone else advice on

what works[,] then I need to be practicing the same thing and it better be working.

My suggestions better be working for me first."

Katie experienced that her study led to what she applied into her classroom and

school. Katie added, "I have used some of the things from the program with my

mentees." Jennie also experienced her study of teacher leadership to easily translate into

her practice of teacher leadership. She said, "I like how all of the strategies are easy to

read, easy to apply, [and that] videos that are short and well worded to teach myself or

hand to a struggling staff member."

Finally, Ruby summed up her study and learning of teacher leadership by

describing the learner she was and how that helped what she studied to be cemented into

her practice. She was the type of learner who needed to practice what she was studying.

That practice led Ruby to be more confident in her own growth as a teacher leader. She noted, "That's kind of the type of learner I guess that I am. Like I need to [practice] to actually feel competent. I need to see it and then I need to do it. So knowing that I can actually do it has just been, I guess that's been a little boost of confidence, I guess, to actually implement it."

Research Question 1: Summary

Five themes, which answered research question one, emerged from the shared lived experience of this study's seven participants. Three of the five themes (i.e. theme one, three, and four) had 100% agreement that the theme was experienced by the teacher leaders. Two themes (two and five) revealed that most of the participants experienced them while studying teacher leadership. Theme two had 57% of the participants recognize this theme to be important to their experience. Theme five had 71% of the participants agree that they experienced this in their work at growing into teacher leaders.

Research Question 2: Learning by Doing

Research question two asked, how do such teachers, enrolled in a professional teacher leadership development program, experience and interpret their evolution as a teacher leader (i.e. the becoming of a teacher leader) as they gain knowledge, skills, dispositions, and insights via the learning by doing (the application of the training) provided by the teacher leader development program? The following are the findings grouped in six major themes. Each section begins with an overall description on the theme with direct participant quotes or writings, and then concludes with reasons why each of the themes are considered important or emerging as a lived experienced of these growing teacher leaders. It is important to note that some identifying information has been masked to safeguard the participants.

2.1 Aspiring Teacher Leaders Used Networking

Four out of the seven participants experienced the need to network as a way to practice their teacher leadership. Networking, in terms of their experience, involved both connecting with one another and discussing their own learning with the other training program participants and with their colleagues within their own school. Networking involved school administrators, teachers, the program trainers, and those holding positions in the central office/management company. The following section will show the evidence for this emergent theme from direct quotes from four of the participants.

Serenity connected her learning from both the study and from the networking. She stated, "I have really enjoyed the readings and more so the discussions. Connecting to other people and hearing what they're going through and then connecting it to my needs and what I am going through has been very helpful." Serenity had the opportunity to act as the school leader for two days when the principal and the assistant principal were absent for training. She relayed that the experience and guidance and help from the administrator really fleshed out for her what a teacher leader may look like. She related this about her experience:

> "talking with [Assistant Principal] and [Principal] about those two days was very helpful. It has also been helpful to see what was going on with some of my mentees in the role that I don't see because I am in the classroom [the] majority of the time. Just kind of being taken under their wing has also been helpful to my leadership."

Serenity expanded upon the viewpoint that other teachers may have had a sense of isolation in their work, whether in their grade level or subject matter. She knew that teacher leadership might have helped in connecting teachers for the purpose of better

classrooms and increased student achievement. In order to foster this connection, it would take leadership that used networking. She noted,

> "I just think that we need each other and it is so easy to be isolated like our own island to ourselves in the school, or a grade level in our schools. Not to branch out, and so that is nice to have teacher leaders in the building that will help push you out of your comfort zone and try to be better teachers for the students.".

Finally, Serenity saw that we all experience problem solving situations. Her experience showed her that networking helped her as a teacher leader to assist in solving problems. She stated that networking was:

> "helping me to see perspective of other people especially as I dialogue with the other program participants. Oh, there are other people who are going through the same thing as I am. Everybody brings their own perspective and you can see the same problem through a different set of eyes."

Melody, a preschool director, knew the importance of networking well before enrolling in the teacher leadership program. She had already networked with other directors in her area. She said, "I enjoy hearing other people's experiences. It kind of gives me insights." She also added, "having the network of people to reach out to is important," and "I would say networking, having that connection, having [the assurance that] somebody has my back, or knowing who to turn to for resources is the most important aspect for me."

Melody experienced a major insight with the process of growing and practicing her own teacher leadership. For her, the networking with teachers from sister charter schools was a big benefit for her in practicing her leadership. She stated,

"One of the big insights I am gaining is connecting with other teachers and staff

from our sister schools. They have the same mindset as I do like how can we

improve our schools, how can we raise test scores, how can we help our teachers.

And, I feel networking is a huge part of being a leader."

Melody concluded her discussion of networking with a description of how much it

impacted her own experience and learning. She stated, "I've gained a lot from

networking and hearing other people's stories."

Jennie also enjoyed the aspect of networking while experiencing her own

leadership. She noted, "I really just like the conversations and the bouncing ideas off of

each other. Everyone's school is in such a different place, different sizes, structures and

different characteristics, and we share our experiences and ideas that work in each of our

schools." Not only did Jennie enjoy networking, but she found that it lessened her

anxiety as she experienced her growth into a teacher leader. She stated, "Talking with

them or other program members, networking with them, has been influential.

Networking lessens the anxiety." She also found that she now had another group of

people where she can bounce ideas off of like minded peers. She had her administrator.

She had her coworkers. And, now she had other teacher leaders. She said, "I want to

bounce ideas off of people and now I have another group of people I can go to."

Due to her participation in the teacher leadership program, Katie noted an

evolution in her perception of her own role. She no longer saw herself working toward a

singular goal, but rather, she was a vital part of a community network. She stated:

"[The fact that] I could email or call others when I needed help was good. It

wasn't just "here you go have fun." But there was going to be supports along the

way throughout the year. Being a part of this program is helping me to think of

my professional life less as one teacher in a classroom to more of a community.

[The knowledge that] I can ask for help and knowing there is a chance that others

will work with me makes it easier to learn from the program."

Networking for Katie, and some of the other participants, seemed to be a theme that

emerged from their time in the teacher leader program. However, networking didn't stop

with the study and practice of leadership or with the program itself. Networking became

a tool that tied these people together for future work and personal growth well past the

time they were enrolled in the program. Networking for them continued to be vital well

after their "graduation."

2.2 Aspiring Teacher Leaders Needed Clarity from School Leadership

School leader support emerged as a theme within this study of teachers growing

and experiencing their own leadership while enrolled in a teacher leadership role. This is

evident in the interviews and journal artifacts through the high frequency of mention

about either the need for school leaders to support teachers in their leadership, or the

appreciation for school leaders already supporting their role as formal or informal teacher

leaders. Every participant mentioned experiencing this theme while five of the seven

participants, or 71% relayed that they found this to be important to their growth into

teacher leaders. The following section will display direct quotations from the participants

which support this theme.

Melody, the preschool director, was a member of a PreK-12 charter school with

over 1200 students. At her school, there were six administrators with whom she

interacted throughout her time in the program. She experienced both a supportive leader

and a leader who she did not feel supported by during her leadership training. Melody

noted this about one of the principals and her support;

"Here at my school, my school leader has been nothing but gracious and helpful

to me. When I did my [program requirements], she gave me so many

opportunities to learn and follow her. I went the principals' meetings and it made

me feel very included. And, I don't know much about high school and she let me

go into the high school with her and it was great to see a different perspective and

her point of view."

While she found support from one of the school principals, Melody also found it

hard to find support from other principals. One of her principals didn't even respond to

emails to allow her to observe fellow teachers. She noted,

"We had to do these classroom observations and take notes. I emailed one of my

administrators to see if there was anyone who needed help in whom I could

observe. I never received an email back. I had to go out of my way to pick a

couple of colleagues to see if I could come in and see if I could do an

observation."

Not having her school leaders' support meant more work and possible closed doors to her

learning, and limits on practicing her own leadership. Melody experienced both

supportive leadership and unsupportive leadership.

Jennie found she needed her school leader's help and assistance not with setting

up a system for her to practice her leadership, but more so with giving an ear to listen and

being present for Jennie to bounce ideas off of her. Fortunately, Jennie experienced that

when she was overwhelmed or unsure of what to do with assignments for the program or

with her practice, she could go to her school leader and seek advice and direction on her

next steps. This support helped to clarify expectations and ease her own anxiety as she

practiced her leadership within her school. She stated, "In the beginning when I was

overwhelmed with assignments or work, I would go talk to our administrator or curriculum coordinator and they would help give me a new spin on the work or give me a new idea."

Lucy, the special education director of a K-5 charter school, said that, "…having a strong school leader is so crucial. It can either build or destroy a school." In Lucy's case, her school leader provided her support by relaying what Lucy was practicing in their school in terms of observations and other leadership aims. For her, the school leader was her ally and not an enemy. Lucy related this thought:

"I think if I went in for observations for certain teachers that I know that are really struggling, they're not comfortable with letting anybody come into the classroom. And that's been a really hard thing for me. But I know if it came from the administrator as, "OK, she's not out to like, you know, to eat you up and say all these horrible things. She's there to help you." It needs to come from an administrator."

Ruby found that as she practiced her leadership, she experienced that school leader support didn't just mean for her and her leadership but also for those teachers who were seeing less classroom success both academically and behaviorally. Her school leader could support her struggling colleagues by knowing they were enduring hardship and connecting them with Ruby and her ability to lead them to solving their struggles. For Ruby, the school leader could support her by connecting the struggling teacher with her and her teacher leadership skills and practice.

Ruby relayed a story about how she was trying to help a struggling teacher whose room was in chaos. She wanted to help but felt like she couldn't until the administrator helped set up the relationship between the teacher and Ruby with Ruby acting as a

mentor. She noted, "So I think once maybe [the mentorship] was established I would be more comfortable having that conversation with my administrator and coworker, but at this point, I just don't feel like I can go in there and help." Ruby experienced that the support of her school leader was a critical initial piece, imperative for her to go into a classroom to observe, assist, and help in managing the classroom.

Serenity summed up her experience featuring support from her school leader and highlighted dynamics such as working closely together to meet goals. She hoped that her future as a teacher leader would continue with school leader support akin to that which she experienced during her time enrolled in the teacher leadership program. She recounted, "having teachers and leaders working so closely together. As for my future as a teacher leader, I would hope that it would stay a lot like I have it right now."

2.3 Aspiring Teacher Leaders Practiced Peer Coaching and Mentoring

All of the participants in this study recognized and experienced that the practice of mentoring and peer coaching helped them solidify their understanding and growth into teacher leadership. Part of their practicing leadership as a teacher involved going into colleague classrooms for observations and peer coaching. Some had prior practice mentoring teachers while others found "doing" of leadership to be new. Either way, all participants experienced leadership growth opportunities. The following section will display their thoughts and insights about their growth into teacher leaders while coaching and mentoring peers.

Liz, a teacher with four years experience, found that peer coaching helped her learn the most about her own teacher leadership. She said, "I am learning the most from being a peer coach, relating to them and offering suggestions to help them growing their classrooms." In her reflections of the entire year program and practice, Liz again

answered what would be an important take-away from her learning. She responded, "I think probably most importantly would be, you know, just learning how to best interact with my peers as a peer coach and talking and reflecting on those at our meetings every month." She noted that she could use what she learned and practiced with peer coaching for, "whatever lays ahead in the future."

Ruby wanted to be a coach in a future leader position. She came into the teacher leader program to learn more about coaching. She stated, "I would like to be some kind of a coach, not necessarily a classroom teacher forever. But I think that this program is a step in the right direction." With this in mind, she desired to practice this part of her leadership. The following insight helped to cement for her the desire to be a full time teacher coach. She relayed this story:

> "We have a kindergarten teacher whose classroom is next to mine and I hear a lot of noise on a daily basis and not a productive noise. And when I was in her room, I saw a lot contributing factors to the unnecessary noise. I was in there for maybe 20 minutes to see what went on in there. I gave her one or two suggestions. It was a large group math lesson and the kids were all over the place. One of my suggestions to her was to give the students an assigned seat while they were on the carpet. I also gave her some feedback about attention getters too. A day or two later she was using those suggestions and I notice that the students were at least a little more controlled. And seeing some of my suggestions working became really rewarding for me."

Ruby noted that practicing her leadership through being a peer coach helped her to know for sure that she may not have wanted to be a school administrator but definitely a peer

coach or teacher leader. She shared this final insight, "This is the way I want to go in my career – a coach or a teacher leader."

Katie also found peer coaching to have deep meaning for her as she grew her own leadership. Katie had been the longest standing teacher in her school. She was already mentoring some teachers when she began the teacher leadership program. Early on she noted, "I have used some of the things from the program with my mentees." However, Katie wanted to continue to grow her skills and further her leadership abilities, especially in adapting her communication with coworkers. She stated:

> "I hope to further keep learning those skills in my communication with other
> people. For instance I recently had to talk to another teacher. One of the
> Kindergarten teachers about her tone. And that was a hard one. The way she
> talks is how she talks to everyone, her friends, her coworkers, everyone. But
> when she talked to her students that way it was coming off as angry. It was a hard
> conversation to have but I was able to say that in my first year teaching my
> principal told me I was using an incorrect tone. I fixed it and that comes with
> experience. And now I can enter the classroom and change my tone from the
> classroom to the teacher lounge. So using that experience to help my peer was
> hard but useful."

For her, peer coaching was hard to do but it was also useful both personally and professionally. Katie experienced a sense of honor in coaching and mentoring of her peers. This was a powerful insight for her as a teacher leader. She relayed,

> "I mentored two teachers this year in which this all came out of a sense of
> necessity. I feel a sense of honor when people say we would like you to be a part
> of this or lead that and they value my opinion. And that makes me feel valued in

what I am doing. So I came to pursue this opportunity from a sense of need but also to share my collective knowledge."

Jennie and Melody were both preschool teacher/directors. They came from different charter schools but found their shared experience of growing their teacher leadership through peer coaching to be rewarding and useful. Jennie shared early on in her studying and practice that she was, "learning how to be a coach, gaining strategies and learning to be confident in my practice. Learn[ing] to be confident and assured in my work as I coach those who need it." Melody also wanted more practice and hoped to gain tools by, "learn(ing) how to coach others and to hear other people's stories." Early on, Melody found trouble identifying "people who actually wanted to be coached," but she eventually found a teacher to mentor. She found the experience to be "a wonderful experience." One of her insights from her practice was to be "on the same page." She related this insight:

> "I think that is a huge part of being an instructional coach is how do I be on the same page as this new teacher and what skills that I have that I could share with her that wouldn't come across as being arrogant or "you need to do this." It's just, 'Hey, I've tried this; I've seen this. Do you want to give it a shot? Tell me what you think. If it doesn't work, then let's try something else.'"

Serenity found her experience peer coaching to be a learning experience worth meditating on and sharing with others. She stated,

> "In the peer coaching, we do pre- and post-conferences when we get observed by administration at the end of the year, like in the beginning of the year. But it's not something I ever did when I was mentoring and doing observations for that. But after reading the chapters in 'Peer Coaching' about that, for the last observation

that I did, I actually did a pre-conference. And I always did a post-conference, but what I really liked about it was, because I talked to them beforehand and I was able to really pinpoint what they wanted me to look for while I was in there, it just felt like I was able to give them some more focused and like descriptive feedback for like exactly what they needed."

Serenity had a lot of opportunities to mentor while she studied and practiced growing into a teacher leader. For her, some of the experiences were positive, but one of those mentees presented a challenge to Serenity. She related this story:

"I think one of the most challenging things that I've had happen recently is the new mentee that I got over spring break. He was originally assigned to another teacher, and he's on a [Performance Improvement Plan] PIP as well. And so now as like a last-ditch effort, they had a meeting on Friday before spring break, and he was told that he was going to be moving to the open position in my grade and that I would now be his mentor and that he was not going to be taken off of his PIP, that he still had some things to work on. So it's been challenging just because I think he feels so threatened. And I think he's so afraid of losing his job. And in the past he's had some resistance towards his mentors. He hasn't always done the things that they've asked him to do. And I don't know if that's just he hasn't really bought into what we do here. I'm not quite sure. So I'm still kind of like trying to like navigate with him and build a relationship, which is difficult, because I know he just feels so upset about the whole situation. And so that's kind of been what I've been going through lately."

Lucy also related peer coaching and mentoring to be positive experiences that led her to grow her leadership. However, she recalled that some of her learning happened in

the midst of closed doors and teachers not wanting help. She related that paired with the administrator's support, peer coaching and mentoring were needed skills in order for teacher leaders to meet the need of teacher growth and student achievement. Here is what she shared:

"I have another situation that's been a really negative experience just because someone wasn't as acceptable, or receptive to the information. And they just don't have that current mind-set. I think this could be a really powerful tool, but I think sometimes it needs to come, like the concept of it needs to come from the administrator, because I think it is a mind shift. I think so. I know in my school, so many people have the closed-door concept that these are my kids, this is the way I do it. And really it makes for a challenging year for them if they don't have help. Everybody needs help and some tools."

Each participant shared experiences that indicated peer coaching and mentoring had deep and lasting effect on her growth as a teacher leader. Though some experiences brought "negative" experiences, even those were counted as important to their growth into teacher leaders. These insights led to the understanding that peer coaching and mentoring is a major theme for this study in what teachers experience in growing into teacher leaders.

2.4 Aspiring Teacher Leaders Found Their Collegial Interactions Changing

Schools are organizations with an infinite amount of interactions occurring on a daily basis. Teachers will find themselves communicating in a variety of ways to a variety of stockholders, from students to parents to administration and to each other. Demands of curriculum, assessment, accountability, and professional development also cause many interactions to occur. Schools are places for human interaction on many

levels. Teachers interacting with each other is very common place within schools. Most of the participants of this study found that their interactions with their colleagues changed as they were practicing and growing their own leadership abilities within their school.

One of the first interactions to be experienced was a resistance from their peers when the participants wanted to grow their leadership by observing and mentoring their fellow teachers. Serenity shared this story of meeting the resistance to her help with mentoring:

"I think one of the most challenging things that I've had happen recently is the new mentee that I got over spring break. He was originally assigned to another teacher, and he's on a [Performance Improvement Plan] PIP as well. And so now as like a last-ditch effort, they had a meeting on Friday before spring break, and he was told that he was going to be moving to the open position in my grade and that I would now be his mentor and that he was not going to be taken off of his PIP, that he still had some things to work on. So it's been challenging just because I think he feels so threatened. And I think he's so afraid of losing his job. And in the past he's had some resistance towards his mentors. He hasn't always done the things that they've asked him to do. And I don't know if that's just he hasn't really bought into what we do here. I'm not quite sure. So I'm still kind of like trying to like navigate with him and build a relationship, which is difficult, because I know he just feels so upset about the whole situation."

Serenity experienced the resistance because of the situation she found her mentee in when she was given him to mentor. Following her rise to leadership, Liz also experienced the apprehension of her coworkers. She wrote about, "having to deal with the awkwardness and resistance to change. This change is in anything in staff, school

policy, anything that is different than what has currently been the norm. I feel like that is always a tough thing to maneuver around." And she added this to her understanding; "I guess I took that as I'm in a different role that maybe there's apprehension to that. Not necessarily the actual conversations that are being had. So, apprehension of my colleagues is something that I'm not really sure how I would deal with."

Melody experienced this resistance to her leadership practice in the form of blame. She had one colleague that she was mentoring and giving direction, and this colleague used blame on others as a reason for why she was not able to change. This blame not only went out to her coworkers but also came back on Melody. She related this from her experience:

> "She wasn't collaborating; her co-teacher wasn't working with her, etc. And, eventually when I sat down with her it was now time to blame me. It was my fault because I had something against her and it was a constant blaming of everybody else. She wouldn't take accountability for herself."

However, resistance was not the only type of collegial interaction Melody experienced. She also found that some of her coworkers embraced her practice of leadership and welcomed her into their classrooms.

Like Melody, the other participants enjoyed interactions where their coworkers welcomed them and their ideas into their rooms. In some cases, these positive interactions led not only to their mentees inviting them into their work space, but also resulted in other teachers approaching them about their work. Melody related this experience: "I reached out to one of the kindergarten teachers and she's been amazing, like letting me come in her classroom, working with her, and it kind of actually trickled

down. Because now other teachers are asking like what we're working on and what is it for. So it's kind of helped me to network with those people."

Jennie also experienced teachers coming to her as she practiced her leadership. She said this from her experience: "I told them that I'm learning in this new program, and do you mind if I come in your room? And they were completely open to it." And she found that her colleagues approached her to, "come and ask me random questions, like they think that I would have the answers." Lucy also experienced openness to her teacher leadership practice. She stated, "I've had a lot more conversations with people that they've come and like initiated the conversation."

Ruby also had a colleague come to her and seek her help based on the positive relationship she had with Ruby and the skills and knowledge Ruby was learning about teacher leadership. Ruby gave this story:

"I can't think of one person that I have negative interactions with like on a regular basis, even ever. I don't have a reason to have a negative interaction with anyone that I work with. I think maybe the one teacher; I think maybe she's a little bit less, I hate to say the word 'intimidated' because I don't think I'm an intimidating person, but she's a very reserved person, I guess, I'm not sure how to describe her. And so I think maybe the conversations that we've had she's felt a little bit more comfortable maybe asking me, even if it's like, you know, one thing. She doesn't talk very much. So just the fact that she's at least, she's come to me one time. But to me, that was a big thing, because she doesn't ever speak up positive or negative. So for to her to have come to me even just one time with that.... That made me at least feel, you know, it made me feel good. It made me feel like, you know, her, our relationship maybe had gone to another level."

Serenity saw these positive interactions to be good on the whole and welcoming to her practice. However, she experienced the need to balance her own work and the needs of her coworkers who were stopping by multiple times a day for advice and assistance. Serenity related this insight:

"I'm just trying to balance it as best I can. Because like in the beginning, you don't ever want to say no to people and you don't want someone to say, like if somebody asks me for something, I'm just inclined to like give it to them right away even if it comes at the expense of something that I need to do for my class. And that's something that I've kind of had to shift and prioritize, and say 'Nope. I need to get this done for my kids now.' I can help them with it later. So that's kind of been, and it's still, especially this year with the people that I'm mentoring have needed so much from me. It's been a balancing act all year. But I feel a little bit better now about it. I feel like I've kind of got a better idea of how to prioritize those things. And knowing too, people are going to understand because they all know that I have got a classroom too. So if I can't get them something they need right away, it's OK."

Serenity also worked on her leadership to help encourage these positive interactions but with boundaries that created space for her own work to be done as interactions with her colleagues increased. She related this experience:

"It got to the point where [my mentee] was so all-consuming that it was, I couldn't get things done that I needed to do. And so we sat down and had a talk about it. And I was like, 'You know, I give you everything that I possibly can. But I need you to understand that sometimes it's going to take a little bit for me to get back to you. It might be later on in the day. I just can't do this right away.' And

too, she knows now that if my door is closed, that means I'm working on something and I can't be bothered. Because it was, it was like literally all day long, all-consuming. So, since we talked about it, she really understood. I just don't think she understood. She's a first-year teacher, and I think she just thought that because I've been here so long that I had everything under control and I didn't need that extra time, but I do."

A final insight into the shared experience about collegial interactions came from the participants experiencing vulnerability to be a key component to their practicing their leadership as teachers. Serenity stated, "Vulnerability that helps a lot with one of the people that I am mentoring this year." Liz added, "It's the idea of being vulnerable and being on the same level as your peers, that whole idea and aspect can help me in any career or profession. That has been influential," and the, "whole idea of approaching peer coaching with vulnerability has been helpful in learning teacher leadership."

Melody saw vulnerability as sitting on the same side of the table with her peers even though she may have led them with coaching or mentoring. She said, "It is important to have open and honest discussions about certain things. I know that we have talked about sitting on the same side of the table. And it is so simple and easy, but I have never thought about it. And it is now another tool or resource I can use as a leader." Lucy added this thought from her journal, "Modeling vulnerability & openness is crucial. At the end of the day, we are all people and deserve a chance to succeed. People deserve opportunities to grow and find potential in themselves."

Liz's insights to vulnerable interactions gave her two thoughts to conclude this section. She said this about her collegial interactions and teacher leadership, "I think

being more vulnerable will make me a better educator in the classroom, being even more vulnerable to my students and my principal and my co-workers has benefits all around."

2.5 Aspiring Teacher Leaders Found Their Confidence Growing

Another theme to emerge throughout this study of teachers growing and experiencing their leadership was the idea that practicing their leadership grew their confidence in the work they were doing within their schools. Six of the seven participants identified this theme to be a major experience. All seven of the participants had something to say about growing and gaining more confidence in their learning and practice of teacher leadership. The following section displays the participants' insights and thoughts about gaining confidence while practicing teacher leadership.

Lucy, the special education teacher, did not identify this theme to be a major experience for her. However, she did have this to say about her own experience:

"The best thing about the discussions and the books and other behavior techniques and stuff is to know that that they actually work you can actually hear from other people that these work in my classroom and is not just someone saying do this or try this but it actually works. And, it is building confidence within my own classroom and in helping others."

Lucy also shared this insight about how studying teacher leadership, networking with others in the teacher leadership program, and then practicing what she was learning helped to build her own confidence as a teacher, coworker, and leader in her school. She stated,

"When we were told that we might be helping teachers and instructors that are not highly effective, it made me very nervous and uncomfortable. And I started to think about the staff at our school and we have a really tight bond within our

school amongst the staff. And it might be kind of uncomfortable or awkward if I

was to help another teacher who is minimally effective. So it is good to talk about

how we would handle different situations and what tools we would use to

confront certain issues. This has been very helpful. It has given me more

confidence in myself to be that type of a leader. I have really enjoyed the

experience. Sometimes it's challenging."

So, while Lucy may not have found her confidence building to be a major experience for

her, she did experience a boost in her confidence while growing her own leadership.

Liz said that her confidence grew not only in studying teacher leadership, but in

the practice of teacher leadership. She stated, "I am young and I didn't feel like I had the

expertise, but I am growing more confident in my role of a teacher leader." And, as the

year long program continued, Liz confirmed that her role was not formally defined as a

teacher leader but, "I am more confident in offering more suggestions when situations

come up, and maybe that is a role in itself."

Melody found that her participation in growing her teacher leadership skills and

abilities reinforced and encouraged her efforts. She said, "This program and these

experiences have reinforced my passion for being a leader and using all these different

tools and techniques to help teachers to help make the classroom better." Jennie also

found her confidence boosted and said this: "I am learning how to be a coach, gaining

strategies and learning to be confident in my practice. [I] learn to be confident and

assured in my work as I coach those who need it."

Ruby had a personal insight about actually feeling her confidence grow as proof

she was doing the right things with her leadership. For her, confidence building was

evidence that her teacher leadership abilities, knowledge, and skills were growing the

proper way. She related this insight: "I need to do it to actually feel competent. I need to see it and then I need to do it. So knowing that I can actually do it has just been, I guess that's been a little boost of confidence, I guess, to actually implement it." Ruby also noted that her confidence was not growing just because she would do the work of a teacher leader, but that her confidence built when she saw her coworkers improve their practice to engage students to learn. She shared,

> "I feel like that's the goal of this whole entire thing is just to make things run more smoothly for teachers, to, you know, improve their practice, to, you know, whether it's behavior management or actual teaching of lessons, student engagement, whatever it is. It just, it makes me feel like I'm doing what I'm supposed to be doing. I guess it, you know, it makes me I guess fulfilled, I don't know if that's a good word to use, but it makes me feel like I'm helping someone become a better teacher because none of us want to be bad teachers or do a poor job. We all want to do a good job."

Finally, Serenity gave us her insight into her own experience with confidence and how that helped to establish her role as a teacher leader within her school. She related, "I feel a lot more confident as a teacher leader. I feel like a lot of the tools that we've gotten have made me a lot more effective. And I feel like the role of a teacher leader is just really to be a support and a resource."

The building of one's confidence emerged as a major theme for the participants in this study. Their confidence grew for each of them in a different way. However, their shared experience of studying and practicing their own teacher leadership helped to grow their confidence to lead within their schools. The next section discusses how the theme of teacher leadership varied from school to school and year to year.

2.6 The Practice of Teacher Leadership Varied

The final theme to arise from this study from all the participants was the fact that teacher leadership will or may look different from school to school and even from year to year. Each teacher experienced her leadership in a variety of ways. A few of the teachers acknowledged that their situation was unique to them and their school. So while all of the participants shared the same program for teacher leadership, each one practiced and grew in some similar ways but also in different ways as dictated by their school culture and environment.

Serenity's school experienced a high turnover rate in staff a few years before the study, and only recently had the school experienced strong leadership and higher staff retention. Because of this vacuum of leadership, Serenity found that her leadership meant stepping into more formal roles and even acting as principal for a couple of days. She related this story, "it was after [the principal] left and we had all that transition in the building. We lost 75% of the staff, and some of the veteran teachers, (myself included) decided to take up the torch and become more of a school leader to take care of the things that needed to be done." Her teacher leadership experience gave her an "eye-opening" memory as she had to be "the acting principal [for] a couple of days."

Katie found that her school needed people to fill roles like school improvement chair. She found that her school needed a teacher to step into committee roles and she would do it. She said, "I became a mentor and the school improvement chair and the leadership positions from a necessity stand point. Because, I know this sounds kind of bad, but there was no one else to do it." She added, "And now it is just part of my job." Katie's school's needs dictated that she practiced her leadership in more formal roles even though her school had a steady principal to follow. Jennie found that her leadership

role helped to fill the need for someone her coworkers could approach with questions or concerns. Her leadership was been more informal. She related, "…a few teachers [would] just come and ask me random questions. I don't know if that's the role of the teacher-leader or if like I've just been there the longest in the building so they know they can come ask me."

Lucy, the special education teacher, found her role to be fluid with what was needed by her principal and coworkers. She was a mentor, a person who her coworkers would come to for help, or someone to chair child studies. She said, "I think that what I most identified with was just a need for not necessarily leadership in our school but a need to fill that void between administration and teachers and that assistance that I think is so important and is needed in our school." She experienced that she was a teacher leader her school needed in terms of, "having somebody other than an administrator, especially because they're so busy." When reflecting on the other schools' need for teacher leadership, Lucy had this final insight about her school: "[The need] varies from school year to school year, it varies from year to year. You could have really, really strong teachers come in. You could have a lot of teachers that need some assistance, could be pulled in all different directions."

Liz, the participant with the least amount of teaching experience, had several insights about this theme. Her school had not had a lot of high turnover in staff or even students. She heard the other participants share about their school and found similarities but also some differences. She shared:

> "One thing that was different was the high turnover rate mentioned. We don't, I
> don't have that or we don't really have that very much. So I can imagine that
> that's a completely different situation and your role as a teacher leader would be

different in that sense. Because uh it would, it would just be different. I mean you would be dealing with brand-new faces all the time, I guess, whereas we wouldn't at our school as much."

For her, she "filled that role" of a department head. She saw that her practice of leadership was used in this role. She stated, "So I am in this newly created role and I have [the] opportunity to make suggestions during our PLCs, leading PLCs based on what we want to talk about based on student achievement. So I see how what we are learning in the program fits with my experience at being a department head." She also gave this insight about how she saw her teacher leadership in her school. She said, "being a teacher leader is a little bit different than being in administration in that you're sort of that middle person between the other teachers in your building and administration." Finally, Liz noted her experience and learning was unique to her school as compare to what the other study participants experienced in their own unique teacher leadership roles. She gave this final insight about teacher leadership:

> "Well, there's no, every situation is different, just, you know, just like life. Every situation's different, and so, you know, you could give someone some advice that you think is awesome, but it just depends on how they take it or how you approach it. I mean there are so many factors that play into it."

Chapter V Summary

This chapter covered the 11 themes as extracted from interviews and journals of the seven teacher leader participants for this study. Overall, teacher leaders experienced similar growth and learning as they studied and practiced teacher leadership while enrolled in a program. In general, they desired to learn more about themselves and about teacher leadership. They also found that their school needs dictated what kind of teacher

leadership they practiced and how they practiced it within their school. They experienced that what they learned was useful and translated well into their practice. Networking, peer coaching/mentoring, and collegial interactions all influenced their growth and experiences of becoming teacher leaders. The practice of teacher leadership brought about a growth of personal confidence in the participants' learning, practice, and work as educators. However, even though the participants experienced similar stories, they also found that teacher leadership may vary from school to school and even year to year to meet the needs of their communities.

The final chapter discusses the findings of this study in terms of answering the two research questions. It will also present future research recommendations due to the limitations, delimitations, and findings of the study. Finally, chapter six will discuss implications this study has for schools and institutions desiring to grow teacher leadership within their communities.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter offers the results of this phenomenology as directly related to the two research questions presented in Chapter One. The results were examined as they pertained to the conceptual framework, the literature review from Chapter Two, and the findings from Chapter Five. Chapter Six concludes with research implications and connections to previous research, recommendations for further study, and a summary conclusion.

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to examine the lived experience of teachers who, while enrolled in a teacher leadership training program, focused upon growing their own teacher leadership. The overall goal of this study was to examine the essence of an individual's actual experience in growing her own teacher leadership knowledge and practice. In this process, the study examined the progress of seven teachers, from different charter schools, who had experienced these phenomena of growing into teacher leaders within their own school. Data was collected through three means: (a) an in-depth interview near the beginning of their course of study, (b) artifact gathering in terms of the researcher analyzing the journals used during their teacher leadership training experience, and (c) a final in-depth interview towards the end of their teacher leadership program experience.

A focus group interview was also conducted at the end of the leadership training experience. This focus group interview was not a constructivist tool to gain new knowledge of their experiences. This focus group was constructionist in nature to see what individual experienced themes connected with the larger group. This focus group was used solely for member checking purposes to ensure accuracy of experienced

themes. Coding schemes were used for content analysis based upon framework stemming from an extensive literature review that identified two primary categories for research as: (a) the studying of teacher leadership and (b) the practice of teacher leadership. Both were experienced through the dispositions and insights of the study participants.

Results of Research Questions

This section presents a summary and discussion of the findings as they directly relate to the three research questions. The structure of the data collection was purposeful in the fact that both in-depth interviews given at the beginning and near the end of the study asked questions to find evidence to answer both research questions. The journals were also analyzed to answer both research questions as the participants moved through and identified their growth into/as teacher leaders. Both of these interviews and journal analysis are supported in the focus group discussion and member checking which occurred at the end of the study.

Research Question #1

Research question one is as follows: How do charter school teachers, enrolled in a professional teacher leadership development program, experience and interpret their evolution as a teacher leader (i.e. the becoming a teacher leader) as they gain knowledge, skills, dispositions, and insights via the learning by studying (the training)?

Several themes combined to answer this question. First, the participants found that their desire to learn more about teacher leadership led them to study. Their school needs and their current positions within their schools also led them to increase their own study of teacher leadership. Second, all of the participants found that the books and resources read and analyzed during their growth into teacher leadership helped them to

identify their own leadership abilities and areas of growth. Finally, participants agreed that they found their studying of teacher leadership to translate into their practice of teacher leadership. The following section will discuss the answers to research question one.

This phenomenological study began after these participants enrolled into the program. They had met at least three times and were already working on their book work and practicing some of the leadership work. By the time the participants had answered the first interview question, they were already reflecting on their studying and practice. It is in this reflection that all of the participants realized that their evolution into teacher leaders through studying began with their internal drive to learn more about teacher leadership. For many of these teachers, this was the next step in their journey of being a teacher. Jennie explained,

> "I guess I have always wanted to be a teacher. I grew up playing teacher in the
> basement and taking home extra assignments from school and playing with my
> chalkboard and everything. That was the path I was going on. I have always had
> friends and colleagues inside and outside of school come to me for advice or vent.
> This is my seventh year of teaching and the last three years I have been a mentor
> so I thought becoming a teacher leader was the next step on the path, my
> journey."

School needs also led to many of the teachers enrolling and studying teacher leadership. For these participants, the needs of their school framed what they studied about teacher leadership. Katie related this example from her experience, "I think that what I most identified with was just a need for not necessarily leadership in our school but a need to fill that void between administration and teachers and that assistance that I

think is so important and is needed in our school." Understanding her own school's need for a middle man to help lead allowed her to evolve into the leader she felt her school needed.

A second facilitating factor in how teachers experienced their evolution into teacher leaders was the resources they were given to study. All of this study's participants found the resources to help them grow and define their own teacher leadership. These resources showed to be very important in the evolution of their own teacher leadership. For Lucy, she found resources to benefit in her work in multiple areas. She said,

> "The best thing about on the discussions and the books and other behavior techniques and stuff is to know that that they actually work you can actually hear from other people that these work in my classroom and is not just someone saying 'do this' or 'try this' but it actually works. And, it is building confidence within my own classroom and in helping others. It's really helpful have other teachers seen that it works and that is applicable and to have actually that visual there for them to see that it does work."

Serenity also agreed that the resources she was given helped her growth into the teacher leader she is today. She said,

> "The reading materials we have used, I have used a lot with both of them. I made copies of parts of the book for them and the other person went and bought it for herself and devoured it over the break. So that has been really helpful in helping them because they need so much help."

These charter school teachers found that their evolution into teacher leaders by gaining knowledge, skills, dispositions, and insights through studying translated well into

their practice. Their studying informed their practice. Katie gave this quote about how her study led to her helping others with an issue in her school. She related,

> "…trying to figure out what kind of strategy you could offer. So when I talked to my mentees...I only have one now, one of them quit. But when I talked to my remaining mentee recently, she had an issue with her students not remembering. And I just, well rather than just be like, 'All right, keep practicing,' I have that book. And just like a lot of strategies in there had to fall back on and as we just put it together, came up with a couple of simple things that she could to do to try to help."

In summary, research question one asked how teacher leaders experience and interpret their evolution into teacher leaders by studying or "training" of teacher leadership. In answer to this question, the evidence suggests that teachers themselves desired to study teacher leadership for themselves and this was the impetus for their evolution into teacher leaders. Their school needs also played a big role in their growth of leadership responsibilities and the type of leader they needed to become for their school. The evidence also shows that resources played an important role in being the foundation for what the participants studied as they formalized their leadership qualities. Finally, studying teacher leadership gave participants insights that their own leadership, knowledge, and skills transferred easily into practice in their schools.

Research Question #2

Research question two is as follows: How do such teachers, enrolled in a professional teacher leadership development program, experience and interpret their evolution as a teacher leader (i.e. the becoming a teacher leader) as they gain knowledge,

skills, dispositions, and insights via the learning by doing (the application of the training) provided by the teacher leader development program?

Several themes combined to answer this question. First, the participants found that their peer interactions changed as they grew their leadership. Networking with other teacher leaders helped to formalize their own understanding and practice. Peer coaching and mentoring of peers practiced by the participants also shaped their own growth into leaders. Second, insights from the participants showed that as they practiced their leadership, they needed clarity and direction from their school leaders on how and when to practice their leadership. Third, participants found their practice of teacher leadership led to building their confidence as teachers and leaders within their school. Finally, participants agreed that teacher leadership duties and roles will vary from school to school and even yearly as the school community needs may dictate their formal practice of teacher leadership. The following section will discuss the answers to research question two.

As the participants began their study, many realized that they needed to network to learn about and grow their leadership. Melody not only found networking to be crucial to her study of the teacher leader, but it became the most important aspect for her. She noted, "I would say networking, having that connection, having somebody has my back, or knowing who to turn to for resources is the most important aspect for me." She added, "I've gained a lot from networking and hearing other people's stories." Networking along with reading about teacher leadership became vital for participants to grow their leadership. Mentoring also allowed these participants to practice teacher leadership. Katie said, "I am currently mentoring two first year teachers, and I think that the whole idea of learning by doing, is being a teacher leader in that respect." Both networking and

mentoring teachers allowed for the participants to practice "doing" teacher leadership and learning from their practice. All the while, each participant noticed that her practice of teacher leadership led to changes in her interactions with their colleagues and peers, but each participant found these two types of experiences important to her growth as a teacher leader.

Another way that teachers experienced their growth into teacher leaders through practice was to acknowledge their need for their school leaders to understand their role as a teacher leader and give them a clear picture as to what their duties were to be in their school. Lucy gave this insight,

"How is this all going to work? How is this going to apply to what I'm going to be doing? How's all the learning going to be put together?" I have discussions with other teachers in the school they really don't understand what instructional coaches or a teacher leader is and maybe even school leaders don't fully understand what that is. So I wonder if everybody knows what this is all about. I try to explain or show the textbooks or to try to explain the conversations we've had. That would be the one thing is how to apply everything there were learning so that everybody is aware of what's going on in and the purpose of the teacher leader or instructional coach and then to take it back to the school."

While Melody's school leader opened up a lot of opportunities for her to practice and learn, she said, "Here at my school, my school leader has been nothing but gracious and helpful to me." In both stories, it is important to note that the role of clarity and support from a school leader can provide for growing teacher leaders.

Practicing teacher leadership also led to participants becoming more confident in their own abilities as teachers and leaders. Ruby gave one example of how her practice of teacher leadership built her confidence. She related,

"We have a kindergarten teacher whose classroom is next to mine and I hear a lot of noise on a daily basis and not a productive noise. And when I was in her room, I saw a lot contributing factors to the unnecessary noise. I was in there for maybe 20 minutes to see what went on in there. I gave her one or two suggestions. It was a large group math lesson and the kids were all over the place. One of my suggestions to her was to give the students an assigned seat while they were on the carpet. I also gave her some feedback about attention getters too. A day or two later she was using those suggestions and I notice that the students were at least a little more controlled. And seeing some of my suggestions working became really rewarding for me."

Ruby also said,

"I feel a little more confident in knowing what to look for, what to look for that I would be able to give suggestions or give feedback regarding it. I feel a little bit, like I know a little bit more about that. Whereas before I feel you're kind of looking, I mean you are looking at everything even as a teacher leader, but there's more specific things or things you know that you can help with and have suggestions to again make their life easier, make their classroom run more smoothly, make sure that they know the students are learning."

This study's participants grew in confidence as they practiced different skills and roles within teacher leadership.

Finally, the participants experienced that their role or skills as a teacher leader would change from year to year or from school to school. The degree of differences in

each person's experience was based on many different factors from their type of school, type of school leadership, experience of colleagues, tenure of colleagues, and even the school based needs, from student achievement, to enrollment, to transiency. All of these factors and many more gave understanding to the participants that teacher leadership may vary greatly from school to school and year to year even though some of the skills, knowledge, and functions of a teacher leader may stay consistent with her learning. Liz talked about her experience growing into a teacher leader. She said this:

"Well, there's no, every situation is different, just, you know, just like life. Every situation's different, and so, you know, you could give someone some advice that you think is awesome, but it just depends on how they take it or how you approach it. I mean there are so many factors that play into it."

For her and as with other participants, she realized that her practice of teacher leadership was different than her colleagues and could be different the next school year. This understanding could have led Liz and the study participants to be flexible in their leadership roles, skills, and actions in the future.

In summary, research question two asked how do teacher leaders experience and interpret their evolution into teacher leaders by practicing or "doing" teacher leadership. To answer this question, the evidence suggests that networking and peer interactions like coaching or mentoring are valuable experiences and tools to grow teacher leaders, especially as collegial interactions may change as one peer teacher grows her formal or informal leadership abilities. The evidence also shows that school leadership support and clarity is vital in order for teachers to evolve into teacher leaders. Practicing teacher leadership skills, roles, and functions leads teacher leaders to grow their own confidence in themselves as both teachers and leaders. Throughout this study, this confidence aided

in their evolution into teacher leaders. Finally, practicing teacher leadership gave participants insights that their leadership might be practiced or displayed differently from year to year and/or from school to school.

Interpretation of Findings

Using the findings from Chapter Five, the researcher combined all emerging and strong themes from the entire study and added them to the conceptual framework (see Figure 5). This illustration highlights how teachers experience their evolution into leaders by studying and practicing teacher leadership. The conceptual framework along with the theme "badges" combined gives a picture of how this study analyzed the lived experience of participants and the phenomena of teachers growing into teacher leaders.

The first note to observe is that another component was added to the overall framework. This component is a part of the "doing" portion of the framework. A major idea that emerged in the experiences of participants is that their school's needs helped to determine what type of leadership they practiced. Each school was different enough in structure and need that it altered the type of experience each participant had in practicing her leadership. The school community helped to focus and define the conceptualization of the roles and functions each participant would practice and therefore informed the "learning by doing" for each participant. Like falling dominoes, this change to the framework illustrates how one piece of the framework can change, revise, or differentiate how the other pieces of the framework inform the experience of the developing teacher leader.

A second note to Figure 7 is that, the major theme 2.5 is connected to the teacher leader specifically. While each component of the framework may and can work to increase the confidence of the teacher leader, in this study, it was the practice of

leadership that led to the building of confidence within the teacher leader. The other themes are connected to elements of the framework where the researcher felt they fit best even though some of them could connect to other elements at the same time or different times depending upon the experience of the phenomena. In this framework, the themes are connected to where they fit for the majority of the participants and their experiences.
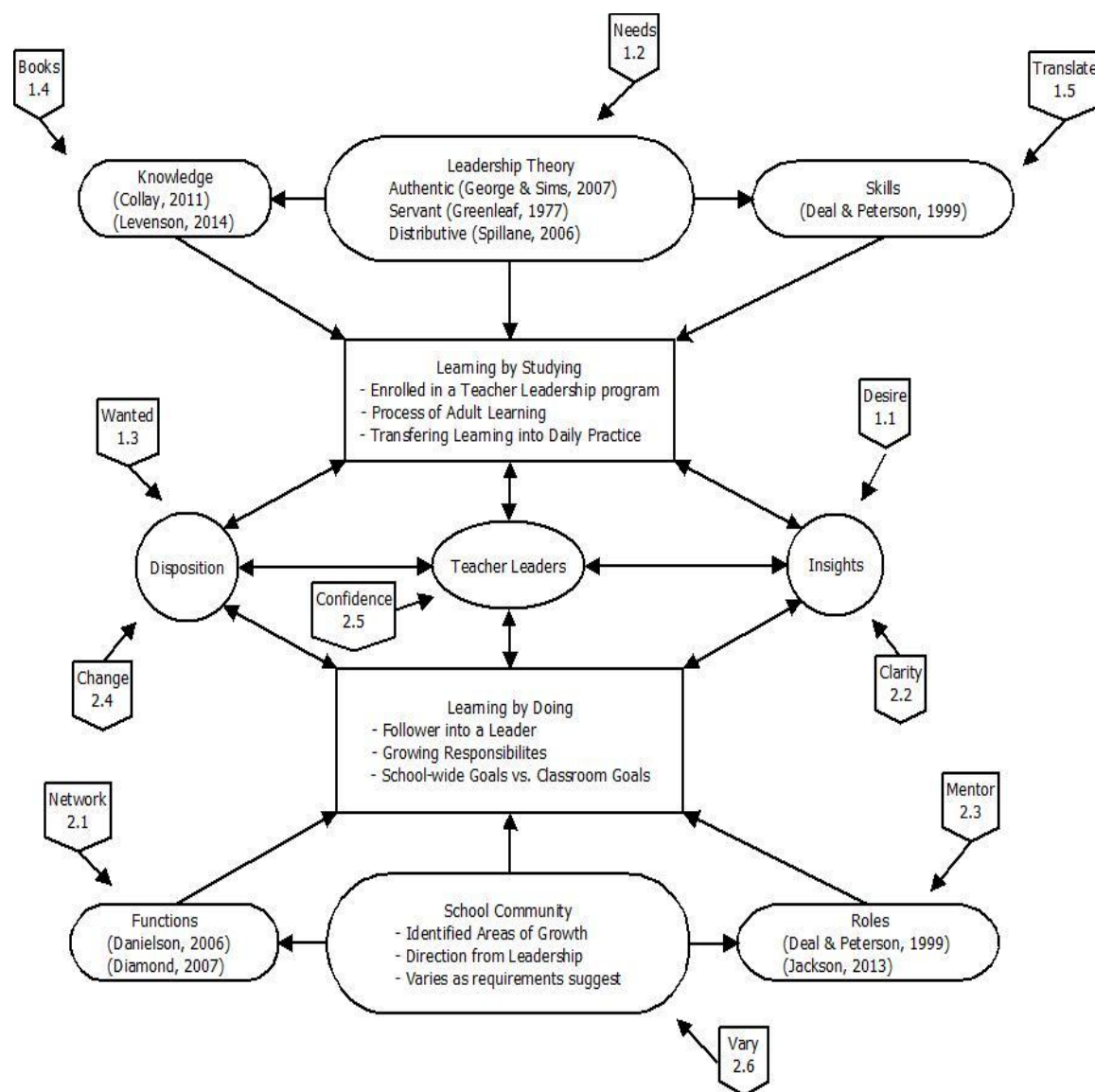
Figure 7. Conceptual Framework with Major Themes

One other picture to emerge from this study was that of how the teachers experienced their growing into teacher leaders. Chapter Four helped to introduce each of

the participants in this study. As a part of her work with the teacher leadership program (studying and doing), each participant went through four phases of leadership interaction. Phase one consisted of entry into teacher leadership. Phase two was early learning and doing. Phase three was adjustments to learning and doing. Phase four was future planning. Figure 8 displays the way the participants interacted with their growth into teacher leadership.
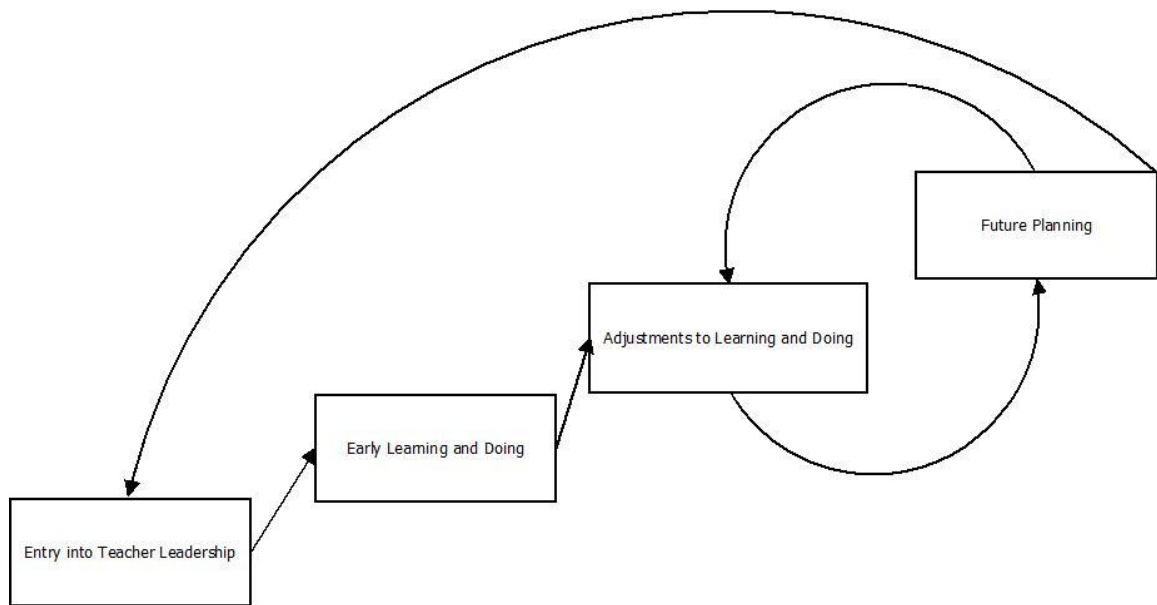
Figure 8. Phases of Teacher Leadership Development

As one can see, the participant began her growth into teacher leadership as step one. Entry into teacher leadership came in various ways (i. e. principal request, personal desire, school needs, etc.). From there, the participant moved into early learning and doing. As they learned, participants used reflection and trial and error to then move into phase three, which was making adjustments to their learning and doing. Refinement of their learning and doing led the participants into the final phase of future planning. In this phase, the participants had implemented their leadership practice and begun future planning for their work as a teacher leader. As this occurred, factors may have arisen

where the participant then made further adjustments to their skills and abilities to fill their roles and functions. Some teacher leaders may move into other newly defined or created roles both formal and informal, and this may lead them back into phase one where they learn anew the knowledge and skills needed for the new role or function. The whole process is cyclical. The participant moves through each phase as needed or directed by her environment, personal desires, or other factors that lend themselves to the need and use of teacher leaders within her school.

Connection to Previous Research

The following section will examine my findings and elements of this conceptual framework about teachers experiencing their evolution into teacher leaders with previous research under consideration. As a reminder, the purpose of my qualitative study was to describe how charter school teachers interpreted their own growth into teacher leaders by studying and practicing what teacher leadership is all about within their schools. The findings and outcomes should not be generalized for all teacher leaders or even for all charter or traditional public schools. However, the goal is that the findings will add to the body of literature pertaining to teacher leadership, specifically as related to how teachers experience their own leadership. These findings can also provide information for institutions (i. e. school districts, charter school management companies, local colleges, universities, etc.) in terms of how they can better support teachers developing into leaders.

In Table 5 and Table 6, serving as another interpretation of the findings in relationship to Figure 8, are eleven key findings that emerged from this study's data collection. The key findings of this study and the findings from the previous research

combine to show that some of the findings confirm previous research, and the rest of the

new findings can be added to the current teacher leadership literature base.

Table 5

Comparison of Carter (2017) Key Findings to Previous Research

Carter (2017)	Previous Research
1) Teachers enrolled into teacher leadership programs because they desired to learn about and practice leadership.	Barton (2011) and Fairman and Mackenzie (2015) confirm that desire plays a significant role in growing teacher leaders.
2) School needs led teachers to begin to study and practice teacher leadership.	Confirms findings from Margolis (2005) and Carpenter and Sherretz (2012). These studies illustrated that teacher leadership is incorporated into schools because of the schools' need.
3) Teachers were already in some type of leadership role within their school and wanted to expand their roles.	Camburn, Kimball, and Lowenhaupt (2008) confirm that teachers are drawn to leadership roles and act in various roles within their school.
4) Teacher leaders found the need for clarity and support from school leadership in their practice.	Stoelinga (2008) and Calik (2012) both confirm that teacher leaders need the support and clarity from school leadership.
5) Teacher leaders found their leadership to be practiced in the forms of mentorship and peer coaching.	Stoelinga and Mangin (2008) confirm that teacher leaders function as in-school mentors and peer coaches.
6) Teacher leaders experienced their roles and functions to vary depending on their school or even the year.	Wei, Patel, and Young (2014) and Cooper et al (2016) confirm that TL roles and functions vary in every school.

What emerged from this study was both new findings and other findings that

confirm some of the established research on teacher leaders(hip). Of these eleven

findings, six of them confirmed other research (Table 5) while five of them were new

findings (Table 6). While some of these new findings may have helped to confirm other

studies, it is important to note that these findings were new to the literature in the fact

they came from the teachers' perspectives as they experienced their own growth into

teacher leaders. For instance, research may show that it is vital for leaders to use

networking to improve their organization or professional strengths. But this study

showed that networking was vital to growing teacher leaders and was seen by them to be

an important support system as they experienced their own growth into teacher leaders.

Table 6

Carter (2017) New Findings

Carter (2017)	Previous Research
1) Teacher leaders experienced their resources (i.e. books) for studying to be vital for their growth.	No previous research found; thus, Carter (2017) is a new finding.
2) Teacher leaders found that what they studied translated easily into their practice.	No previous research found; thus, Carter (2017) is a new finding.
3) Teacher leaders found networking to be a vital support.	No previous research found; thus, Carter (2017) is a new finding.
4) Teacher leaders experienced their interactions with their coworkers change.	No previous research found; thus, Carter (2017) is a new finding.
5) Teacher leaders experienced their confidence growing as they practiced their leadership.	No previous research found; thus, Carter (2017) is a new finding.

First, the section will discuss the findings that confirm previous research. There

is much literature that discusses the teacher's desire to improve upon her own

professional work including leadership abilities and knowledge. George and Sims

(2007), Barton (2011), and Fairman and Mackenzie (2015) and others report that teacher

leaders are internally and externally motivated to learn and grow as they are needed in

their school. School needs determine the purpose of teacher leaders. This study and

previous research [Margolis (2005), Carpenter and Sherretz (2012)] agreed that the school environment, as well as expectations for high achievement, drives teachers to grow into teacher leaders. These needs vary based on the school and therefore catalyze the practice of teacher leadership, too as Wei, Patel, and Young (2014) and Cooper et al (2016), and now Carter (2017) report.

These teacher leaders found that they were in some sort of role already, before enrolling into the teacher leadership program, whether it was PLC chair or grade level captain or acting assistant principal. Danielson (2006) and Camburn, Kimball, and Lowenhaupt (2008) confirm those findings as they report that teachers serving in a variety of leadership roles exert peer-to-peer influence to support their school. This study also found that teacher leaders experienced the need for school leader support and clarity in order for them to practice their leadership within their schools. Stoelinga (2008) and Calik (2012) describe this finding within their own research stating the importance for principals to make opportunities for teachers to lead as well as give direction in the areas of work. Finally, the last finding confirming previous research is that teacher leaders experienced their practice of leadership to be in the form of mentoring or peer coaching their coworkers. Stoelinga and Mangin (2008) previously discussed the fact that teacher leaders function as in-school experts who mentor or coach their peers. This study confirms their earlier work.

As for the new findings, this study determined that the participants found their books and other resources that allowed participants to study teacher leadership to be useful. Participants' knowledge and understanding through using the books and other resources helped them to grow their own leadership. While other studies about teacher leadership inform the literature about the importance of training teacher leaders, this

study found that teacher leaders greatly relied on the resources given to them during their learning and that these sources greatly impacted their practice of teacher leadership. Adding to this finding, this study also showed how the right resources and "study" of teacher leadership helped the translation of the knowledge and skills manifests into the actual practice of doing teacher leadership responsibilities and roles. From the participants' disposition, experiencing teacher leadership and implementing their leadership was greatly affected by the resources they were given which relayed into their practice of leadership.

While Beachum and Dell (2003) reported that school structures needed to be in place to support and encourage teacher leadership, and they demonstrated that networking could be one of those structures in place, they did not specifically say that networking was essential to growing and supporting teacher leaders. Other studies may offer similar insights into support systems for teacher leaders to use to practice and experience their leadership. In contrast, this study expressly showed that networking was vital for newly minted teacher leaders to have so that they could reflect, share, and receive feedback on the new work they were learning and implementing.

Interaction amongst teachers is vital to the support of student achievement and school culture. Many studies discuss the importance of school teachers not remaining islands in their classrooms but instead connecting with others. Interactions occur all the time between teachers within schools. This study found that teachers experienced their own collegial interactions changing as they took on more leadership roles and functions. While this may be a simplified way of stating the obvious, no other studies report that teachers will experience their collegial interactions to change. This study showed the interactions to be both positive and negative depending on the circumstance.

The last new finding from this study found that teachers growing their own leadership gained confidence. This confidence did not only affect their leadership practice, but it also boosted their confidence as classroom teachers. Other studies on teacher leadership may reference the need for TLs or the effect on student achievement, but no other study has found that confidence building is a major asset for those who are growing into TLs. These findings helped to inform the next section which will discuss the recommendations for school institutions, principals, programming and further research.

Recommendations for Future Practice

Findings from this study can help inform school districts, schools, or higher institutions that want to or currently have programming to grow teacher leaders formally or informally. As the research shows, each school context will vary in degrees based upon their need for teacher leaders. However, there are some recommendations that may work in each context (i. e. charter or traditional public schools, urban, rural, suburban, large or small populations, etc.). The following section will discussion recommendations for school districts, schools, or higher education institutions.

For school districts, one of the first recommendations is to know your schools, their strengths, and their areas of need. Understanding the needs of each school will allow for districts to build programming suited to fit those needs (i. e. peer coaching or leading professional development). In the effort to understand the needs and then create programming to grow teacher leaders, school districts will want to find the appropriate resources such as books and tablets, to help teachers study and practice their leadership. Districts will also want to create networking patterns for support for their developing leaders to use for understanding. These networks can be district wide and should offer

connections both within and outside of the school. School districts will want to have opportunities available for teachers to practice their leadership through mentorship or peer coaching as they are available. Finally, knowing teachers' collegial interactions will evolve, school districts may want to prepare teachers for identifying and using their interactions to make effective change, but buffer that change for positive effects.

Schools, or more precisely school leaders, will find that those within their schools who already have some sort of leadership role may be looking to develop their leadership abilities. Identifying potential leaders is a must, and it is recommended that school leaders look for those who display a desire to learn more about their profession and those who may already be informally leading in some regards. For schools that are growing teacher leaders, it is recommended that principals be clear in their directions and give support where the teachers may need it (i. e. conversations, setting up the mentor relationship, etc.). It is also recommended that principals encourage the networking with other teacher leaders to help improve practice. Finally, it is recommended that school principals help to build the confidence of their growing TLs by recognizing and expressly pointing out the work the TLs are doing within their school.

For higher institutions, it is recommended that this study be used for planning and programming of any teacher leadership course or program. Higher institutions are able to connect the teacher with studying and her practice. Higher institutions can offer practical resources to emerging teacher leaders and help schools and school districts to network and build supports for growing teacher leadership. Finally, it is recommended that higher institutions help teacher leaders, schools, and school districts understand the importance of flexible teacher leader training as the needs of the school or individuals will differ from school to school and year to year. Higher institutions can help guide educational

programs to grow teacher leaders and support them as they develop by giving current resources, guidelines, and supporting programs.

Future Research Recommendations

Arthur Schopenhauer (2011), a German philosopher in the early 1800's, wrote, "Transcendental knowledge is that which, going beyond the boundary of possible experience, endeavours to determine the nature of things as they are in themselves; while immanent knowledge keeps itself within the boundary of possible experience, therefore it can only apply to phenomena. (Loc. 1331). This phenomenological study developed immanent knowledge about how teachers from charter schools experienced their growth into teacher leaders. Eleven major themes, two of them emerging, arose from the participants' lived experience over a school year while they were enrolled in a teacher leader training program. The hope of this study was to fill a hole within the literature in regards to teacher leadership. This section discusses the recommendations for future research to build a transcendental knowledge such as Schopenhaur described many years ago.

This first recommendation would be to replicate this study with other aspiring teacher leader groups. This study focused in on seven female charter school teachers. Other studies should possibly have mixed gender and ethnic groupings as well as more participants. It is recommended that a study of teacher leaders be expanded into other forms of studies (i.e. case study, quantitative study, etc.) to triangulate this study and its findings with others, and to give light to both how teacher leaders experience their growth and how to better support their growth. Replicating this study and adding similar studies will broaden and deepen the current literature and knowledge about teacher leadership. This knowledge will lead to a better understanding of what, how, and why

teacher leadership improves schools. If the goal of education is to help children achieve academically, and teacher leadership helps school culture and student achievement, then more studies about how teacher leadership is developed are needed. And, different types of studies on teacher leadership are needed to fill the holes in the literature.

A second recommendation for future research is to dig deeper into two of the emergent themes. The first theme that requires a further inquiry would be that of networking. This theme emerged as an experience that every participant had even though not all considered it a major experience for them. The interviews and analysis of that data showed a positive effect that networking had on the participants. It would be beneficial to study and identify why and what types of networking help teachers explore leadership study and practice. Exploring networking, including social networking, with teacher leaders could shine light on areas that support teacher work and increase productivity, confidence, achievement, and cultures of K-12 schools.

The second theme that begs further exploration would be what school needs are driving the push for teacher leadership. If the expectations on public schools are great, and school leadership is one of the main factors for school success, then one should study the needs of schools that lead to growing teacher leaders. There is much within the literature illustrating why schools need leadership and for teachers to grow into leadership. But, as this study showed, each school context is different and may even change from year to year. If studies were to be longitudinal or larger in scope, data could be analyzed regarding what main areas of school needs are being addressed or need to be addressed. Having this knowledge could help districts, schools, or higher institutions to create programming for growing teacher leaders in order to meet those needs that may

change from year to year. It is a work that needs to be considered in order to support schools, educators, and students to meet high stakes expectations of today's world.

The final recommendation of this study is to study teacher leader programs. This study focused on the lived experience of teachers growing into teacher leaders through study and practice. All of the participants were enrolled in a specific teacher leadership program for a school year. While that program was mentioned in this study, it was not studied. An area for further study would be finding and studying the effects of another teacher leadership programs upon teachers, schools, students, etc. This is an area of interest from this study. While there is some literature that looks at different pathways to teacher leadership, it would valuable to the education community to study the impact of programs that grow and train teacher leaders. There are few studies that display findings from teacher leader institutes and programs. Overall, there are some rich areas of experience, data, and research to explore in the area of teacher leadership development.

Final Conclusion

This phenomenological study examined the actual, lived experience of teachers who studied and practiced leadership to become teacher leaders. By exploring the experiences of teachers becoming teacher leaders, this study sheds some light on ways in which teachers draw upon their study and practice of teacher leadership. This study focused on seven participants and their experiences, insights, and dispositions while growing their leadership to serve their communities by leading.

To explore these issues, a conceptual framework was created based upon an extensive literature review process. Two main areas emerged which guided this study; they were: (a) the study of teacher leadership, and (b) the practice of teacher leadership.

Several factors were identified in each category, providing a coding scheme with which

to analyze and sort data collected through (a) in-depth interviews, (b) journal analysis,

and (c) a final member-checking focus group interview. Two ninety-minute interviews

were scheduled with seven teachers enrolled in a specific year-long teacher leadership

program. Direct quotes from participant narratives were used to demonstrate key

findings. The frequency of mentioned ideas and concepts was used to identify major

themes, as were the focus group interviews used to member check their experiences.

Journals were used to support the data, and storytelling was used to demonstrate and flesh

out the concluding results.

Because the purpose of this research was exploratory and descriptive in nature,

results cannot be generalized due to the limited size and geographic scope of the sample

group. With that said, the findings of this study suggest there are eleven factors that

influence teachers becoming teacher leaders. The major themes for the studying of

teacher leadership were: (a) teachers became teacher leaders because they had an internal

desire to do so, (b) school needs drove teachers to explore their leadership capabilities,

(c) those who began to study teacher leadership were already in or on wanted to be in a

leadership role, (d) books and other resources were vital to studying teacher leadership,

and (e) the studying of teacher leadership led to an easy transition to practicing teacher

leadership.

The significant themes of practicing teacher leadership for this study are: (a)

networking is vital in helping teachers practice their leadership, (b) novice teacher leaders

needed school leader support and clarity in order to practice their leadership, (c) teacher

leaders practiced their leadership by mentoring and peer coaching, (d) collegial

interactions changed as teachers practiced their leadership within their schools, (e) novice

teachers experienced their confidence growing as they practiced their leadership, and (f) teacher leadership roles and functions may vary from school to school and year to year. Overall, there were several findings for this study in regards to these themes individually, as well as for their inter-relatedness to universal teacher leadership development.

The exploration of how teachers experience their own leadership is still relatively small within the broader understanding of teacher leadership as a whole. There is still a need for relevant and useful contributions to this field, especially in the ever changing world of organized education. This qualitative study contributes to the growing literature of this important social science and offers additional data for understanding the factors that lead to teachers becoming leaders and how they are inter-related.

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Appendix A

Participant Recruitment Email

Recruitment Email

[Date]

Dear Teacher Leader Colleague,

My name is Alan Carter, and I am the Assistant Headmaster of Creative Montessori Academy, a K-8 school. I am also completing my Ph.D. studies in Educational Leadership at Western Michigan University and would like to invite you to participate in a research project that I think will benefit all teacher leaders and the programs that develop them. The purpose of this study is to give voice to teacher leaders about their own personal experience becoming teacher leaders. This research project is part of the requirements for the doctoral degree program in Educational Leadership at Western Michigan University, in which I am a student.

Participants in this study will be asked to complete two one-on-one, confidential, 60 minute interviews with the researcher. The interview will take place in a comfortable and confidential setting of your choice, or by phone. After each interview, you will be asked to review a transcript of the interview to add or expand upon what you said if you wish to do that. Both the audio recording and transcript of the interview will use a participant number and code name and any potentially identifying information about you and your school will be redacted. Only the researchers will know the names and schools of actual participants.

You will also be asked to share your journals that you have, and are creating for, the entire leadership development class. These will be analyzed for concepts and themes in regarding your experiences developing into a teacher leader. I will also want to meet with you and two or three other participants for a one time focus group discussion sometime during your time enrolled in this program.

If you are interested in learning more about participating in this research study, please review the attached participant consent form. Should you have questions or need more information about this study, please contact me by email at (alan.l.carter@wmich.edu) or by phone at (734-308-4829).

After reviewing the consent form, if you are interested in participating in this research study, please sign the consent form and return to me via email.

If more than 10 teachers are interested in participating a sampling technique will be used. Thank you for your consideration of this request to be a part of an important study. I would appreciate a response to this email, so I know that you have received it during this school year.

Sincerely,
Alan Carter

Appendix B

Demographic Questionnaire

Demographic Questionnaire

Name:

Ethnicity:

Gender:

Number of years teaching:

Number of years in your current assignment:

Grade levels of your school:

Current student enrollment:

Location of school: Urban   Rural   Suburban

Previous Grades taught:

Previous Subjects taught:

Current grade/subject taught:

Highest degree achieved:

Please return via email to alan.l.carter@wmich.edu

Thank you.

Appendix C

Participant Consent

Participant Consent

Western Michigan University
Department of Educational Leadership, Research, and Technology

Principal Investigator: Dr. Jianping Shen
Student Investigator: Alan Carter
Title of Study: *From Following to Leading: Experiencing the Phenomena*
of Becoming a Teacher Leader

You have been invited to participate in a research project titled, " *From Following to Leading: Experiencing the Phenomena of Becoming a Teacher Leader."* This project will serve as Alan Carter's research project for the requirements of obtaining a Doctor of Philosophy. This consent document will explain the purpose of this research project and will go over all of the time commitments, the procedures used in the study, and the risks and benefits of participating in this research project. Please read this consent form carefully and completely and please ask any questions if you need more clarification.

What are we trying to find out in this study?
This qualitative study examines charter school teachers, enrolled in a teacher leadership development program, as they experience their own leadership development and early practice of their leadership.

Who can participate in this study?
You can participate in this study if you enrolled in the teacher leadership development program provided by Choice/MI Choice Schools. We are not conducting an evaluation of the program; rather we are interested in how you are experiencing the shift to from a classroom teacher into a teacher leader within your school.

Where will this study take place?
The interviews for this study will take place at a location that is convenient for you and also private, safe and comfortable for both you and the researcher.

What is the time commitment for participating in this study?
Your total time commitment to the study will be approximately 4 hours over a three month period. This will involve two 60 minute interviews, a 60 minute focus group discussion with you and two to three other participants, and an opportunity to review the transcript of your interview and clarify the transcript which may take an additional 30-60 additional minutes.

What will you be asked to do if you choose to participate in this study?
If you agree to participate, you will be asked to participate in two 60 minute in-depth interviews with the researcher. During the interview you will be asked a series of questions related to your experience with their teacher leadership processes. The interview will be audiotaped and later transcribed. You will receive a copy of the

transcript with an invitation to review and add to it if you want to clarify anything you said in the interview or add more information.

You will also be requested to sit for a focus group where 3-4 participants discuss their experiences becoming teacher leaders. This conversation will also be audiotaped and later transcribed. You will receive a copy of the transcript with an invitation to review and add to it if you want to clarify anything you said in the interview or add more information.

Also, you will be required to share with the researcher your journals for review analysis. The journals will be copied and returned to you promptly. I will be looking at the entire journal for entries from the whole program length. The journals will be copied and returned to you in a short period of time.

What information is being measured during the study?
The interview will contain a few demographic questions to assist the researcher in profiling the participants of study. This information will not include your name or other identifying information that could be attributed back to you. The focus of the interview will be a conversation about your experience developing your leadership practices as a teacher while enrolled in a teacher leadership development program. You will be asked to describe your experiences and the meaning those experiences hold for you. Your descriptions will be compared with those of other study participants to identify common themes and/or ways in which principal's experiences differ from one another.

What are the risks of participating in this study and how will these risks be minimized?
There are no known risks for your participation in this study; however, the topic may stimulate emotional responses for some participants. If this occurs, the researcher may pause or stop the interview if you appear to be in a state of emotional distress. You may also choose to stop the interview if he/she feels emotionally overwhelmed.

What are the benefits of participating in this study?
There are no known immediate benefits to participants for involvement in this study; however, you may experience some emotional benefit from being afforded an opportunity to express your personal experience teacher leadership.

Are there any costs associated with participating in this study?
There will be no monetary costs for participation, lunch will be provided during the focus group.

Is there any compensation for participating in this study?
There is no compensation for participating in this study

Who will have access to the information collected during this study?
The principal investigator, student investigator and transcriptionist will be the only persons to have access to the information collected as part of this study. Once transcribed, the digital recordings of the interviews will be deleted and the remaining

transcription will have all identifying information redacted or replaced by a participant number or code. Data from the study will be maintained on an encrypted and password protected electronic storage device and stored in a locked file or cabinet in the researcher's office until the conclusion of the study when the data will be transferred to and maintained by the Western Michigan University research archives for a minimum of three years, then destroyed. All information will be treated with complete confidentiality. You will be assigned a specific participant number to protect your identity and ensure confidentiality of your responses.

De-identified research findings will be published as part of the student researcher's dissertation and may also be utilized by the researchers in future publications or presentations.

What if you want to stop participating in this study?
You can choose to stop participating in the study at any time for any reason. You will not suffer any prejudice or penalty by your decision to stop your participation. You will experience NO consequences, penalty, or judgment if you choose to withdraw from this study.

Should you have any questions prior to or during the study you can call me, the student investigator, at 734-284-5600 (office) or 734-308-4829 (cell) or via e-mail at alan.l.carter@wmich.edu. You may also contact the primary investigator, Dr. Jianping Shen at 269-387-3527 or via e-mail at jianping.shen@wmich.edu. You may also contact the Chair, Human Subjects Institutional Review Board at 269-387-8293 or the Vice President for Research at 269-387-8298 if questions arise during the course of the study.

This consent document has been approved for use for one year by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (HSIRB) as indicated by the stamped date and signature of the board chair in the upper right corner. Do not participate in this study if the stamped date is older than one year.

I have read this informed consent document. The risks and benefits have been explained to me, and I agree to take part in this study.

_____

Please Print Your Name

_____   _____

Signature   Date

Appendix D

Interview Protocol

Interview Protocol #1

Project: From Following to Leading: Experiencing the Phenomena of Becoming a Teacher Leader

Start Time of Interview: _____

End Time of Interview: _____

Date of Interview: _____

Location: _____

Interviewer: _____

Participant # and Code: _____

Thank you for consenting to participate in this study. I would like to record the interview so the study can be as accurate as possible. You may request that the recorder be turned off at any point of the interview. This interview will probably take 60 minutes to complete.

Lead-in: Today, we are going to explore your experiences with your own learning of leadership and practice. I would like to understand the nature of your experience both in your professional development course work and practice within the school. I am most interested in giving teachers like you an opportunity to describe what you have experienced becoming a teacher leader and how those experiences are impacting your work as a teacher. Before we begin, is there a pseudonym that you would prefer to use for this study? If not, then one will be provided for you.

1) Please start by describing your history as a teacher and how you came to the decision to pursue opportunities to become a teacher leader?

   Probe: Please share with me some of your personal aspirations as a teacher leader.

2) What new knowledge and skills are you learning and developing through the teacher leader training program and how are they helping you to evolve into your new role as a teacher leader?

   Probe: Are there any knowledge or skill addressed in the training that you find redundant or not helpful? If so, what are they?

3) Where and how are you gaining knowledge and skills outside of the training program that you feel will be useful in your work as a teacher leader?

4) Where and how have you already had opportunities to apply the knowledge and skills from your teacher leader training or from other experiences? Please describe what you have been able to use, how you used it, and the result?

5) What aspects of teacher leadership appeal to you the most and the least?

6) What has been your inclination or attitude toward the idea of teacher leadership? Toward your own future as a teacher leader?

   Probe: How has participating in a program to become a teacher leader influencing your thinking and feelings about your professional life?

7) What insights do you feel you are gaining from participating in a program to prepare you for teacher leadership?

   Probe: Of these insights, which one is the most important for you as you evolve your teacher leadership style?

8) So far, what interactions with others have you had that influence your perspective about becoming a teacher leader?

9) Is there anything else you want to say regarding your personal experience so far with learning and practicing teacher leadership within your school?

Thank you for talking with me today about your experiences, so far, as you learn about and prepare yourself to do the important work of a teacher leader. I look forward to our next conversation as you complete the program.

Your review of the transcript is completely voluntary. I you choose to review the transcript, it will help me validate the research and make it more credible and reliable. It may take me a few weeks to get the transcript of your interview back to you and it could take 30-60 minutes for you to read it and respond. Specifically, I will ask you to:
   1. Read for accuracy. The transcription will verbatim, but you may want to elaborate upon, correct, or add to one or more areas of your responses.
   2. Reflect on how well the transcript tells your story. Feel free to fill in any gaps.
   3. Be sure that the transcript accurately captures both how you experienced things and how you make sense of your experiences. Again, feel free to fill in the gaps.

I will send you these same prompts when I send you the transcript. You will receive it as a word attachment to an email, so please provide me with a private email account, if you wish me to send it there rather than to your school account. I suggest you download the electronic word file of your interview transcript and use track changes (if you are comfortable with that process) to make your edits and revisions. If you would rather use a different process to highlight any additions you make to the transcript, just let me know at the time, so I am clear on how I will get your feedback. Do you have any questions?

Again, thank you for giving your time and voice to this study.

Alan L. Carter

Interview Protocol #2

Project: From Following to Leading: Experiencing the Phenomena of Becoming a Teacher Leader

Start Time of Interview: _____

End Time of Interview: _____

Date of Interview: _____

Location: _____

Interviewer: _____

Participant # and Code: _____

Thank you for consenting to participate in this study. I would like to record the interview so the study can be as accurate as possible. You may request that the recorder be turned off at any point of the interview. This interview will probably take 60 minutes to complete.

Introduction:

Thank you for meeting with me again to talk about your experiences training for and beginning to act as a teacher leader. I really enjoyed our first conversation and learned so much from hearing about your experiences and listening to your thoughts. Now that you are at (or near) the end of your teacher leader training program, I am eager to hear more about your experience.

1. Please start by telling me how the teacher leader training going.

   Probe: What new learning experiences have you gained from the training?

   Probe: What new learning experiences have you gained from other sources?

   Probe: From these new learning experiences, tell me what stands out as most important to your evolution as a teacher leader.

2. Please share a story about a meaningful experience you had, since we last talked, related to becoming a teacher leader.

3. What opportunities have you had to act in the role of teacher leader and how did that go for you?

   Probe: What knowledge or skills did you have a chance to apply?

   Probe: Are there any knowledge or skills you have learned that you found to be most important?

   Probe: Were there any issues you did not feel adequately prepared to address?

4. As you are preparing for and/or acting as a teacher leader, have you experienced any changes in your interactions or relationships with other teachers? If so, please describe.

    Probe: How are you making sense of any changes you are experiencing or anticipate experiencing in your interactions and relationships with other teachers as you take on more responsibilities as a teacher leader?

5. As you reflect on where you are now in your development as a teacher leader, what new insights do you feel you have regarding the role of a teacher leader?

6. What new insights do you feel you have developed about yourself?

    Probe: How do you feel these insights relate to your future as an educator?

7. Is there anything else you would like to talk about regarding your personal experience with your learning and practicing teacher leadership within your school?

Thank you, so much, for this second interview. After I analyze the data from this round of interviews, I will invite you to participate in one more conversation—a focus group conversation between each of my study participants to review and provide me feedback on the ideas I gained from your individual interviews. I will be in touch shortly to schedule that conversation.

Your review of the transcript is completely voluntary. If you choose to review your transcript, please remember these three items:
1. Read for accuracy. The transcription will verbatim, but you may want to elaborate upon, correct, or add to one or more areas of your responses.
2. Reflect on how well the transcript tells your story. Feel free to fill in any gaps.
3. Be sure that the transcript accurately captures both how you experienced things and how you make sense of your experiences. Again, feel free to fill in the gaps.

I will send you these same prompts when I send you the transcript. You will receive it as a word attachment to an email, so please provide me with a private email account, if you wish me to send it there rather than to your school account. I suggest you download the electronic word file of your interview transcript and use track changes (if you are comfortable with that process) to make your edits and revisions. If you would rather use a different process to highlight any additions you make to the transcript, just let me know at the time, so I am clear on how I will get your feedback. Do you have any questions?

Again, thank you for giving your time and voice to this study.

Alan L. Carter

Appendix E

Focus Group Protocol

Focus Group Protocol

Project: From Following to Leading: Experiencing the Phenomena of Becoming a Teacher Leader

Start Time of Interview: _____

End Time of Interview: _____

Date of Interview: _____

Location: _____

Interviewer: _____

Participants' # and Codes: _____

Thank you for consenting to participate in this study. I would like to record this focus group interview so the study can be as accurate as possible. You may request that the recorder be turned off at any point of the interview. This interview will probably take 60 minutes to complete.

Introduction:
Each of you has read a vignette I wrote to capture the essence of my first and second interviews with you. These are my attempt to capture your stories.

1) Please share with each other how felt about and found yourself reacting to my vignette about your experience preparing to become a teacher leader.

   Probe: Was there anything that felt "off" in my version of your story?

   Probe: Was there anything that felt "on the mark" in my version of your story?

2) As you listen to each other talk about my vignettes of your stories, is there anything that struck you as common to your stories? Different between your stories?

You also received a copy of the major themes and sub-themes I distilled from the common elements in your stories.

3) As you have reviewed the themes and sub-themes:
   a. Where did you each feel the strongest connection to your personal experience and why?

   b. Where did you feel the weakest connection to your personal experience and why?

   c. Is there anything you felt was significant to your own story that I did not capture in the themes or sub-themes? If so, what is it and how was it significant to your personal experience?

4) As you look back on your experience training for and becoming a teacher leader, what are some important moments or "take-aways"?

5) What would you say is the most important aspect of your experience so far becoming teacher leaders?

6) How would you advise other teachers who are contemplating going through a similar process to become teacher leaders?

Thank you all for participating in my study and contributing so generously to our understanding of the important leadership work teachers do.

The next step will be for the recording to be transcribed. Once the recording of your interview transcribed I will contact you so you may review the transcription to ensure that it accurate and reflects what you said. When you receive the transcription, it will have a name and number and any information that identifies you, your school, or district will be redacted.

Your review of the transcript is completely voluntary. I you choose to review the transcript, it will help me validate the research and make it more credible and reliable. It may take me a few weeks to get the transcript of your interview back to you and it could take 30-60 minutes for you to read it and respond. Specifically, I will ask you to:

1. Read for accuracy. The transcription will verbatim, but you may want to elaborate upon, correct, or add to one or more areas of your responses.
2. Reflect on how well the transcript tells your story. Feel free to fill in any gaps.
3. Be sure that the transcript accurately captures both how you experienced things and how you make sense of your experiences. Again, feel free to fill in the gaps.

I will send you these same prompts when I send you the transcript. You will receive it as a word attachment to an email, so please provide me with a private email account, if you wish me to send it there rather than to your school account. I suggest you download the electronic word file of your interview transcript and use track changes (if you are comfortable with that process) to make your edits and revisions. If you would rather use a different process to highlight any additions you make to the transcript, just let me know at the time, so I am clear on how I will get your feedback. Do you have any questions?

Again, thank you for giving your time and voice to this study.

Alan L. Carter

Appendix F

Journal Analysis Protocol

Journal Analysis Protocol

Participant journals are used to record reflections and thoughts about the program's meetings, homework, and practice of leadership assignments within the school.

1) Journals are collected once in the middle of the five month study.
2) Journals are photocopied.
3) The photocopies will be used by the researcher for analysis of answers to homework assignments, participant reflections, and notes from the classes.
4) The original journals will be returned to the participant in a timely manner either in person or through the mail.

All identifying information will be redacted from any of the published materials from the study.

Appendix G

Confidentiality Contract Transcriptionist

Confidentiality Contract Transcriptionist

Confidentiality Agreement-Data Collection Transcriptionist

Western Michigan University
Department of Education, Leadership, Research and Technology
College of Education

Principal Investigator: Dr. Jianping Shen
Student Investigator: Alan Carter

I understand that I have been asked to transcribe interviews as part of a doctoral research study for the doctoral student listed above. This research has been approved by the Human Subject Institution Review Board (HSRIB) of Western Michigan University and is approved doctoral research project. I have been thoroughly trained in the transcription protocol and I will not deviate from the protocol as presented.

I, _____, transcriptionist, agree to maintain full confidentiality in regards to any and all audiotapes and documentation received from Alan Carter related to her doctoral study. Furthermore, I agree:

- To hold in strictest confidence the identification of any individual that may be inadvertently revealed during the transcription of audio taped interviews, or in any associated documents;
- To not make copies of any recordings or computerized files of the transcribed interview texts;
- To store all study-related audiotapes and materials in a safe, secure location as long as they are in my possession;
- To return all audiotapes and study-related documents to Alan Carter in a complete and timely manner.
- To transcribe the information collected verbatim to express the complete intent of the participant without adding any additional information, context, meaning or judgment.

I am aware that I can be held legally liable for any breach of this confidentiality agreement, and for any harm incurred by individuals if I disclose identifiable information contained in the recordings and/or files to which I will have access.

Transcriber: _____   _____
                              Signature   Date

Student Investigator: _____   _____
                                        Signature   Date

Appendix H

HSIRB Approval Letter

HSIRB Approval Letter

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

Human Subjects Institutional Review Board

Date: January 14, 2016

To: Jianping Shen, Principal Investigator
Alan Carter, Student Investigator for dissertation

From: Amy Naugle, Ph.D., Chair *Amy Naugle*

Re: HSIRB Project Number 16-01-08

This letter will serve as confirmation that your research project titled "From Following to Leading: Experiencing the Phenomena of Becoming a Teacher Leader" has been **approved** under the **expedited** category of review by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board. The conditions and duration of this approval are specified in the Policies of Western Michigan University. You may now begin to implement the research as described in the application.

Please note: This research may **only** be conducted exactly in the form it was approved. You must seek specific board approval for any changes in this project (e.g., *you must request a post approval change to enroll subjects beyond the number stated in your application under "Number of subjects you want to complete the study").* Failure to obtain approval for changes will result in a protocol deviation. In addition, if there are any unanticipated adverse reactions or unanticipated events associated with the conduct of this research, you should immediately suspend the project and contact the Chair of the HSIRB for consultation.

Reapproval of the project is required if it extends beyond the termination date stated below.

The Board wishes you success in the pursuit of your research goals.

Approval Termination: **January 13, 2017**

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