

TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES OF EMERGENT TEACHER LEADERSHIP IN AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

by

ELLEN MARIE SABATINI

(Under the Direction of Jo Blase)

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to describe teachers' perspectives of emergent teacher leadership in an elementary school. This study was guided by a symbolic interactionist framework and grounded theory research design. Data were collected in an elementary school in which emergent teacher leadership was supported and was thriving. Face-to-face interviews were conducted, audio-taped, and transcribed. Constant comparative analysis was utilized to generate a theory, grounded in the data, explaining teachers' perspectives of emergent teacher leadership.

Findings from this study indicate that teacher empowerment is the underlying theme to teachers' experiences with emergent teacher leaders. Teachers are empowered to direct their own learning as they take initiative to form relationships with emergent teacher leaders based on shared experiences, expertise, and availability. These relationships provide support for meaningful interactions to take place. Teacher-teacher leader interactions were found to occur at the classroom-level and school-level. Classroom-based interactions include curriculum support, instructional support, collaboration, and observation. School-based interactions include inquiry and shared decision making. Teachers indicate that these relationships and interactions result in teacher improvements, student benefits, "collective ownership," increased leadership capacity, stability, and improved morale.

Based on the findings, several theoretical ideas are discussed. First, when teachers are empowered to direct their own learning, they seek out emergent teacher leader peers to improve their instruction. Second, when teachers interact with emergent teacher leaders, they focus on instructional and school improvement. Third, when teachers are empowered to collaborate with emergent teacher leaders, they experience a sense of collective ownership. Fourth, when teachers interact with emergent teacher leaders, leadership capacity increases. Fifth, when teachers are empowered to lead, they feel trusted, valued, and validated.

Implications for future research, practitioners, higher education, and policy makers are discussed. Principals should consider creating an environment that cultivates and supports emergent teacher leadership. Teachers can take responsibility for

developing themselves as leaders. Colleges and universities should consider offering coursework to develop teachers as leaders.

INDEX WORDS: Teacher leadership, Informal leadership, Emergent teacher leadership, Leadership capacity, Teacher collaboration, Teacher empowerment, Staff development, Teacher improvement, School improvement

TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES OF EMERGENT TEACHER LEADERSHIP
IN AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

by

ELLEN MARIE SABATINI

B.A., University of Connecticut, 1991

M.Ed., The University of Georgia, 1997

A Dissertation Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of The University of Georgia in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

ATHENS, GEORGIA

2002

© 2002

Ellen Marie Sabatini

All Rights Reserved

TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES OF EMERGENT TEACHER LEADERSHIP
IN AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

by

ELLEN MARIE SABATINI

Major Professor: Jo Blase

Committee: Joseph Blase
Sally Zepeda

Electronic Version Approved:

Maureen Grasso
Dean of the Graduate School
The University of Georgia
December 2002

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My friends and family encouraged, motivated, inspired, and supported me throughout my pursuit of a doctorate. This dissertation would not be complete without acknowledging the many people who helped me achieve one of my professional goals.

To Dr. Jo Blase: It was definitely not my plan to pursue a doctorate at this point in my life—but you started it all when you approached me in your Staff Development course. Thank you for your constant encouragement, support, and motivation. Your high expectations challenged me to work harder than I ever have. Thank you for opening up your home and creating a supportive group for doctoral students. "Hugs" to you!

To Dr. Joseph Blase and Dr. Sally Zepeda: Thank you for serving on my committee and providing me with helpful feedback. Your questions helped me see things in new ways and understand my work at a deeper level.

To my Alps and Barrow Buddies: Thank you for your friendship and support over the past several years. You all have greatly contributed to my growth as a teacher and leader. Thank you for the many laughs and many "happy hours." A special thanks to Dr. Sherrie Gibney-Sherman, Jodi Weber, and Barbara Wright for providing me with excellent examples of leadership and facilitating my development as a professional educator.

To my family: Mom, Dad, and Sue—thank you for supporting me every step of the way. It has not been easy being so far away, but I know I am always in your heart, as

you are in mine. Carol and Joe—I greatly appreciate the guidance and support you have given Ken and me.

To Ken, my sweetie: You are the best! Words cannot express how grateful I am for all that you do for me everyday. You have helped me through the hard work by listening to me, being patient, and understanding me. I thank you for your flawless editing of almost every page and your commitment to helping me do my best. Most of all, I thank you for providing me with a sense of balance: what I will remember when I look back on our "doctoral years," is all the fun we had together—the shows, the dinners, the movies, the games, the tunes, the excursions, the conversations, the laughs, and the quiet times too!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES	viii
CHAPTER	
1 INTRODUCTION	1
Literature Background.....	1
Description of the Study.....	6
Significance of the Study.....	10
Limitations of the Study.....	11
Overview of the Chapters.....	12
2 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE: TEACHER LEADERSHIP.....	13
Historical and Theoretical Development of Teacher Leadership.....	13
Teacher Leadership	22
Emergent Teacher Leadership.....	40
Summary	52
3 METHODOLOGY.....	53
Theoretical Framework: Symbolic Interactionism.....	53
Site and Sample Selection.....	56
Context of the Study.....	61
Data Sources.....	66

	Data Collection Procedures.....	67
	Data Analysis Procedures.....	73
	Credibility.....	79
	Summary	82
4	FINDINGS	83
	Individual Participants.....	83
	Common Themes	90
5	SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND IMPLICATIONS	195
	Summary of the Study.....	195
	Discussion.....	196
	Implications	207
	REFERENCES.....	217
	APPENDICES	
A	SITE SELECTION SURVEY FOR TEACHERS AND ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS.....	226
B	SITE SELECTION SURVEY FOR DISTRICT-LEVEL ADMINISTRATORS	231
C	INITIAL SAMPLE SELECTION CRITERIA.....	234
D	RESEARCH STUDY CONSENT FORM.....	235

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

	Page
Table 1: Participant Demographic and Professional Information.....	67
Figure 1: Common Themes of Teachers' Perspectives of Emergent Teacher	
Leadership	91

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This study examined teachers' perspectives of emergent teacher leadership in an elementary school. This introduction will include four sections. The first section will present an overview of the literature on teacher leadership. The second section will provide a description of the study, including the purpose of the study, guiding research questions, site and sample selection procedures, and research design. The third section will discuss the theoretical and practical significance of the study. The last section will present the limitations of the study.

Literature Background

Interest in teacher leadership is a relatively new phenomenon. While teachers have held leadership positions in the past, such as department chair or textbook coordinator, these roles have been primarily administrative in function and have been available to only a few teachers (Smylie & Denny, 1990). Second-wave reform reports during the 1980s created increased interest in the expansion of leadership roles for teachers. Reports from the Carnegie Foundation (1986) and the Holmes' Group (1986) included recommendations that school districts create career ladder programs and lead teacher positions in an effort to create more professionalized working environments for teachers. A report issued by the National Governors' Association (1986) also recommended school-based decision making and teacher participation in leadership activities. The authors of these reports were guided by the belief that teachers needed to be involved in school improvement efforts (Smylie & Denny, 1990).

Initial efforts to broaden leadership roles for teachers were focused on formal leadership positions. Smylie (1995) referred to these formal positions as "appoint and

anoint" positions, meaning that teacher leaders are chosen by those in administrative positions and are given formal authority to carry out their leadership functions. Teachers have assumed a variety of new formal leadership roles, including mentors, lead teachers, instructional leaders, and team leaders.

Two examples of formal teacher leadership roles will provide illustration. Several school districts have implemented lead teacher programs based on Devaney's (1987) Lead Teacher model (Smylie & Denny, 1990). The goals of this model are to improve professional learning opportunities for teachers, to engender collegiality and collective responsibility among teachers, and to promote classroom and school improvement. Lead teachers usually serve as regular classroom teachers for a portion of the day, allowing them some time to perform their leadership roles. Lead teacher responsibilities are not prescribed a priori so they can be flexible to meet individual school needs (Devaney, 1987).

Proposals for new teacher leadership roles have recommended that teachers provide instructional support to other teachers by experimenting with new techniques in the classroom and sharing results with other teachers (Howey, 1988). For example, Wasley (1991) studied a teacher serving in the role of instructional leader. This teacher experimented with innovative teaching methods in her classroom, which served as a model demonstration classroom for other teachers in the school and district. She also provided staff development workshops on various instructional strategies (Wasley, 1991).

The teacher leadership literature is focused on the goals of teacher leadership, the roles teacher leaders assume, and the outcomes of teacher leadership. In general, the outcomes are not favorable; although studies have emphasized the strong personal benefits teacher leaders gain from working in their new roles, researchers have had limited success in linking the work of teacher leaders to benefits at the classroom-level or school-level (Smylie & Denny, 1990; Trachtman, 1991; Wasley, 1991). In fact, many

researchers have found that teacher leaders in formal positions face obstacles that hinder their success as teacher leaders (e.g., Pellicer & Anderson, 1995; Smylie, 1992a; Smylie, 1992b; Smylie & Brownlee-Conyers, 1992; Smylie & Denny, 1990; Wasley, 1991).

These obstacles include:

1. Traditional Authority and Teacher-Principal Relationships. Teachers are reluctant to see themselves as leaders and struggle to build new working relationships with their administrators.
2. Norms Influencing Teachers' Working Relationships. Norms of professional equality, autonomy, and privacy are in opposition to the work required by teacher leaders.
3. The Nature of Teachers' Work. Physical isolation, tight scheduling, classroom responsibilities, lack of access to new knowledge, and lack of time all hinder collegiality and leadership opportunities for teachers.
4. Ambiguities and Uncertainties. Often teacher leader roles are not clearly defined, or clearly communicated, leading to multiple interpretations of the teacher leader's responsibilities.
5. Lack of Training. Teacher leaders rarely receive training to help them be successful in their new roles.

These obstacles have led many theorists to suggest the potential of less structured, more emergent forms of teacher leadership (e.g., Darling-Hammond, Bullmaster, & Cobb, 1995; Howey, 1988; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 1996; Lambert, et al., 1995; Lieberman, 1992; Miller, 1992; Odell, 1997; Smylie, 1995). According to this perspective, leadership emerges in a natural way according to need and can be shared by many teachers within the school setting. Different terms have been used to refer to teacher leadership that emerges in an informal manner. Howey (1988) used the term "career lattices" to differentiate emergent teacher leadership from formal leadership programs associated with career ladders. Darling-Hammond, et al. (1995) used the term

"collaborative leadership" to describe the form of teacher leadership that emerged in Professional Development Schools. Lambert, et al. (1995) also referred to emergent teacher leadership, using the concept of "constructivist leadership."

Although the terms vary, these authors share beliefs about the notion of emergent teacher leadership: Emergent teacher leadership is a collaborative process focused on instructional improvement; leadership opportunities are available to all teachers based on experience, expertise, and interest, not on formally-assigned roles; leadership roles and responsibilities are fluid and flexible, and can be initiated by whoever identifies a need; and leadership becomes a normal part of the teacher's role and an integral part of the school culture (Darling-Hammond, et al., 1995; Howey, 1988; Lambert, et al., 1995). Katzenmeyer and Moller (1996) provide a definition of emergent teacher leadership which integrates these ideas: "Teachers who are leaders lead within and beyond the classroom, influence others toward improved educational practice, and identify with and contribute to a community of leaders" (p. 6).

Very few studies have been focused on emergent teacher leadership. In three published case studies, researchers examined strategies used by emergent teacher leaders in schools involved in specific program initiatives or restructuring efforts. In a fourth study, researchers identified strategies as well as effects of emergent teacher leaders in one middle school.

Darling-Hammond, et al. (1995) studied seven long-standing Professional Development Schools (PDSs) to describe teacher leadership in those schools. PDSs are collaborations between schools and university education programs. These collaborations involve educators in redesigning schools and schools of education to provide better instruction to students. Darling-Hammond, et al. found that, in PDSs, leadership opportunities were available to all teachers based on experience and expertise, not formally-assigned roles. Within the various PDSs, teacher leaders emerged to initiate and

fulfill leadership roles including: mentors and teacher educators, curriculum developers and decision makers, problem solvers and change agents, and researchers (Darling-Hammond, et al., 1995).

Heller and Firestone (1995) studied eight schools involved in institutionalizing a school-wide problem solving program. They explored how well and by whom various leadership functions were carried out. They broadly defined leadership as a specific set of tasks to be performed, emphasizing that who performed the tasks was not critical. They found that the principal did not emerge as the key leader. Rather, leadership tasks were carried out by teams of individuals, including teachers. Teachers contributed to many leadership functions necessary in the process of successfully institutionalizing the program including: sustaining a vision for the program, reinforcing each other's efforts, monitoring each other's progress, and educating new teachers. Heller and Firestone concluded that teacher leadership can emerge in the ways schools are currently structured and can complement other sources of leadership.

Miller (1992) examined the development of teacher leadership in a school undergoing school restructuring. Five formal teacher leaders were chosen to participate in the management and leadership of the school. Miller discovered that while these formal leaders fulfilled many leadership functions, classroom teachers emerged to initiate the most change efforts. Teachers initiated new teaching arrangements such as multi-grade classrooms and team teaching partnerships. Over time, emergent teacher leadership became an integral part of the school culture. Based on interest and expertise, teachers took on additional leadership activities such as offering staff development workshops, reviewing research and sharing with colleagues, redesigning curriculum and student assessment, and making presentations throughout the state and country. Miller concluded that several factors supported emergent teacher leadership in this school

including strong district commitment, participatory leadership, opportunities for teacher collaboration, and the talents and interests of the teachers.

Finally, Stone, Horejs, and Lomas (1997) studied middle school teacher leaders who carried out their leadership roles informally in one school. These teachers viewed themselves as facilitators who served as catalysts to their colleagues' learning through activities such as collaborating and sharing, mentoring, and staff development. The researchers found several effects of informal teacher leadership including improvements in teacher collaboration and in relationships between teacher leaders and other staff members. Teacher leaders believed they grew professionally and personally from serving in leadership roles. Time and support from colleagues and administrators both supported and hindered the work of teacher leaders.

The results of these four studies have contributed to a beginning knowledge base concerning emergent teacher leadership. These case studies have yielded descriptive information focusing on strategies emergent teacher leaders use in specific restructuring and program initiatives. The need for more in-depth and theoretical research in this area is obvious. This study thoroughly explored teachers' perspectives of emergent teacher leadership in an elementary school and resulted in a theoretical analysis of these perspectives. The findings of this study significantly broaden our current understanding of emergent teacher leadership.

Description of the Study

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to explore teachers' perspectives of emergent teacher leadership in an elementary school and propose a theory explaining their perspectives. The research questions that guided this study were open-ended and process-oriented. These questions are typical of grounded theory research. Initial

guiding questions included: (a) What are teachers' experiences with emergent teacher leaders? and (b) What do these experiences mean to teachers?

Formal versus Emergent Teacher Leadership

The focus of this study is emergent teacher leadership. Definitions of formal teacher leadership and emergent teacher leadership are necessary to differentiate these two concepts and to understand the specific focus of this study. Formal teacher leadership refers to leadership positions to which teachers are "appointed and anointed" by those higher up on the hierarchy. This traditional leadership model gives teachers formal authority to perform their leadership duties (Smylie, 1995). Formal leadership roles for teachers include lead teachers, mentor teachers, instructional leaders, and team leaders. These formal positions are limited in number and available only to a few selected teachers.

Emergent teacher leadership refers to teachers "who are leaders within and beyond the classroom, influence others toward improved educational practice, and identify with and contribute to a community of teacher leaders" (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 1996, p. 6). Emergent teacher leaders do not hold formal titles. They tend to have positive relationships with their peers, show initiative, take risks, and are willing to share ideas with others. It is these characteristics, rather than formal titles, that enable them to influence others. Emergent teacher leadership roles are not limited in number and are available to all teachers within a school (Darling-Hammond, et al., 1995; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 1996).

Site Selection

Purposeful sampling was used to select a site for this study. Specific criteria were used to select an elementary school in which emergent teacher leadership flourished. To identify such a school, criteria were based on Katzenmeyer & Moller's (1996) Dimensions of Teacher Leadership. They found seven dimensions that characterized

schools where emergent teacher leadership was supported and thriving. These dimensions were: (a) developmental focus, (b) recognition, (c) collegiality, (d) autonomy, (e) participation, (f) open communication, and (g) positive environment. These dimensions, along with definitions and specific examples were given to two groups of experts at the district-level and the school-level (see Appendix A and Appendix B). These groups were asked to nominate schools that best met the criteria. The school chosen most often and that was willing to participate was selected as the research site for this study.

The selected school was Northville Elementary School, a newly-built school in a predominantly African American neighborhood, located in an urban area of Northeast Georgia. The school serves 483 students from primarily low-income families. The majority of the students are African American (70%), however, there is also a large Hispanic population (25%). The remaining students (5%) are Caucasian and students from other racial backgrounds. Northville Elementary will be discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

Sample Selection

Theoretical sampling, a component of grounded theory methodology, was the method used to select research participants. According to grounded theory methodology, as the researcher collects and analyzes data, theoretical sampling is used to select participants who will contribute to the emerging theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). An initial sample of teachers was chosen to maximize variation in data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This initial sample was chosen based on Leithwood's (1990) integrated model of adult development. Leithwood's model is comprised of four stages: (a) self-protective, (b) conformist, (c) conscientious, and (d) autonomous. Teachers at different stages of adult development hold varying views which influence their interactions with others in the school (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 1996). Therefore, it is likely that teachers at various

stages will experience emergent teacher leadership differently. The school principal chose an initial sample of eight participants based on detailed descriptions of these criteria.

Research Design

Teachers' perspectives of emergent teacher leadership was the focus of this qualitative study. Grounded theory methods will guide the entire research process, from data collection to final writing (Glaser, 1978). In a grounded theory study, "theory evolves during actual research . . . through continuous interplay between analysis and data collection (Strauss & Corbin, 1994, p. 273). The researcher is continuously involved in the process of data collection, data coding, and data analysis. Ongoing data analysis informs the researcher of data to be collected in the future. This reciprocal process, called constant comparative analysis, was utilized to collect data, analyze data, and generate a theory concerning teachers' perspectives of emergent teacher leadership.

Specific data collection procedures included interviews and document collection. Additionally, a research notebook was created to record and organize all notes through the course of the research study. Data was analyzed by searching through the transcripts and documents line-by-line for incidents of teachers' perspectives of emergent teacher leadership. Similar incidents were grouped together and became categories. As more data were collected, categories became more dense. Also, relationships among categories became apparent and led to a working theory.

Interviews

Interviews were the primary data source for this study. According to Bogdan and Biklen (1992), an interview is a purposeful conversation used to generate descriptive data about how participants perceive and interpret their world. Beginning interviews were unstructured, allowing participants to discuss what they believed was relevant concerning emergent teacher leadership. As categories emerged during analysis, semi-structured and

structured interviews were used as a means of filling out the categories. All interviews were audiotaped with the permission of the participants and were transcribed.

Documents

Documents were also collected as sources of data. Documents are written, visual, or physical material that communicate information (Merriam, 1998). The kind of documents collected for this study were official documents, which are written forms of communication produced by an organization (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). These documents provided context to the study. Official documents that were collected included: grant proposals, pages from the school's website, the school's "report card" produced by a state agency, and test scores.

Significance of the Study

Presently, very few studies have focused on emergent teacher leadership. Four unique published case studies have produced a limited knowledge base to build upon. These case studies have concentrated on strategies emergent teacher leaders use in specific change initiatives or restructuring efforts. Because of the limited amount of research in emergent teacher leadership, the results of this study have theoretical, practical, and methodological significance.

Theoretical Significance

The results of this study significantly contribute to the knowledge base in emergent teacher leadership. This study provides unique findings because of its in-depth focus on the experiences of teachers in an elementary school. The findings suggest that the work of emergent teacher leaders has the potential to enhance classroom instruction and school improvement efforts. These findings provide theoretical support of the literature that espouses more emergent forms of teacher leadership.

Practical Significance

The results of this study have significance for both school practitioners and university-level faculty. This study provides practitioners with knowledge concerning new roles and working relationships for teachers, as well as administrators. This study suggests the possibilities for involving teachers as leaders in school improvement. Additionally, this study informs teachers and administrators on ways to support and cultivate emergent teacher leadership in schools.

This study also has significance at the university-level. As teacher education programs are restructured, faculty members may use the results of this study to build teacher education programs that include teacher leadership as a normal part of the teacher's role. They may also begin integrating administrative and teacher education programs to build a potential "community of leaders."

Methodological Significance

This study also has methodological significance. Past research in emergent teacher leadership has used case study methodology. By using grounded theory methodology, this study resulted in theoretical ideas explaining teachers' perspectives of emergent teacher leadership. These theoretical ideas will provide a knowledge base for other researchers to build upon. Researchers interested in similar kinds of work can gain insight from the methodological procedures used in this study.

Limitations of the Study

The one limitation associated with this qualitative study is its limited representativeness. This study was conducted in one public elementary school in Northeast Georgia. These demographics are not representative of other schools in the state or country. To minimize this limitation, the study focused on providing an in-depth, holistic look at emergent teacher leadership in one research setting. This kind of comprehensive focus is difficult to provide with a large representative sample.

Overview of the Chapters

The remaining chapters include: Chapter 2, a review of the literature; Chapter 3, the methodology; Chapter 4, the findings; and Chapter 5, the summary, discussion, and implications.

Chapter 2 provides a review of the historical and theoretical development of teacher leadership, including a summary of the major traditional leadership theories that have influenced education, an overview of the reform efforts of the 1980s that proposed teacher leadership, and a thorough review and analysis of the teacher leadership research.

Chapter 3 presents a complete description of the methodology for the proposed study. Sections in this chapter include a review of the symbolic interactionism framework; information on the site and sample selection process; a thorough description of the research setting; an overview of data collection procedures; a discussion of grounded theory methodology, including the stages and components of constant comparative analysis; and an explanation of the criteria used to enhance credibility.

Chapter 4 offers the findings of this study. It begins with an introduction of the participants, highlighting each of their individual experiences with emergent teacher leadership. The chapter then presents the common themes that emerged from the data, using the words of the participants to provide support.

The final chapter, Chapter 5, provides a thorough discussion of the most significant research findings, as they relate to the extant research and literature. It presents connections among the three main categories; a discussion of the core category, teacher empowerment; and several theoretical ideas that can be maintained based on the findings. The chapter ends with implications for further research, as well as for practitioners, higher education, and policy makers.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE: TEACHER LEADERSHIP

Chapter 2 presents the historical and theoretical development of teacher leadership, including an overview of traditional and newer models of leadership. This chapter describes theories and research findings that build a foundation for this study of teachers' perspectives of emergent teacher leadership. This chapter has four sections. The first section contains a review of the major traditional leadership theories that have influenced education. These theories provide a framework for recent proposals for leadership by teachers. The second section presents a discussion of the first- and second-wave reform efforts of the 1980s and the newer forms of school leadership that followed, specifically, participative leadership. The third section focuses on formal teacher leadership, including an examination of the goals of formal teacher leadership, the roles teacher leaders assume, and the obstacles they tend to face in their work. This section incorporates the research that has been most influential in the field. The fourth section describes the concepts and research related to emergent teacher leadership.

Historical and Theoretical Development of Teacher Leadership

Throughout most of the 20th century, American public schools have been structured according to the principles of classical organizational theory (Hart, 1995; Pellicer & Anderson, 1995). Based on the thinking of Fayol, Weber, and others, schools were organized as bureaucracies, with formal rules and regulations, hierarchical structures, and strict lines of authority. Efficiency and effectiveness were criteria for school success. As school leaders, principals had sole authority to make decisions, which were to be implemented by teachers without question (Pellicer & Anderson, 1995).

While this organizational model has continued to characterize most public schools, varying leadership models have influenced the ways in which principals have led schools for the past century. A review of major leadership perspectives will provide a context to the current calls for a new kind of leadership by teachers, the focus of this study.

Traditional Approaches to Leadership

Over fifty years of research on leadership has suggested that effective leadership is an essential factor in the success of an organization (Bennis & Nanus, 1985). Leadership theorists have sought to discover what makes a leader effective. Early leadership studies centered on the traits of individual leaders. This trait approach, also termed the "great person theory," proposes that leaders possess certain traits, including physical characteristics, personality traits, and intellectual abilities, which make them successful leaders and differentiate them from non-leaders (Razik & Swanson, 1995). Several leadership theorists have discounted this theory, criticizing the fact that this approach does not take into account situational variables (Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Gardner, 1990).

In the 1950s, leadership theorists at The Ohio State University began examining leader behavior, attempting to identify specific leader behaviors that influenced subordinate productivity and job satisfaction. According to behavioral theorists, two factors are associated with effective leader behavior: "consideration," or the extent to which leaders focus on people and relationships, and "initiation of structure," or the extent to which leaders focus on defining and structuring their own role for the attainment of organizational goals. Relationship behaviors include support and concern for subordinate's welfare, as well as expression of trust, warmth, and respect. Task behaviors include attention to organizational goals, task assignment, and performance

evaluation. Behavioral researchers suggest that effective leaders rate high on both dimensions (Halpin & Winer, 1957).

Several behavioral theorists also have examined leadership styles and have studied how these styles affect worker performance and satisfaction. Likert (1961) suggests a continuum including four leadership styles that vary by the degree of trust leaders have in their subordinates. From low to high trust, these leadership styles are: exploitive authoritative, benevolent authoritative, consultative, and participative (democratic). Likert determined that leaders who use a participative leadership style are more effective leaders.

While behavioral approaches are still studied and referred to today, behavioral theories do not take into consideration situational factors that affect leadership behavior (Razik & Swanson, 1995). In the 1960s, Fiedler and others extended the leadership styles research by maintaining there was no single effective leadership style. Rather, Fiedler's Contingency Theory suggests that leadership effectiveness depends on how well the leader's style matches situational variables, such as task structure and quality of leader-subordinate relations (Fiedler, 1967).

Other contingency/situational models include House's (1971) Path-Goal Theory, which suggests that an effective leader is able to analyze the task environment and choose a leadership style that maximizes a subordinate's ability and desire to achieve organizational goals. Also, Hersey and Blanchard's (1982) Situational Leadership Theory suggests that leaders vary their leadership approach depending on the maturity level of the employee. An employee with a lower maturity level would have a high need for more directive actions by the leader, while a more mature and knowledgeable employee would have more need for emotional support. Leaders' roles might vary to include directing, coaching, supporting, and delegating. Situational leadership theory

maintains that when leaders match their styles to their employees' maturity levels, results will include higher employee performance and job satisfaction.

In the 1970s and 1980s, transformational leadership ideas influenced the field. Also referred to as "charismatic leadership," this perspective focuses on leaders serving as agents of social change, who work to transform organizations or societies (Razik & Swanson, 1995). Theorists such as Burns (1978) and Bennis and Nanus (1985) maintain that transformational leaders behave in ways that result in special relationships with their followers. Transformational leaders tend to have excellent communication skills, are able to propose a vision and a clear plan for attaining that vision, show high willingness to take risks for their cause, and show great concern for their followers' needs. As a result, followers tend to show extreme loyalty, as well as enthusiasm for the leader's ideas. Followers are willing to work beyond expected and sacrifice personal interests for the sake of the leader's goals (Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Burns, 1978).

While these leadership theories influenced business, as well as education, leadership in schools became a serious matter following the publication of the *Coleman Report: Equality of Educational Opportunity* (1966). This study found a significant gap in academic achievement between minority and majority students and concluded that schools were unable to close the achievement gap. Following this report, several researchers studied inner city schools with high-achieving students, trying to identify specific strategies that seemed to minimize the achievement gap. Through this research, known as the "effective schools movement," researchers such as Brookover and Lezotte (1979) and Edmonds (1979) found that school principals were the essential element of an effective school. Principals in these studies created a disciplined school atmosphere with high expectations for staff and students, encouraged collegial and collaborative staff relationships, and maintained adequate time for instruction.

The effective schools research has been criticized for both its conceptualization and methodology. For example, leadership was narrowly defined, as influence flowed from the principal down to the teachers. Additionally, the studies recommended prescribed strategies to fit all situations. Contextual issues, such as teacher and community influence, had been ignored in most of these studies (Burlingame, 1987). In spite of these criticisms, the effective schools research has influenced the field of education and has given policymakers and educators hope for the future of school improvement (Razik & Swanson, 1995).

One area particularly influenced by the effective schools research was the role of the principal. The literature began redefining the role of the principal by calling for principals to serve as instructional leaders, who directly influence the instructional programs of schools and focus on student learning (Weber, 1989). Through his research, Weber concluded that principals acting as effective instructional leaders demonstrated the following behaviors:

- Established the school's mission, vision, and goals to create a common purpose for the staff, and demonstrated commitment to the mission, vision, and goals;
- Had knowledge of instructional strategies, content areas, and issues facing classroom teachers;
- Protected instructional time;
- Promoted a positive learning environment;
- Held high expectations for academic achievement; and
- Evaluated teacher instruction through classroom observation.

According to Blase and Blase (1999), instructional leadership is often defined as a combination of many important tasks. For example, Glickman (1985), includes five tasks essential to instructional leadership: direct assistance, group development, staff

development, curriculum development, and action research. Pajak (1989) adds planning, facilitating change, and motivating staff. Recent models of instructional leadership have been collaborative in nature and have emphasized teacher reflection and growth.

Each of these traditional leadership models has influenced school leadership during this century. These models can be considered traditional because they share a common theme: the leader (usually the principal) uses his or her power or influence to make others (teachers) do something (like achieve organizational goals) (Foster, 1986).

Reform and New Leadership Models

Efforts to reform American schools dominated educational literature and discussion in the 1980s. Beginning with the publication of The National Commission on Excellence in Education's report, *A Nation At Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform* (1983), which criticized teachers for their lack of knowledge and preparation, and poor motivation and performance, first wave reform initiatives attempted to improve the quality of teaching in our nation's schools through top-down regulation, prescription, and standardization (Cooper & Conley, 1991; Hallinger & Richardson, 1988; Smylie & Denny, 1990; Wasley, 1991). Many states responded by raising standards for teachers and students, mandating curricula, and instituting statewide testing of teachers and stricter teacher evaluation. It was obvious that first wave reform efforts held teachers responsible for the poor performance of schools nationwide (Cooper & Conley, 1991).

Critics of top-down reform argued that educational change could not take place through strict regulation. Legislating higher standards did not necessarily result in higher student achievement. In 1986, the National Governor's Association issued a report titled, *Time For Results*, which emphasized that raising standards was not enough: schools needed to be restructured to bring about higher outcomes. The governors recommended that schools and school districts be given the authority to make decisions for their schools. Schools would also be held accountable for producing positive results. A

number of second wave reform reports followed, calling for local decision making and teacher participation in school decision making (Smylie & Denny, 1990). Additionally, the reports called for new leadership roles for teachers. The authors of these reports believed that teachers were the solution to the problem and needed to be involved in change efforts.

One influential report, *A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century* (Carnegie, 1986), recommended that schools create more professional environments for teachers including: opportunities for teacher involvement in school decision making, the creation of lead teacher positions, and increased time for professional development. Another report, *Tomorrow's Teachers* (Holmes Group, 1986) recommended closer collaboration between teachers and university faculty in efforts to improve schools, as well as schools of education. The report also suggested that states develop career ladders to include differentiated status, responsibilities, and salaries for teachers at different career stages.

While a few teacher leadership positions had been available in the past, such as department chair, text-book adoption coordinator, and union representative, the recommendations in these reports created renewed interest in teacher leadership positions, expansion of leadership roles for teachers, and new hope for what these roles might accomplish (Smylie & Denny, 1990).

Participative Leadership

A new type of school leadership developed as a result of second wave reform reports of the 1980s. Rather than viewing teachers as part of the problem of schools, educators began considering teachers as essential to the solution. Some educators proposed that teachers needed to be involved in decision making processes in order for schools to improve (Hallinger & Richardson, 1988). During the past decade, many schools have implemented participative or shared leadership models in their efforts to

restructure schools. These shared leadership efforts have empowered teachers to make important decisions that affect them (Blase & Blase, 1999).

In traditional schools, school administrators, typically responsible for school decision-making, are vested with formal or positional authority. Through their positions, they are given the power to make decisions for others in the school. Decisions made at the administrative level often have little or no effect on participants at lower levels, such as teachers. This results in a difference between decision making and decision implementation. It is often the teachers who determine the level of implementation (Hallinger & Richardson 1988).

One assumption behind shared leadership is that teachers should be involved in important decision making related to curriculum and instruction since they are closest to instruction and responsible for implementing decisions made. Teachers will have more ownership in the decisions and will be more likely to support the decisions (Blase & Blase, 1997).

Another assumption supporting shared leadership is that, by involving teachers in school decision making processes, better decisions will be made (Blase & Blase, 1997). Teachers are viewed as reflective practitioners, able to contribute their experiences and professional judgment for school restructuring.

There are a variety of participative or shared leadership models that have been implemented in the United States. Various models have evolved over the years, empowering teachers to make more important schoolwide decisions and including participants from the broader educational community. Early models, such as the Principals' Advisory Council, was composed of a group of elected faculty who merely advised the principal, while the principal continued to make the final decisions (Hallinger & Richardson, 1988).

A more expanded and involved model of shared leadership is the League of Professional Schools, a network of schools that are associated with the University of Georgia. The purpose of the League of Professional Schools is to, "establish representative democratic decision-making structures to promote teacher involvement in schoolwide instructional and curricular decisions" (Blase & Blase, 1997, p. 24). Schools operating under the League of Professional Schools may vary in their specific leadership structures, but agree to the following principles:

- The school agrees to form a democratic council, made up of school staff who are elected or volunteer and represent the school community at large.
- The chairperson of the council is elected and the principal is a member of the council.
- The council meets regularly, follows an agenda, and keeps minutes.
- The goal of the council is to work on instructional improvement.
- Staff development and action research are essential school processes (Glickman & Allen, 1991).

The shared leadership council strives to devote their time to make the most important decisions related to curriculum and instruction. Topics that might be addressed include: staff development, instructional materials, classroom management, scheduling, textbook adoption, program innovation, hiring, and budgeting (Glickman & Allen, 1991).

Research concerning the effects of shared decision making structures on educational outcome has not been favorable (Drury, 1999; Sweetland & Hoy, 2000). Drury identified several factors that have hindered the success of shared decision making structures. These include:

- Lack of focus on student achievement;
- Resistance from board members, administrators, and teachers;

- Limits on the actual authority individual schools have over budgeting, staffing, and instructional programs;
- Continued concentration of authority in the hands of school administrators; and
- Limited resources at the school level, such as information, knowledge and skills, and rewards.

Drury maintains that to become centers of change and self-renewal, schools must "reinvent" their shared decision making structures. He proposes schools create "school-based improvement" structures which emphasize student achievement, consider teachers and parents to be central to decision making processes, and emphasize the importance of continuous improvement. These structures must be supported by all educational stakeholders (Drury, 1999, p.26).

Sweetland and Hoy (2000) advocate the importance of teacher empowerment. They speculate that "teacher empowerment may not be a sufficient condition for improving student academic performance, although it is likely a necessary one" (p. 210). Teacher leadership roles have the potential to further empower teachers to make significant improvements in their classrooms, their schools, and their profession as a whole (Sirotnik & Ericson, 1996).

Teacher Leadership

Interest in teacher leadership has grown considerably since the second-wave reform efforts of the late 1980s. While some teachers have had opportunities to assume leadership roles in the past, recent proposals for site-based management and comprehensive school reform have further increased the availability and variety of leadership opportunities for teachers (Livingston, 1992). Literature in the area of teacher leadership is relatively new, appearing only within the last 14 years. One gap in the literature is the lack of a clear definition of teacher leadership (Smylie, 1995). The

literature tends to focus on the goals of teacher leadership, the roles teacher leaders assume, and the outcomes of teacher leadership. This section provides an examination of the definitions and goals of teacher leadership, as well as the teacher leader roles that have been proposed and carried out in practice. This section also incorporates the most important areas of research in the teacher leadership field.

Few definitions of teacher leadership exist in the literature. Based on data from her multiple case study, Wasley (1991) defines teacher leadership as: "the ability of the teacher leader to engage colleagues in experimentation then examination of more powerful instructional practices in the service of more engaged student learning" (p. 170). Wasley states that teacher leaders focus their work on instructional improvement and do this by collaborating with colleagues on challenging instructional issues. Wasley also proposes that teacher leaders work in the classroom for part of the day because they need to experiment with instructional practices and share what they learn with their colleagues.

Lists of goals of teacher leadership are commonly found throughout the literature. These goals include: professionalizing the teaching profession to attract and retain high quality teachers, reducing teacher isolation, increasing teacher participation in decision making, tapping teacher expertise, and bringing teachers together to solve classroom problems and enhance instruction. Policymakers and educators hope that by working towards these goals, schools will improve and student achievement will increase (Mertens & Yarger, 1988; Smylie, 1995; Smylie & Denny, 1990; Wasley, 1991; Whitaker, 1997).

Many assumptions concerning teacher leadership influence the focus of research in the field, as well as how teacher leadership is carried out in practice (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 1996). Two assumptions concerning teacher leadership are central to this study and require further examination. The first assumption deals with who is included in leadership roles. Some hold that leadership roles should be limited in number and

available only to a few selected teachers, while others believe that leadership opportunities should be available to all teachers. Educators interested in further professionalizing the teaching profession propose the idea that leadership should be considered a "normal" part of a teacher's responsibilities (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 1996).

The second assumption relates to how teacher leadership is performed. The primary way teacher leadership has been carried out in practice and portrayed in the literature is in terms of formal leadership positions for teachers, such as lead teacher or master teacher. Smylie (1995) refers to formal teacher leadership positions as "appointed and anointed" positions, in which teachers are chosen by those higher up on the hierarchy and given formal authority to carry out their roles. This is a very traditional form of leadership, one that is characteristic of traditional hierarchical organizations like schools. An alternative approach to teacher leadership is one which focuses on leadership functions that can be performed by a number of people in the school. Such functions might include curriculum development, grant writing, mentoring, peer coaching, or staff development. By looking at leadership as "a set of functions rather than a formal role" (Lieberman, 1992, p. 163), teacher leaders are encouraged to emerge in more informal ways. The following section will provide a discussion of formal leadership roles and the obstacles teachers in these roles face. The research presented will offer a clear rationale for the necessity of more informal, emergent forms of teacher leadership.

Formal Teacher Leadership Roles

There are two ways to discuss teacher leadership roles: one way is to look at visions and proposals for teacher leadership found in the literature and another way is to look at the actual roles that are carried out by teacher leaders, as studied in the research. As the expansion of teacher leadership is a relatively new phenomenon, proposals for teacher leadership are much more broad and grand than those roles in actual practice. Many of these new roles for teacher leaders are at the proposal, development, or

experimental stages. These roles have either yet to be implemented fully or have not yet been studied in the research (Smylie, 1997). This section focuses on formal teacher leadership roles and the obstacles teachers face in these positions.

New leadership roles envisioned for teachers include roles that focus on instructional improvement at the classroom level and schoolwide decision making/school improvement at the building level. Teacher leader roles at the classroom level include mentors, lead teachers, and instructional leaders. Teacher leaders also can provide staff development, conduct classroom-based action research, and collaborate with other teachers to solve classroom problems and enhance instruction (Howey, 1988; Smylie, 1992b). A few of these more common roles will be described in detail.

Mentors

Mentors are experienced classroom teachers who provide support and assistance to beginning teachers (Goldsberry, 1998). In recent years, teacher induction and mentoring programs have been developed and implemented to provide formal, ongoing assistance to beginning teachers. Mentor activities reported in the literature include: information sharing, informal interaction, problem solving, demonstration teaching, co-teaching, peer coaching, and collaborative action research (Gordon & Nicely, 1998). In a review of 208 studies of teacher leadership (including mentor studies), Smylie (1997) found that contact between mentors and protégés was infrequent and time allocated for mentoring was underutilized. Most contact between mentors and protégés occurred outside the classroom and took the form of information sharing. Very few studies have found mentoring relationships that focused on classroom instruction. Mentoring activities often included: locating materials, completing paperwork, encouragement, and emotional support (Smylie, 1997).

Lead Teachers

Two proposals calling for lead teacher positions include Devaney's (1987) Lead Teacher concept and career ladder programs. The main objectives of the Lead Teacher concept are improving professional learning opportunities for other teachers, engendering collegiality and collective responsibility among staff, and promoting classroom and school improvement. The concept embraces the idea that lead teacher responsibilities should not be prescribed a priori, but be varied and flexible to meet individual school needs. Lead teachers typically serve as regular classroom teachers, working on reduced schedules to allow time to perform leadership duties. Often, lead teachers teach full-time and are either compensated financially or with release time for the leadership duties they perform (Devaney, 1987).

Career ladder programs have been implemented in many school districts in the United States. The goal of career ladder programs is to provide a career path within teaching so educators can achieve professional fulfillment and salary advancement without leaving the classroom (Mertens & Yarger, 1988). Most career ladder programs emphasize individual growth and career development of teachers through job enlargement. The most prevalent forms of job enlargement include evaluation and mentoring of beginning teachers, curriculum development, and grade level team leadership. Some programs also involve teachers in other activities such as conducting educational research, serving as staff development specialists, leading building-level or grade-level innovation projects, disseminating effective teaching strategies, promoting parent involvement in schools, and sharing expertise with colleagues (Smylie, 1997).

One example of a career ladder program is Rochester, New York's Career in Teaching Plan, a four-tiered system for identifying and rewarding teachers: Intern teachers are new and under the guidance of mentors, Resident teachers have completed one year but are not tenured, and Professional teachers have tenure and permanent

certification. Lead teachers, the highest level, are those teachers that have much experience, have earned an advanced degree, and have demonstrated excellence in teaching. They are usually selected to teach half-time, allowing a portion of their time for leadership responsibilities. Leadership activities for Lead teachers include working as mentors or consultants, selecting textbooks, writing curricula, planning staff development, and serving as adjunct professors in colleges. Lead teachers are paid higher salaries than other teachers (Urbanski & Nickolaou, 1997).

Instructional Leaders

Proposals for teacher leader roles consistently recommend that teacher leaders provide instructional support to other teachers by experimenting with new techniques in the classroom and sharing results with other teachers (Howey, 1988). One of the teacher leaders in Wasley's (1991) multiple-case study recreated her role as an external instructional support leader by moving back to the classroom and experimenting with innovative teaching methods. Her classroom served as a model demonstration classroom for other teachers in the school as well as from other schools. She also provided staff development workshops on the instructional strategies she was using in the classroom.

Shared Governance Teams

New leadership roles for teachers that focus on schoolwide decision-making and school improvement at the building level include school improvement teams, shared leadership groups, teacher-led principal advisory councils, team leaders, leadership cadres, and change facilitators. Additionally, with movements toward decentralized decision making, teacher leaders are making important decisions in the areas of staff development, curriculum and program development, and program and personnel evaluation (Smylie, 1992b; Smylie & Brownlee-Conyers, 1992; Smylie & Denny, 1990). Smylie (1992b) also envisions teacher leadership roles that will increase teachers' participation in policy development and decision making related to non-instructional and

organizational matters, such as budgeting, acquiring and allocating material resources, scheduling activities and assigning tasks, and hiring and evaluating teachers.

In reviewing the research, Smylie (1997) found that teachers are being presented with opportunities to make school decisions through shared governance groups, school committees, and task forces. Participative decision making groups may begin by dealing with simple, procedural, and administrative subjects before they progress to more complex issues. When participative groups are able to move beyond procedural issues, they may begin to address matters such as: curriculum, budget, student discipline, instructional equipment, class scheduling, teacher personnel policy and staff development, and parent involvement in schools.

Team Leaders

Team or grade level leaders are responsible for many leadership functions at the team/grade and school level (Miller, 1992). An in-depth study of team leader positions in a Maine school district found that team leaders were formally responsible for carrying out the following tasks: communicating to team members, representing team views, disseminating information, coordinating budgets, designating committee representation, supervising field trips, overseeing mentorships for new teachers, and scheduling/coordinating the use of teacher assistants. In addition to these prescribed functions, team leaders voluntarily took on jobs beyond the description of their role, such as developing agendas for team meetings, disseminating articles from professional journals, offering personal and professional assistance to colleagues, and building time for collegial discussions (Miller, 1992).

Related Studies in Teacher Leadership

Despite the growing interest in teacher leadership, research in the field is limited. The majority of teacher leadership studies examine formal teacher leader roles, that is, positions to which teachers have been formally appointed. Additionally, most of the

studies have focused on the teacher leaders, specifically looking at their role development and performance, the outcomes of their work, and the obstacles to their work. Very few studies have focused on the teachers that interact with teacher leaders. The most important research in the field of teacher leadership will be reviewed in this section. The first part of this section will present those studies that focus on the teacher leaders, while the second part will present the few studies that focus on the teachers. This section will conclude with a summary of the major barriers to formal teacher leadership.

Studies of Formal Teacher Leaders

Several studies have looked at the roles teacher leaders assume and the activities they actually carry out in these roles. Oftentimes, actual practice has not matched the ideal or intended practice. Smylie and Denny (1990) conducted an exploratory study of 13 lead teachers who were appointed by a group of colleagues and administrators as part of a district career enhancement program. The program, modeled after Devaney's (1987) Lead Teacher concept, required teacher leaders to perform their extra leadership duties while teaching in the classroom full-time. These roles were not prescribed a priori, but were expected to be determined based on the needs at each school. The teacher leaders in the study believed their roles would allow them to provide support to their colleagues, especially helping teachers in their daily work with students, as well as helping teachers improve their instruction.

In fact, Smylie and Denny (1990) found that teacher leaders spent most of their time attending meetings at the district and building level. These meetings involved teacher leaders in activities such as discussing administrative aspects of the Lead Teacher program, developing curricular and instructional programs, organizing staff development, and performing various administrative tasks. Lead teachers rarely spent time with other teachers at the classroom level, even though their roles intended to focus on improving instructional practice.

Whitaker's (1997) case study findings provide further support that the practice of teacher leadership often does not match the expectations teacher leaders have for their roles. Whitaker studied a unique situation involving a team of teacher leaders who replaced the assistant principal at their elementary school. Four teacher leaders taught in the classroom half-day and performed leadership functions the other half-day. The teacher leaders expected to perform primarily instructional leadership activities, yet the majority of their time was spent on administrative tasks related to discipline, grant writing, community outreach, and staff development.

Trachtman (1991) interviewed 75 teacher leaders across the country, the majority of whom held formally appointed teacher leadership positions. She found that teacher leaders carried out a broader range of tasks. Most often, they were involved in professional development activities, such as planning and presenting inservice workshops and demonstrating instructional techniques. The teachers she interviewed were also involved in curriculum development, mentoring and coaching, classroom research, grade level or department leadership, community activities, and setting educational policies at the building, district, state, and national level.

Wasley's (1991) multiple-case study provides support, as well as a deeper understanding of the issues. She studied three teacher leaders, each with very different leadership roles. Two of the three roles were formally created by the central office, while the third was a self-created, informal leadership role. Across all three cases, Wasley found that the intentions for the roles did not match the realities. The teachers who were supposed to benefit from the leadership positions were unaffected. Furthermore, roles were never assessed to determine whether they were successful in meeting their intentions.

Wasley (1991) also discovered that no teachers were involved in the creation, selection, or evaluation of the teacher leadership positions. This issue negatively

impacted the work the teacher leaders were trying to do with teachers. As nonparticipants, Wasley concluded, "most teachers are unresponsive to top-down efforts to improve their instruction through administratively created teacher leadership positions" (p. 160).

The fact that teachers did not take part in creating the teacher leader positions may have contributed to the limited effects these roles had on teachers. Wasley (1991) determined that those who did create the roles also had the power and authority to decide how the roles would function and how the majority of the teacher leaders' time would be spent.

Researchers have been unable to link the work of teacher leaders to benefits at the classroom level (Smylie & Denny, 1990; Trachtman, 1991; Wasley, 1991). Most studies of teacher leaders emphasize the strong personal benefits the teacher leaders gain from working in their new roles. In Wasley's (1991) study, the teacher leaders believed they acquired new skills and understandings as they were able to observe other teachers and work with a variety of educational experts. As a result, the teacher leaders believed their own teaching skills improved. The teacher leaders also reported that their leadership experiences increased their commitment to education and made them feel more professional.

Barker (1998) studied ten teacher leaders who served on a school leadership team. Teacher leaders reported several outcomes of their experiences on this team including:

- Increased commitment to their school, students, and their role in effecting change;
- Enhanced sense of empowerment;
- Increased confidence in their leadership abilities; and
- Strengthened relationships with colleagues on the team.

Barker concluded that the school leadership team provided many personal and professional benefits to teacher leaders and the team contributed to school-wide reform efforts.

Trachtman (1991) also found that teacher leaders gained new skills related to instruction, leadership, and group dynamics. Their formal positions also gave them recognition and prestige. The teacher leaders in Whitaker's (1997) study reported enhanced self-esteem as a result of having the opportunity to use their knowledge in their leadership roles.

To conclude, studies of formal teacher leaders reveal two important themes. First, the actual practice of teacher leadership has not matched teacher leaders' intentions. Teachers assuming formal teacher leadership positions believed they would be involved in instructional leadership activities, specifically working with teachers in classrooms. In fact, teacher leaders spent more time on tasks that kept them away from classrooms, such as disciplining students, attending meetings, writing grants, and performing various administrative tasks. Teacher leaders were involved in one activity that related to teacher instruction: planning and leading various staff development sessions.

Second, the primary beneficiaries of teacher leadership have been the teacher leaders themselves. Teacher leaders reported many personal and professional gains from their new leadership roles including: recognition and prestige, enhanced self-esteem, improved teaching skills, and increased commitment to education. While these outcomes are certainly important, teacher leaders have not identified effects of their work on other teachers or the schools.

Studies of Teachers' Interactions with Formal Teacher Leaders

Few studies look closely at the teachers who are intended to benefit from teacher leader positions. Although some studies include teacher surveys or interviews as a secondary focus, the information gathered from these data sources are often limited to

teachers' perceptions of the benefits and drawbacks of specific teacher leadership programs. Two important studies (Smylie, 1992b; Wasley, 1991) examined teacher-teacher leader interactions.

Smylie (1992b) conducted a study exploring teachers' interactions with teacher leaders and how psychological factors influence those interactions. He found that opportunity to interact with teacher leaders was a necessary but insufficient condition for interaction to occur. Teachers' beliefs and values concerning teachers' working relationships were significantly related to interactions with teacher leaders.

Smylie (1992b) pointed out that teachers' professional relationships are characterized by norms of equality, autonomy, and privacy, as well as independence and physical isolation. Teacher leadership creates differentiated status among teachers and changes previous working relationships. Teacher leadership encourages teachers to work collaboratively and to learn from one another for the purpose of continuous improvement. Smylie's findings emphasized that teacher leadership roles conflict with professional norms, especially equality of status and independence, and that the degree of conflict affects teachers' interactions with teacher leaders. Teachers who held strong beliefs about teachers' equality were less likely to interact with teacher leaders. Also, teachers who felt obligated to carry out the advice of teacher leaders were more likely to avoid future interactions with teacher leaders. Smylie suggested that feelings of obligation might intrude on the independence teachers usually enjoy in their work.

Wasley (1991) found that teachers had different interpretations of the teacher leaders' roles and that these interpretations impacted their interactions with teacher leaders. Teachers were much less willing to work with teacher leaders if they felt the teacher leaders were serving as extensions of the administration or if their roles were to function as experts to fix problems related to inadequate teaching. On the other hand,

teachers were more willing to collaborate if they believed the teacher leaders were working for their benefit.

Wasley (1991) pointed out that one essential problem with existing formal teacher leadership positions is the lack of incentives for teachers to work with teacher leaders; so often, the services teacher leaders are willing to provide are ignored. Wasley explained that while many incentives existed for the teacher leaders, many teachers felt coerced to participate in activities sponsored by the teacher leaders. Often, teachers felt imposed upon. For example, in her study, teachers had to adjust their schedules and work with fewer resources, as teacher leaders were given lighter schedules, more resources, and better classrooms. Teachers felt like they suffered at the hands of their teacher leader "colleagues" who were treated with more ideal classroom conditions (Wasley, 1991).

Research focusing on teachers' perceptions of teacher leadership outcomes supports previously cited research finding few benefits at the classroom level. Smylie and Denny (1990) surveyed teachers to find their responses to a school district's Lead Teacher program. They found that although 45% of the teachers interacted with the Lead Teachers, the teachers tended to identify benefits for their building or school, rather than for themselves. Building-level benefits included: more staff development opportunities, a more positive and professional school climate, and more focus on curricular and instructional innovation. Additionally, teachers noted increased cooperation between teachers and administrators. Some teachers citing personal benefits mentioned feeling more professional.

Teachers in Smylie and Denny's (1990) study had several criticisms of the Lead Teacher program. The teachers believed the program created hierarchical relationships among teachers, rather than helping or supportive relationships. Because the Lead Teacher positions were formally appointed and limited in number, teachers competed

against one another to gain the few leadership positions available. Sometimes this prevented the teachers and Lead Teachers from working together in positive ways.

Teachers also believed that the Lead Teachers spent too much time out of the classroom while doing work related to their leadership roles, as well as too much time working at the district level rather than the building or classroom level. Teachers felt this time away from the classroom was counterproductive to the education of children (Smylie & Denny, 1990).

Whitaker (1997) also interviewed staff members to gain their perceptions of the newly established teacher leader management team. Over the two years this model was in place, teachers found it helpful to have a team of teacher leaders they could go to for various concerns and needs. The teachers believed that the team approach allowed for a broader range of expertise, more ideas to be generated, and more leadership opportunities for teachers.

Staff members also mentioned drawbacks to this model. Some teachers felt resentment toward the team because they were not included in the process of choosing the team members or defining their roles. Also, there was definite confusion related to the roles of team members, their responsibilities, and how procedures were to be handled. Staff members felt much of this ambiguity was due to poor communication among team members, as well as between team members and staff (Whitaker, 1997).

Finally, teachers in Whitaker's study felt that the teacher leaders were overloaded with work and had a difficult time fulfilling the responsibilities associated with both their teaching roles and their leadership roles. They felt this "role overload" contributed to the stress they observed in teacher leaders (Whitaker, 1997).

To summarize, studies of teachers' interactions with teacher leaders have revealed that teacher leaders encounter many challenges in their work. These challenges will be described in detail in the following section.

Obstacles to Formal Leadership Roles for Teachers

As opportunities for teacher leadership have begun to increase in schools, teachers in these formal positions have been faced with several barriers that have hindered their success. After reviewing the teacher leadership literature (e.g., Pellicer & Anderson, 1995; Smylie, 1992a; Smylie, 1992b; Smylie & Brownlee-Conyers, 1992; Smylie & Denny, 1990; Wasley, 1991), five major obstacles to teacher leadership have been identified. These are: (a) Traditional Authority and Teacher-Principal Relationships, (b) Norms Influencing Teachers Working Relationships, (c) The Nature of Teachers' Work, (d) Ambiguities and Uncertainties, and (e) Lack of Training. Each of these obstacles to teacher leadership will be described in-depth.

Traditional Authority and Teacher-Principal Relationships

Teachers and principals have traditionally been isolated from one another and have worked on different aspects of schooling. The principal has been the traditional authority figure in an inflexible school hierarchy (Smylie, 1992a). The school culture has expected teachers to teach and principals to lead. Because of these traditional roles, teachers begin their teaching careers with a limited view of their own power (Sirotnik & Ericson, 1996). Teachers may be unwilling to assume leadership roles because they feel they will be disobeying their principal. Teacher leadership requires teacher leader-principal interaction and collaboration. Both teachers and principals are expected to take on new roles. Depending on their previous relationships, principals and teacher leaders may have no history of trust to build their relationships upon. They may have different agendas, interests, definitions, and ways of carrying out their leadership roles (Smylie & Brownlee-Conyers, 1992; Zinn, 1997).

Forster (1997) argues that the patriarchal nature of our schools and administrators' reluctance to share decision making power might be responsible for teachers not taking on leadership roles. However, she also questions whether or not teachers desire to take

on leadership roles, noting that many teachers are reluctant to become involved beyond the classroom level. She maintains that principals and teachers have a tacit agreement in which teachers sacrifice influence at the school level for relative autonomy within their classrooms.

Norms Influencing Teachers' Working Relationships

The norms that characterize the teaching profession and influence working relationships among teachers are professional equality, autonomy, and privacy. These beliefs suggest that teaching is a personal and private act that should be free from scrutiny and judgment. Differentiating oneself from a colleague is often viewed negatively (Smylie, 1992a). Teacher leadership requires work in direct opposition to these norms: collaboration, collegiality, and differentiated status. Teachers may be reluctant to participate in leadership roles for fear that participation may result in collegial disfavor or sanction (Smylie, 1992a). Smylie (1992b) found that teacher leaders were treated differently by their teacher colleagues once they assumed leadership roles. Teachers interacted with the teacher leaders less frequently than before and with apprehension or suspicion. Other researchers have found a lack of teacher support for teacher leaders (Pellicer & Anderson, 1995; Smyser, 1995; Urbanski & Nickolau, 1997; Zinn, 1997). In a case study of three teacher leaders, Wasley (1991) found that although the teacher leaders enjoyed collaborating and working with adults, they felt more isolated than before as a result of their formal leadership positions. They felt separated from the rest of the staff and felt like they were in "no-man's land"--they were neither regular teachers nor were they administrators (p.142).

The Nature of Teachers' Work

The nature of teachers' work fails to support opportunities for teacher leadership. Physical isolation, tight scheduling, classroom responsibilities, lack of access to new knowledge, and time all hinder collegial interaction and leadership opportunities (Smylie,

1992b; Urbanski & Nicholaou, 1997). Many teacher leaders are in positions in which they have to balance classroom responsibilities with leadership functions. Wasley (1991) found that this arrangement helped teacher leaders' credibility with other teachers, but took time away from each of their dual roles. Teacher leaders felt they were not providing the best instruction for their students and also had insufficient time to fulfill their leadership roles. Zinn (1997) found that leadership was just one aspect of teacher leaders' lives. Other personal and professional commitments lessened teachers' willingness to take on leadership roles. Other researchers have found time to be a major barrier to teacher leadership (Goldsberry, 1998; Pellicer & Anderson, 1995).

Ambiguities and Uncertainties

Various teacher leadership programs have been established by states and local districts. In many of these programs, intentions for teacher leadership have not always matched realities (Pellicer & Anderson, 1995). In several studies, teachers were assigned formal leadership positions, yet their roles were not clearly defined (Smylie & Brownlee-Conyers, 1992; Smylie & Denny, 1990; Wasley, 1991). This led to many tensions as teacher leaders and their colleagues were uncertain about the functions teacher leaders were to perform. Often the work teacher leaders did was inconsistent with their own definitions of their leadership roles. While teacher leaders thought they were to provide direct instructional help and support to teachers, they spent a majority of their time performing administrative tasks (Smylie & Denny, 1990; Whitaker, 1997).

In Wasley's (1991) study, everyone in the educational community had different interpretations of the teacher leaders' roles, their purposes, and how their time should be spent. These multiple interpretations influenced the way in which the teacher leaders were able to carry out their roles. Three critical groups—administrators, other teachers, and teacher union representatives—either constrained or enabled teacher leaders to perform effectively. For example, supportive administrators encouraged and valued the

work of teacher leaders, and gave them the flexibility and freedom to carry out their leadership roles as they saw fit. Unsupportive administrators did not believe the teacher leader roles were needed and they interfered with the work teacher leaders were trying to do. Teacher colleagues backed the teacher leaders only if they believed the teacher leaders were there to support them, not to evaluate them. Finally, one teacher leader was supported by his local teacher's union, while the two other teacher leaders experienced a great deal of opposition from their local unions. These teacher leaders felt their leadership roles were constantly under fire (Wasley, 1991).

Another factor that greatly added to a sense of uncertainty was a lack of communication. In Wasley's study, communication between the teacher leaders and other teachers about what they were trying to do was extremely limited and haphazard. Information seemed to flow hierarchically from administrators to teachers, often bypassing the teacher leaders. Poor communication contributed to a great deal of staff resistance to the teacher leader roles (Wasley, 1991).

Lack of Training

Several researchers have found that teacher leaders feel they lack the training necessary to carry out their roles successfully (Goldsberry, 1998; Pellicer & Anderson, 1995; Smylie & Brownlee-Conyers, 1992; Smyser, 1995; Wasley, 1991). Teacher leaders believe they needed training in the following areas: educational change and implementation of innovation, conflict resolution, group dynamics, communication skills, needs assessment, and school culture and politics (Pellicer & Anderson, 1995; Wasley, 1991). In Smylie and Brownlee-Conyers' (1992) study, both principals and teachers voiced concerns about a lack of training in developing new working relationships. Sirotnik and Ericson (1996) point out that university education programs have yet to support teacher leadership: Educational administration programs have had very little to

say about teacher leadership and teacher education programs have focused primarily on classroom practice.

The problems associated with current teacher leadership practices involve a variety of members of the educational community and need to be addressed at many levels. Forster (1997) points out that teacher leadership is associated with several interrelated reform themes: teacher professionalization, school improvement and restructuring, and shared governance. The common theme behind these ideas is that those responsible for implementing change, that is, teachers, need to take active roles in the planning, choosing, and directing of those change efforts. Teachers who care about instructional and school improvement need to view leadership as a professional responsibility. Forster provides an ideal definition of teacher leadership: a professional commitment and a process in which people work together toward change and improved practice that enables the achievement of shared educational goals. This definition has not guided the formal teacher leadership positions studied in the literature, but characterizes a different approach to teacher leadership, one that emphasizes more informal, emergent roles. The next section provides a framework for understanding emergent teacher leadership, the focus of this study.

Emergent Teacher Leadership

While formal leadership roles for teachers have empowered teachers to take on new responsibilities and use their knowledge and expertise in new ways, there exist many obstacles which prevent formal teacher leaders from contributing to school improvement (Odell, 1997; Wasley, 1991). Recently, many authors have mentioned the potential of less structured, more informal or emergent leadership roles for teachers. For example, in critiquing the teacher leadership literature, Smylie (1995) stated that the literature tends to narrowly define teacher leadership as positions to which teachers are appointed or elected. Less attention has been given to emergent forms of teacher leadership, such as

those associated with Professional Development Schools and new school reform models (e.g., Accelerated Schools, Essential Schools) (Smylie, 1995). Odell (1997) presents a systems view, which focuses on teacher leadership within the context of the school organization. She proposes that if schools as a whole are "professionalized and better organized for teaching, teacher leaders will emerge as a matter of course in informally structured positions" (p. 121).

Literature concerning informal or emergent teacher leadership is significantly lacking. The words "informal" and "emerging" are often mentioned (Darling-Hammond, et al., 1995; Lieberman, 1992; Miller, 1992; Odell, 1997; Smylie, 1995; Teitel, 1997), but have yet to be clearly defined or examined. Katzenmeyer and Moller (1996) propose one definition of emergent teacher leadership: "Teachers who are leaders lead within and beyond the classroom, influence others toward improved educational practice, and identify with and contribute to a community of leaders" (p. 6). They emphasize the importance of teacher leaders remaining connected to actual classroom practice for a portion of the day. Teacher leaders do not need formal titles to influence others, but typically they have positive relationships with their peers, show initiative, are willing to take risks, and are willing to share their ideas with others. Katzenmeyer and Moller believe that teacher leadership is not limited to a few teachers; rather, leadership emerges in a natural way and can be shared by many. All teachers must develop leadership skills as part of their normal professional expertise. This promotes a "community of leaders" in the school (p. 12).

This section will present three concepts that guide the current study and begin to build a framework for understanding emergent teacher leadership: career lattices, Professional Development Schools, and Constructivist Leadership theory. Findings from the few studies that relate to emergent teacher leadership will also be summarized.

Career Lattices

Howey (1988) emphasizes the need for teachers to take on leadership roles, as they are closest to school problems and can address instructional needs in an ongoing, collective manner. He envisions teacher leadership as a group of teachers working together to improve instruction. Rather than promoting the hierarchical notion of career ladders, in which teachers have differentiated status, responsibility, and pay, he suggests the concept of career lattices, which encourages a more collaborative, horizontal division of labor and allows for more teachers to be involved in leadership activities. Howey views leadership as a dynamic process in which roles and responsibilities are fluid and flexible. Career lattices allow for leadership opportunities to vary at each school site, depending on need. Howey suggests several leadership functions for teachers, including planning and implementing new curriculum, developing new instructional strategies, and conducting collaborative action research.

Darling-Hammond et al. (1995) refer to the same concept, further explaining that the notion of career lattices recognizes teacher knowledge and leadership as major resources to the school community and acknowledges that teacher expertise can be used in many ways. They provide a broad concept, "collaborative leadership," in which principals, teachers, and teacher educators use their collective knowledge to collaboratively redesign organizational structures.

Professional Development Schools

Professional Development Schools (PDSs) also incorporate emergent teacher leadership. PDSs, first introduced following second-wave reform proposals, are collaborations between schools and university education programs. These collaborations involve educators in redesigning schools and schools of education so current and prospective teachers are better able to provide instruction that meet the diverse needs of all students (Darling-Hammond et al., 1995; Forster, 1997; Teitel, 1997). PDSs promote

a view of leadership similar to Howey's career lattices. In PDSs, leadership opportunities are available to all teachers and are based on experience and expertise, not on formally-assigned roles. Darling-Hammond et al. describe teacher leadership in PDSs as leadership that emerges and compares it to Sergiovanni's (1987) notion of cultural leadership, in which leadership is defined as "the power to accomplish," rather than the "power over people or events" (p. 121). While teacher leadership activities vary depending on school need, many teachers collaborating with PDSs are involved in the following activities:

- Involvement in the preparation of pre-service teachers and new teachers, including placing student teachers, overseeing their school experiences, teaching courses at colleges, and mentoring beginning teachers;
- Working on their own professional development as well as facilitating the professional growth of colleagues by presenting at and attending conferences, peer coaching, visiting other schools, and presenting workshops to other teachers;
- Developing a high quality education for all students by tailoring instruction to meet student needs, examining new instructional strategies, developing new forms of student assessment, and developing curriculum; and
- Involvement in the continuous inquiry into improving practice by conducting research, developing new models of collaborative research, participating in university-conducted research projects, and presenting at conferences (Teitel, 1997; Darling-Hammond et al., 1995).

Darling-Hammond et al. (1995) see great potential in Professional Development Schools preparing a new kind of teacher, one that sees leadership as a normal part of the teaching role: "In these PDSs, teacher leadership is potentially more than a role; it is a

stance, a mind-set, a way of being, acting, and thinking as a learner within a community of learners, and as a *professional teacher*" (p. 95).

Constructivist Teacher Leadership

Lambert et al. (1995) propose a constructivist model of teacher leadership. This section will present a brief review of constructivist learning theory, upon which the model is based, as well as provide a more in-depth examination of the constructivist model of teacher leadership.

Constructivist Learning theory is based on the early works of Dewey, Piaget, Bruner, Vygotsky, and Feuerstien, as well as more recent work by Schon and Gardner (Lambert et al., 1995). Constructivist Learning theory maintains that students construct knowledge through social interaction. Students bring their knowledge, experiences, and values to these interactions and use them to make meaning from new information. When presented with new knowledge, students assimilate that knowledge into existing schemas or adjust the existing schemas to accommodate the new information. Disequilibrium occurs when new information does not fit with existing knowledge. Students grow from these experiences and through reflection upon these experiences. Cooperative learning strategies encourage students to interact with one another and make meaning from their experiences. Student self-assessment is a valuable activity for further growth and development. Students can make meaning from bigger ideas, rather than from broken down fragments. They can learn from seeing patterns and themes, rather than isolated bits of information or individual skills (Lambert et al., 1995).

Constructivist learning theory is critical to adult learning and has implications for teachers working together for school change. Adults in a community need to interact to construct knowledge and meaning. Lambert et al. (1995) suggest that the function of leadership is to encourage people in the process of making common meanings about teaching and learning.

Lambert et al. (1995) provide the following definition of Constructivist Leadership: "the reciprocal processes that enable participants in an educational community to construct meanings that lead toward a common purpose about schooling" (p. 29). In this leadership model, traditional thinking about leadership roles and responsibilities is replaced by a more open and expanded notion of leadership as a process. Leadership is not limited by formal authority and power. Rather, it is an integral part of the school culture and can be undertaken by whoever identifies a need or opportunity. As such, any participant in the school community can engage in leadership actions.

Analyzing Lambert et al.'s (1995) definition of Constructivist Leadership will provide a more thorough understanding of this theory's principles:

- "The reciprocal processes that enable" refers to people working together to exchange ideas and concerns, construct meaning, make sense of the world, and grow together. Structures must exist to support these dynamic, collaborative processes, such as the formation of groups (leadership teams, action research groups), the availability of supportive places (faculty rooms, professional libraries), and the initiation of events (workshops, group dialogue sessions).
- "participants in an educational community to construct meaning" refers to all members of the educational community. Participants' roles continually change and leaders emerge at different points in time depending on interest, expertise, experience, and responsibility.
- "that lead toward a common purpose of schooling," that common purpose being broadly defined by Lambert et al. as the growth of children, adults, and communities.

Constructivist Leadership theory significantly broadens and deepens current understanding of what emergent teacher leadership may look like in schools.

Related Studies in Emergent Teacher Leadership

Despite the calls for a broader view of teacher leadership to include informal roles (Darling-Hammond et al., 1995; Odell, 1997; Smylie, 1995; Wasley, 1991), very few studies exist that focus on emergent teacher leaders. In one study, the researcher looked at the influences on emergent teacher leaders. In three case studies, researchers focused on strategies emergent teacher leaders used in specific restructuring or change initiatives. In a fifth study, the researchers identified strategies and effects of emergent teacher leadership in a middle school. These studies will be described in detail.

Corallo (1995) studied the influences on the development of informal teacher leaders. Informal teacher leaders were defined as classroom teachers who had the ability to influence teachers because of certain characteristics. These characteristics included excellent teaching skills, strong collaboration skills, willingness to take risks, and involvement in continuous professional development. Following extensive interviews that focused on the personal and professional life experiences of three teacher leaders, Corallo concluded that several factors influenced the development of informal teacher leaders: family background, success in early leadership endeavors, mentor teachers, professional growth activities, and support from administrators.

Darling-Hammond et al. (1995) conducted in-depth case studies of seven long-standing Professional Development Schools to examine teacher leadership in those schools. Data from the case studies came from interviews of teachers involved with PDSs, observations, surveys, teacher logs, and reviews of PDS documents.

They found that Professional Development Schools provided opportunities for all teachers to take on leadership roles in areas in which they developed expertise or had interest. Leadership for teachers was inclusive, rather than exclusive, and resulted in no

teachers having higher professional statuses. Darling-Hammond et al. (1995) described the type of leadership they observed as a collective form of leadership by many individuals.

For example, the Learning/Teaching Collaborative, a PDS in Boston, Massachusetts, was governed by a Steering Committee comprised of teachers, as well as college faculty and school administrators. Every teacher in the Collaborative was a member of a governing subcommittee, allowing leadership roles for teachers in many aspects of the school organization: budgeting, planning and conducting professional development activities, and interviewing and selecting student interns.

Throughout their case study research, they found that within the various PDSs, teacher leaders emerged to initiate and fulfill the following roles:

1. Mentors and teacher educators—Through the collaborations with universities and colleges, teachers took responsibility for the greater teaching profession by helping design new methods courses and preparing new teachers through regular reflection, discussion, and research activities.

2. Curriculum developers and decision makers—Teachers took initiative in redesigning curriculum, grouping students for instruction in new ways, and using innovative instructional strategies. They also created new forms of assessment that better met their students' needs and provided them with better information on how their students learn.

3. Problem solvers and change agents—In PDSs, shared decision making structures empowered teachers to identify and solve problems. Rather than looking to school administrators or outside sources for leadership, teachers looked to one another for leadership for school change.

4. Researchers—Teacher leaders conducted classroom-based and schoolwide research, frequently read scholarly research, and held discussions with their colleagues.

Darling-Hammond et al. (1995) concluded that in PDSs, teacher leadership was not artificial or imposed through formal hierarchies and positions. Rather, teacher leadership emerged and leadership roles were available to all teachers. They propose that this concept of teacher leadership will lead to greater acceptance of leadership as a normal role for teachers. Additionally, cultivating this type of leadership will likely improve the ability of schools to better meet their students' needs.

Heller and Firestone (1995) studied eight schools that differed in the degree to which they successfully institutionalized a problem solving program, and then explored how well and by whom various leadership functions were carried out. They interviewed a principal and three teachers at each school, as well as a consultant to each school. They defined leadership as a specific set of tasks to be performed and proposed the idea that it was critical that these leadership tasks be performed, while who performed them might be less important.

In schools that successfully institutionalized the program, the principal did not emerge as the key leader for change. Rather, leadership tasks were carried out by teams of individuals, including teachers, and tasks were often performed redundantly with little coordination. In all fully institutionalized schools, teachers contributed to a variety of critical leadership functions, including helping to sustain a vision for the program by encouraging each other, reinforcing each other's efforts, monitoring each other's progress, and educating new teachers about the program.

In one school, teachers completely sustained the program, as the new principal had no interest in the program. The program survived only because a large group of teachers continued fulfilling whatever leadership functions they could. The researchers

concluded that teacher leadership is possible in the way schools are currently structured and that teacher leadership can complement other sources of leadership.

Stone, et al. (1997) studied similarities and differences in teacher leadership at the elementary, middle school, and high school levels. The researchers asked teachers at each site to select six teachers in their schools whom they perceived as teacher leaders. Those identified most frequently were chosen as participants in the study. Data sources included interviews with teacher leaders, teachers, and principals, as well as principal journals, focus group sessions, and observations.

The researchers reported that teacher leaders chosen by their colleagues at the elementary and high school levels held formal leadership positions designed by administrators, while all of the middle school teacher leaders carried out their leadership roles informally (Stone et al., 1997). As such, only the findings at the middle school level will be summarized. The researchers did not thoroughly describe the participants, but did provide a surface view of their characteristics, motivations, activities, effects, and supports and constraints.

They found that the middle school teacher leaders defined their leadership roles as facilitators. Teacher leaders also believed they served as catalysts to their colleagues' learning through activities such as collaborating and sharing, mentoring, and staff development. Assuming teacher leadership roles provided them with a challenge, the opportunity to improve the teaching profession, and satisfaction from fulfilling a perceived need (Stone et al., 1997).

The researchers found several effects of teacher leadership at the middle school level, including improvements in collaboration, as well as in relationships between teacher leaders and colleagues, and with the principal. Teacher leadership also resulted in personal and professional growth for the teacher leaders and provided encouragement and role models to others. Two factors were found to be both supports and constraints to

teacher leadership. These included time to perform tasks or lack of time, and support from colleagues and administrators or lack of support. Two additional constraints reported were school climate and lack of compensation (Stone et al., 1997).

Miller (1992) conducted a case study of a school undergoing school restructuring. During the three-year study, she focused on the development of teacher leadership through the restructuring process. Data were collected through interviews, focus groups, extensive field notes, and documents. In the school restructuring project, five formal teacher leaders were chosen to participate in the management and educational leadership of this school.

Miller (1992) discovered that, while team leaders fulfilled many leadership functions, it was the classroom teachers who initiated the most change efforts. Seeking to improve their practices, teacher leaders emerged to initiate change. Within the first year of the process, one-half of the teaching staff had initiated new teaching arrangements, such as creating a multi-grade classroom, team teaching, and regrouping special needs students with non-special education students. Miller noted: "Leadership in program development and curriculum reform had emerged from patterns of interaction that had taken root in the school. A process of inquiry, dialogue, reflection, invention, and action, was becoming the modus operandi of the school" (p. 120).

Over time, emergent teacher leadership became the norm at the school. Teachers assumed leadership responsibilities depending on their expertise and interests. Teachers began offering in-service workshops for their colleagues. One teacher assumed responsibility for reviewing research in learning theory and discussing it with her colleagues. Others took leadership in redesigning the curriculum and the kindergarten program. Another group of teachers who became interested in student assessment began making presentations throughout their state and country.

Miller (1992) attempted to account for this form of emergent teacher leadership she observed. She provided several factors that supported emergent teacher leadership:

1. The superintendent of the school district set the stage for teacher leadership by fully supporting the restructuring process and communicating her trust in teacher decision making. She also provided support in the way of time, money, access to various professional development activities, and regular conversations with teachers about what they were doing in the classroom.

2. The principal of the school regularly communicated her vision of the school as a center of inquiry. She established herself as a teacher-advocate by initiating discussions with teachers about instructional practices, encouraging teachers to reflect on their practice, and verbally stating her belief that diverse teaching styles were of value. She quickly won the trust of her teaching staff.

3. Teachers developed the regular practice of reflecting on their teaching and openly questioning, discussing, and problem solving with their colleagues.

Miller concluded:

A culture of questioning, inquiry, reflection, experimentation, and trust developed among the faculty. This was promoted by a strong district commitment to teacher professionalism, participatory school leadership, opportunities for dialog and action; and, lastly, the unique talents and interests of the teachers in the school" (p. 126).

To summarize, research findings in the area of emergent teacher leadership have been very positive. Roles for emergent teacher leaders evolved in natural ways, based on individual school needs. These roles were available to all teachers. The strategies used by teachers in these roles had the potential to significantly contribute to improvements in teaching and learning.

Summary

To conclude, most research in teacher leadership has focused on teacher leaders who hold formal leadership positions. Researchers have concluded that teachers in these formal roles face many obstacles due to the very nature of the teaching profession. As such, teacher leaders in formal roles usually have not been successful in achieving their desired goals. Informal, or emergent teacher leadership, has the potential to achieve what formal teacher leadership roles have not: to improve teaching and learning. Very little is known about informal or emergent teacher leadership. This study focused on teachers' perspectives of emergent teacher leadership in an elementary school and resulted in a theory explaining teachers' perspectives. This study significantly contributes to the current knowledge of emergent teacher leadership.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to explore teachers' perspectives of emergent teacher leadership in an elementary school. This study examined teachers' experiences with emergent teacher leaders in their school and the meaning these experiences had for them.

This chapter includes five sections. The first section provides a background and framework for understanding symbolic interactionism, a perspective which guided the design of this study as well as the interpretation of findings. The second section offers in-depth information on the site and sample selection process. It also includes a rich description of the school in which the study was conducted to provide the reader with a context for comparison. The third section presents a detailed description of data collection procedures, specifically, interviews. The fourth section provides a thorough discussion of the grounded theory methodology, as well as the stages and components of constant comparative analysis. The last section presents credibility criteria used for this qualitative study.

Theoretical Framework: Symbolic Interactionism

Symbolic interactionism was the theoretical framework for this study of emergent teacher leadership. Blumer (1969) defines symbolic interactionism as "activity in which humans interpret each other's gestures and act on the basis of meaning yielded by interpretation" (pp. 65-66). Symbolic interactionism focuses on the nature of social interactions. According to symbolic interactionists, individuals act based on their interactions with others, as well as their interactions within themselves (Charon, 1995). In the following section, the background and framework of symbolic interactionism will

be discussed. The section will conclude with an explanation of the relationship of symbolic interactionism to this study.

Background of Symbolic Interactionism

In writing about symbolic interactionism, Herbert Blumer (1969) integrated the work of George Herbert Mead, Charles Darwin, John Dewey, and others. Blumer was primarily influenced by Mead's philosophy of pragmatism. Mead (1934) believed that human beings are active in interpreting all things in their environment. By defining the world around them, individuals define reality. He also stated that human beings constantly test knowledge and judge knowledge by its usefulness. Perspectives, facts, ideas, and definitions are used and remembered based on their applicability. Objects are also defined according to their use, and because any object can have a multitude of uses, any object can be defined in many ways. Mead believed that individuals are best understood through their actions. Actions are not always physical or observable; there are also thinking actions. Therefore, one should study humans through what they think and do (Mead, 1934).

Mead and Blumer were both influenced by Charles Darwin's belief in the importance of symbols. They agreed that human beings are the only animals that can reason and use symbols. Humans can understand the forces working in nature and can modify those forces. This makes human beings active, not passive, in nature. Darwin also believed that all things in nature are constantly in a state of change. Symbolic interactionists believe that individuals are always changing as a result of social interactions (Charon, 1995).

Framework of Symbolic Interactionism

Blumer's (1969) framework of symbolic interactionism rests on three primary premises: (a) individuals act toward objects in their environment based on the meanings those objects have for them; (b) these meanings develop from the social interactions

individuals have with one another; and (c) individuals use an interpretive process to establish, modify, and make sense of these meanings.

In discussing the first premise, Blumer (1969) argued that individuals are not passive, merely responding to environmental stimuli. Rather, they are active and purposive. Individuals act with plans and purposes because of the meanings they hold for objects.

The second premise of symbolic interactionism states that individuals develop meanings for objects through their interactions. Objects do not have intrinsic meaning, rather, individuals give meanings to objects based on the uses they have for those objects. Objects are called social objects by symbolic interactionists because individuals come to know about objects through social interaction. A social object is any object in a situation that is useful to individuals in that situation. Social objects can include physical objects, human-made objects, animals, other people, ourselves, symbols, ideas, perspectives, and emotions (Blumer, 1969; Charon, 1995).

Symbols are one group of social objects. Symbols are social objects used by individuals to represent and communicate something. Physical objects, human actions, and words can be symbols. Symbols are social (defined through interaction), meaningful (represent something else), and significant (used intentionally to represent or communicate). It is through symbolic interaction with one another that individuals give meaning to the world (Blumer, 1969; Charon, 1995).

Blumer's (1969) third premise states that individuals use an interpretive process to make sense of the meanings of social objects. Social interaction with others influences how individuals interpret meanings. Blumer described two steps of this interpretive process. First, an individual communicates with himself (through thought) to identify which objects have meaning. Then, the individual selects, checks, suspends, regroup, and transforms these meanings based on the current situation in which he is placed.

Individuals constantly interpret meanings as they move from one situation to another. Therefore, meanings are not static, but change in light of new situations (Blumer, 1969).

Relationship of Symbolic Interactionism to this Study

This study was guided by the symbolic interactionist framework, evident by its focus on teachers' interpretations and meanings. The purpose of this study was to describe teachers' perspectives of emergent teacher leadership in an elementary school. Through working with emergent teacher leaders, teachers interpret their experiences based on their interactions and their thought processes. Teachers also share with one another as they relate experiences, stories, and problems. Teachers create common meanings of emergent teacher leadership through their interactions with one another.

Site and Sample Selection

Purposeful sampling was the general method used to select the research site and the participants for this qualitative research study. According to Merriam (1998), "purposeful sampling is based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned" (p. 61). The purpose of sampling in a qualitative study is to maximize information, through information-rich data sources, not to facilitate generalization (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In the following sections, specific methods for site and sample selection will be discussed.

Site Selection

The specific methods used to choose a research site were guided by Lincoln and Guba's (1985) recommendations. A few sites were identified that would most likely generate the kind of information this particular study called for. In this study, existing literature was used to develop criteria for site selection and experts were asked to nominate sites that best fit the criteria. Explanations of these procedures follow.

To understand teachers' experiences with emergent teacher leadership, this study was conducted in a school where teacher leadership thrives. To identify such a school, criteria were used based on Katzenmeyer and Moller's (1996) Dimensions of Teacher Leadership. These researchers found that certain characteristics exist in schools where teacher leadership is supported and has become the norm. According to Katzenmeyer and Moller, these seven characteristics or dimensions include:

1. Developmental Focus. "Teachers are assisted in learning new knowledge and skills and are encouraged to help the learning of others."
2. Recognition. "Teachers are recognized for the professional roles they take and contributions they make."
3. Collegiality. "Teachers collaborate on instructional and student-related matters."
4. Autonomy. "Teachers are encouraged to take the initiative to make improvements and to be innovative."
5. Participation. "Teachers are involved actively in making decisions and have input on important matters."
6. Open Communication. "Teachers both send and receive communication in open, honest ways and feel informed about happenings in their school."
7. Positive Environment. "Teachers experience a positive climate and effective administrative leadership" (pp. 99-101).

Katzenmeyer and Moller (1996) also included several examples of activities or strategies that further define each dimension. For example, in schools with a developmental focus, teachers were involved in many learning-based activities, such as mentoring, peer coaching, professional development, journal reading, and meeting with study groups. Specific examples from descriptions of Katzenmeyer and Moller's dimensions were included in written surveys used to select the research site.

Two different, but related, surveys were created to identify a school for this study. The first survey was for teacher leaders and school-level administrators (in this case, assistant principals). This survey asked participants to read the seven dimensions of teacher leadership along with the descriptors which provided examples of each dimension. After reading this, participants indicated whether each dimension described their schools (with options of "yes", "no", or "don't know"), and provided brief comments to justify their decisions. A pilot version of this survey was given to teachers at the researcher's school, and changes were made based on their feedback.

This revised survey (see Appendix A) was given to 13 teacher leaders (one from each elementary school) at a district-level Elementary Instructional Committee meeting in February, 2002. The researcher attended the meeting and explained the study and the directions for completing the survey. All 13 of the teacher leaders completed the survey at that time and returned it to the researcher. The same survey also was given to 13 assistant principals at an Assistant Principals' meeting in February, 2002. Again, the researcher explained the purpose of the study and the directions for completing the survey. The assistant principals chose to complete it on their own time and return it to the researcher through inter-office mail. Seven of 13 surveys were completed and returned. Of those schools not returning surveys, only one school had positive survey results from teachers and district-level administrators.

A second survey (see Appendix B) was created for district-level administrators. This survey asked the participants to read the dimensions of teacher leadership and the descriptors which provided specific examples. Then it asked them to nominate up to three elementary schools that best exemplified the dimensions given. The survey was given to two district-level administrators: the Director of Instruction and the Director of Gifted Programs and Assessment. A third district-level administrator, the Director of

Curriculum, provided her nominations in a phone conversation. All of these directors worked closely with the teachers and administrators in each of the elementary schools.

The results were tallied in a chart. Three elementary schools emerged as possible research sites, based on positive responses from the teachers, assistant principals, and district-level administrators. Two schools had all positive results from the teachers and Assistant Principals, as well as one district-level nomination. A third school had positive results from the teacher and two district-level nominations. After speaking with the principals at two of the elementary schools, the researcher determined that Northville Elementary School (pseudonym used) would serve as the best research site. An observation of a faculty meeting at this school further confirmed that emergent teacher leadership thrived at this school. Approval to conduct the research study at Northville Elementary was given by the school, the school district, and the university Human Subjects Committee.

Sample Selection

Theoretical sampling, a type of purposeful sampling, was used to select research participants. Theoretical sampling (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) is an essential component of grounded theory, in which the total sample is not specified ahead of data collection (see later section on theoretical sampling). Glaser and Strauss state:

Theoretical sampling is the process of data collection for generating theory whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes, and analyzes his data and decides what data to collect next and where to find them, in order to develop this theory as it emerges (p. 45).

Initially, any participants within the sample unit (e.g., teachers) may be chosen, however, choosing participants to maximize variation in data is most useful. Initial participants were chosen in ways that provided the broadest range of information possible (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The first participants were chosen based on information related

to the stages of adult development. Research in the area of adult development reveals that teachers at different stages of adult development hold varying views which influence their interactions with administrators and other teachers, and also influence their ability to lead (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 1996).

Leithwood (1990) integrated the work of several developmental psychologists and created a model to describe the stages of adult development. This model has been related to the developmental growth of teachers (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 1996). Although these stages appear to be separate categories, human behavior is complex and does not fit neatly into categories. As such, teachers may exhibit behaviors from more than one stage. However, these descriptions served as a guide for the initial selection of participants (see Appendix C). Four stages make up Leithwood's (1990) model:

1. Self-Protective. Teachers at this stage have difficulty communicating in an open and honest manner. They are quick to blame others. These teachers usually have only one solution to a question or problem.

2. Conformist. These teachers tend to follow the group and are wary of individuals who are different. They have difficulty making group decisions. They tend to embrace the status quo, only willing to accept change if others want it.

3. Conscientious. Teachers at this stage are future-oriented. They work well in groups and often act as facilitators. These teachers understand multiple possibilities and can problem solve.

4. Autonomous. Teachers at this stage are fully independent. They accept others as they are and they are able to see differing viewpoints as valuable to the school. These teachers appreciate leadership responsibilities.

The principal of the selected school nominated an initial sample of 8 teachers at varying developmental stages based on the above descriptions. Of the 8 nominated teachers, 4 were available to be interviewed during the summer months. Additional

participants were selected based on the principles of theoretical sampling. Theoretical sampling evolves as data are collected, coded, and analyzed. As concepts begin to emerge in the data, participants are chosen based on how they might contribute to the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1998; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Strauss and Corbin (1998) state:

The aim of theoretical sampling is to maximize opportunities to compare events, incidents, or happenings to determine how a category varies in terms of its properties and dimensions. The researcher is sampling along the lines of properties and dimensions, varying conditions (p. 202).

For example, in this study, the first few participants were teachers of primary grades. They had all been involved in the Literacy Collaborative model. Throughout implementation of this model, they had experiences with many emergent teacher leaders. To vary conditions, participants not associated with the primary grades and the Literacy Collaborative were selected. By interviewing teachers at other grades and subject areas, the researcher was able to compare their perspectives with those of the primary level teachers.

As participants were selected for the study, they were provided with information related to the general purpose of the study, the expected duration of the study, the procedures for data collection, and the issues concerning confidentiality.

Context of the Study

This study took place in an urban elementary school in Northeast Georgia. The school district served 12,127 students in the 2001-2002 school year. For the district as a whole, approximately 57% of students were African American, 31% were Caucasian, and 7% were Hispanic. Despite the presence of a major university, as well as other colleges within the community, there existed a high rate of poverty, and many residents were undereducated.

Northville Elementary School was 1 of 13 elementary schools in the district. It opened in 1990 in a predominantly African American neighborhood, surrounded by several low-income federal housing projects, subsidized apartment complexes, and mobile-home parks. Many residents were employed in low-income industries, such as poultry processing plants.

Northville Elementary was an attractive, state-of-the-art facility, featuring a fully-stocked media center, updated technology lab, open hallways, and large classrooms. In 2001-2002, the school served 483 students in grades Pre-Kindergarten through five. Approximately 70% of the students were African American, 25% were Hispanic, and the remaining 5% were Caucasian and students of other racial backgrounds. Twenty-one percent of the students had limited English proficiency. The high-poverty index for all students at Northville was apparent in the fact that 94% of the students qualified for federal free or reduced lunch. Data from a state-wide criterion-referenced test showed that over half of the school's fourth graders did not meet state standards in reading and math. In general, parents were supportive of school efforts. They regularly attended parent conferences, as well as the many parent involvement activities that were planned by the school.

At the time the study was conducted, there were approximately 85 staff members, including the principal, assistant principal, counselor, teachers, paraprofessionals, cafeteria staff, custodial staff, and clerical staff. Forty-five staff members were certified teachers. About 65% of the teachers held advanced degrees, and the average number of years of teaching experience was 15 years. Approximately 20% of the certified teachers were African American, while the remaining 80% were Caucasian. Many teachers had won local and state awards of excellence and several were the recipients of educational grants.

Over the past 12 years, Northville Elementary was led by three different principals. While each of these principals had unique leadership styles, each embraced the ideas of shared governance and teacher empowerment. These leaders were instrumental in creating a school environment in which teacher leadership could thrive. From the beginning, the administrators and staff at Northville Elementary were committed to working together with the community to meet the needs of their students and families. They bonded by creating a shared vision for student achievement, based on high expectations for all students. Administrators and teachers used many data sources to determine their strengths and weaknesses, including test data, surveys, and school-based action research. They also searched for effective ways to meet their students' needs. In the last ten years, Northville had implemented two nationally-recognized school reform initiatives: the Accelerated Schools Project and Literacy Collaborative. Implementing these initiatives required many teachers to take on leadership roles within the school. These initiatives, as well as their shared vision, created a school climate which embraced and fostered teacher leadership. Each of these school reform initiatives is thoroughly described, as they provided the structures under which emergent teacher leadership could thrive.

Northville Elementary School adopted the Accelerated Schools Project model (ASP) in 1993, and was Georgia's first school to do so. The Accelerated Schools Project is a model for shared governance, inquiry, and school improvement. The ASP began in 1986 at Stanford University by Dr. Henry Levin, as a comprehensive school reform model designed to improve schooling for children in at-risk communities (Hopfenberg et al., 1993). Instead of focusing on remediation for these students, the emphasis is on providing powerful learning activities that enrich and stimulate student learning.

Three central principles guide the ASP, and schools associated with the project agree to carry out these principles. The first principle is "unity of purpose," which

describes a school community working together toward a common set of goals. The second principle is "empowerment coupled with responsibility," which characterizes the process of school governance. In Accelerated Schools, like Northville, the faculty is empowered to make important educational decisions and is expected to share in the responsibility for implementing those decisions and for the outcomes of those decisions. The third principle, "building on strengths," means that the strengths and resources of all members of the school community are utilized to the fullest (Hopfenberg et al., 1993).

Implementing the ASP provided the Northville faculty with many opportunities for teacher leadership. The school governance structure included three levels of decision making power. Everyone in the school was a member of a cadre, a small group that used an inquiry process to determine specific areas in need of improvement. Cadres met regularly and engaged in activities such as collecting and analyzing data, problem solving, brainstorming, and making recommendations. In each cadre, members were assigned specific roles such as facilitator, recorder, and timekeeper. At Northville, specific cadres focused on language arts, math, technology, and student discipline. Cadres reported their progress, including their recommendations, to the school Steering Committee.

The Steering Committee included representatives of each of the cadres, as well as a facilitator, the administrators, and parent representatives. This committee monitored the progress of cadres, helped cadres develop and refine recommendations, and disseminated information. The Steering Committee made sure that everyone was moving toward the common school vision. At Northville Elementary, the Steering Committee facilitator was a teacher. She had the responsibility of leading the committee meetings, as well as acting as a liaison between the faculty and administrators.

The final level of governance was the School-As-a-Whole (SAW), which included the entire school staff. The staff met monthly to hear the recommendations of

the cadres and Steering Committee. Staff approval was required before recommendations were implemented and decisions were made. The process they used to vote on recommendations was called "fist to five." At voting time, each staff member held up a fist or one, two, three, four, or five fingers. "A fist" meant that the staff member did not agree with the recommendation, while a "five" meant that the staff member was in full agreement. Anyone who showed a fist, one, or two, was required to voice their opinion. The staff engaged in a discussion and then voted again. Decisions were made based on majority vote. Once a recommendation was approved, the cadre was responsible for leading and organizing any activities related to the recommendation, but everyone on staff was held accountable for implementation.

An example of this process follows. The math cadre analyzed test data and surveyed the staff and parents concerning math instruction. They determined that they were weak in teaching problem solving and that parents did not know how to help their children in math. The cadre recommended that the faculty would benefit from staff development in math problem solving techniques. They also recommended that they have a math night for parents and children, during which teachers would demonstrate math activities parents could do at home with their children. Once this recommendation was approved by the staff, members of the math cadre took responsibility for locating and scheduling an outside math specialist for staff training, scheduling and organizing a math night, and creating activities for parents to use at home. This process engaged many teachers in leadership activities at the school level.

In the fall of 2001, Northville began implementing an additional school reform model to improve their literacy instruction. This program, the Literacy Collaborative, is a research-based reform model, associated with The Ohio State University. It emphasizes an integrated literacy approach, and is designed to improve the reading, writing, and language skills of children in the primary grades (K-2). The reading and writing program

elements provide children with opportunities for teacher-directed experiences, supported activities, and independent work. Program elements for reading include: reading aloud to children, shared reading, guided reading and reading workshop, and independent reading. Program elements for writing include: language experience and shared writing, interactive writing, guided writing and writing workshop, and independent writing. The Literacy Collaborative model also offers a variety of assessment tools, as well as family involvement activities.

One central component of the Literacy Collaborative is a commitment to long-term professional development for all teachers. Professional development is guided by an in-school Literacy Coordinator. This person receives intensive, ongoing training over the course of a year. She is then responsible for training the staff and serving as a model and coach. At Northville, the Literacy Coach did not have her own classroom, but worked in a different classroom each year, providing ongoing, hands-on training and support to the classroom teacher. This arrangement allowed her to be available to other teachers. She also provided regular after-school staff development in the Literacy Collaborative model to all K-2 teachers. Teachers were given reading assignments, as well as activities to try in their classrooms. These experiences provided a basis for professional reflection and dialogue among teachers.

Data Sources

The teachers selected for this study were interviewed by the researcher. The sample size was determined as data were collected and analyzed. Eight teachers were interviewed at a site and time of their choice during the summer of the year 2002. Four other teachers who were selected to be interviewed were unavailable during that time. As the researcher analyzed her data, she determined that theoretical saturation had been reached, and concluded that it was unnecessary to pursue interviews with the other teachers. Demographic and professional data about the participants are given in Table 1.

Table 1.

Participant Demographic and Professional Information

Participant	Gender	Highest Degree	Grade/Area	Years of	
				Experience	Years at Northville
Kelly	Female	Master's	2 nd	9	7
Claire	Female	Master's	1 st	2	2
Sharon	Female	Bachelor's	1 st	12	1
Martha	Female	Bachelor's	1 st	10	2
Lisa	Female	Master's	ESOL	16	3
Brian	Male	Master's	3 rd	2	2
Jenny	Female	Master's	3 rd	7	7
Rachel	Female	Master's	K	7	2

Seven of the eight teachers interviewed were female and one was male. All of the participants were Caucasian. The teachers' total years of experience ranged from 2 to 16 years. All of the teachers had been at the school for a relatively short period of time, since the school was only 12 years old.

Interviews physically took place at Northville Elementary, as well as the researcher's school. Since both schools were out for the summer, these sites served as quiet places that were free of interruptions and allowed the participants to speak in complete privacy. The participants appeared comfortable and at ease in these locations. Interviews were conducted in the summer of 2002, with follow-up interviews conducted in September 2002.

Data Collection Procedures

In the following section, data collection procedures will be discussed. Specific data collection procedures were chosen based on the kind of data that would be generated and how well those data fit with the purpose of the study. The purpose of this study was

to describe teachers' perspectives of emergent teacher leadership in an elementary school. Data collection was guided by the following research questions: (a) How do teachers experience emergent teacher leadership? (b) What meanings do these experiences have for them? Data for this study were collected through interviews and documents. In addition, a research notebook was kept by the researcher.

Interviews

Interviews were the primary data source for the study. An interview is a conversation with a purpose (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). For this particular study, the purpose was to gain understanding of the participants' experiences with emergent teacher leadership and the meaning they make of those experiences (Seidman, 1998).

Prior to interviewing, the researcher met with the school faculty at a regularly-scheduled, after-school faculty meeting. This meeting took place at the end of the 2001-2002 school year, in May. The researcher was given time on the agenda to speak to the faculty as a whole about the research study. During this time, the researcher introduced herself, explained the purpose of the study, described the criteria for selecting the school, and explained the basic interview procedures. Information concerning confidentiality and timelines was also provided. The faculty was in good spirits despite it being the second to last week of school. They joked with the researcher about interview timelines, but also communicated that they were more than willing to participate in the study.

Once initial participants were selected by the principal, the researcher began contacting participants by telephone to make interview arrangements. Beginning interviews took place at Northville Elementary, while later interviews were held at the researcher's school. As the researcher met with each participant she reviewed the purpose of the study, explained confidentiality techniques, and asked the participant to sign the consent form (see Appendix D). The researcher also gained permission to tape

the interview. Audio-taping allowed the researcher to preserve the exact words of the participants and allowed the researcher to later review the tapes for further reflection (Merriam, 1998). Each interview also started with informal small talk to put both the participant and researcher at ease. Interviews ranged from forty-five to seventy minutes in length.

Beginning interviews were unstructured, allowing the participants to respond in an open manner about the broad focus of emergent teacher leadership. Lincoln and Guba (1998) explain that unstructured interviews are useful when the interviewer "does not know what he or she doesn't know and must therefore rely on the respondent to tell him or her" (p. 269). In each interview, the researcher gave the following introduction and definition of emergent teacher:

I am interested in talking with you today about teachers who emerge informally as leaders. For the purposes of this study, a teacher leader is one who leads within and beyond the classroom and influences others toward improved educational practice. Also, I am focusing on teachers who lead informally, not those in formal leadership positions.

The researcher then asked the participants to describe their experiences with emergent teacher leaders at Northville Elementary. The participants were encouraged to discuss what they believed was relevant. In follow-up questions, the researcher also asked the participants to describe specific teacher leaders and how those leaders influenced them.

Several participants were eager to speak about their experiences and were able to provide many examples, with little prompting from the researcher. For example, in her opening response, Kelly described her relationships with several different teacher leaders, and what these relationships meant to her. Lisa was able to provide a very clear picture of her interactions with one teacher leader in particular. The researcher found herself able to imagine exactly what these interactions were like for the participant.

Other participants, usually those with fewer years of teaching experience, had a more difficult time expanding on their experiences with teacher leaders. As the interview process continued, the researcher found it easier to give prompts that yielded more descriptive information. The researcher also found it very helpful to remain silent after a participant completed a response. This often resulted in the participant thinking of more experiences to share.

As the interview process continued, the researcher was able to narrow her questioning to focus on specific topics that emerged from the initial interviews. For example, several beginning participants mentioned the Accelerated Schools model, and their experiences with teacher leaders through this shared governance structure. Because this emerged as a relevant topic, the researcher asked later participants to describe their own experiences with shared governance at Northville Elementary.

During the final stages of data collection, structured interviews were used as a means of filling out categories and member checking. Structured interviews are useful when the interviewer "knows what he or she does not know and can therefore frame appropriate questions to find out" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 269). The researcher conducted follow-up interviews with each participant to gain additional information and confirm the relevancy of categories that emerged during analysis. These interviews lasted approximately twenty to forty minutes, and were also recorded and transcribed to preserve the accuracy of responses and allow for further analysis.

Before follow-up interviews were conducted, the researcher reviewed the transcripts from the first round of interviews and wrote specific questions that she wanted each participant to answer. These questions asked the participants to clarify, elaborate, and provide additional examples. The researcher also asked the participants to consider the categories that had emerged during the various stages of data analysis. They were

given the opportunity to respond to these findings and supply the researcher with further information.

Following each interview, the researcher went home to make additional field notes about her experiences during the interview. These notes described the setting and mood of the interview, as well as behaviors and expressions of the participants. The researcher also wrote a brief paragraph of her initial thoughts and ideas related to the experiences and meanings emergent teacher leadership had for each participant. This activity allowed the researcher to record her beginning reflections before she began the arduous task of transcribing the interview tapes. All field notes and reflections were kept in the research notebook. The researcher transcribed each tape immediately following these reflection activities.

Documents

Documents were collected to provide background information on the school and to confirm the degree of emergent teacher leadership in the school. In general, documents are forms of written, visual, or physical material that communicate information (Merriam, 1998). Most documents are easily accessible and can "ground an investigation in the context of the problem being investigated" (Merriam, 1998, p. 126).

Official documents are written forms of communication produced by an organization, such as a school (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). Documents that were collected included the school's Reading First grant proposal, pages from the school's website, the school's report card produced by a state educational agency, and school test scores. These documents provided background information for the researcher as she interviewed participants, giving her a clearer understanding of the experiences the participants described. For example, knowing the components of the Accelerated Schools project, as well as the school's history with that project aided the researcher in understanding the participants' experiences with shared governance and inquiry. The \$700,000 grant

proposal, created primarily by teachers, gave evidence of past efforts by teachers and administrators to work towards increased student achievement and overall school improvement.

Research Notebook

A research notebook was kept to record and organize all notes throughout the course of the research study. The research notebook included a research log, methodological notes, field notes, and research memos. The research log contained information related to the progress of the research (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). This section included a calendar indicating research activities that took place, as well as a journal summarizing each day's activities. This log helped the researcher to set goals and timelines for accomplishing those goals.

Methodological notes included comments and questions that related to the carrying out of the research study. This section included descriptive explanations of procedures related to selecting the site and participants, contacting the research site, scheduling and conducting interviews, and analyzing the data.

Field notes included observations made during data collection in the research setting (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). These notes were recorded immediately following each interview and each visit to the research site. These notes provided the researcher with information related to the context of the interviews.

Research memos are "the theorizing write-up of ideas about categories and their relationships as they strike the researcher while coding" (Glaser, 1978, p. 83). Memos were written to work out insights gained during the coding process. Memos took many forms throughout the research process. Beginning memos included as many questions as ideas. These questions aided the researcher in reflecting on her data as they were revisited after each interview. As data were collected, many of these questions were answered, and some became irrelevant. While coding, it was also helpful for the

researcher to write a response to the following question: "How does this participant experience emergent teacher leadership?" This activity reduced the data to what was most essential to each participant and aided the researcher in making connections among participants. Later memos included groups of categories and diagrams showing connections between categories. Writing memos was a critical piece of the data analysis process. Memos are further discussed in the section on constant comparative analysis.

The research notebook was a valuable tool in that it recorded the entire research process and traced the researcher's thinking processes throughout the course of the study.

Data Analysis Procedures

Grounded Theory

The grounded theory method was used to generate a theory concerning teachers' perspectives of emergent teacher leadership. "Grounded theory is a *general methodology* for developing theory that is grounded in data systematically gathered and analyzed. Theory evolves during actual research, and it does this through continuous interplay between analysis and data collection" (Strauss & Corbin, 1994, p. 273). Grounded theory is a method which includes many steps in the research process, from data collection to a final writing (Glaser, 1978). The grounded theory researcher allows data to emerge in a natural way during data collection.

Grounded theory was specifically chosen as an appropriate methodology for this particular study. Stern (1994) states, "the strongest case for the use of grounded theory is in investigation of relatively uncharted waters" (p. 116). The few studies that have focused on emergent teacher leadership have yielded primarily descriptive information. Creswell (1998) states that grounded theory is used to generate a theory that relates to a specific social process in which "individuals interact, take actions, or engage in a process in response to a phenomenon" (p. 56). This study focused on teachers' experiences with emergent teacher leaders and the meanings these experiences had for them.

A central component of grounded theory methodology is constant comparative analysis, in which the researcher compares each new piece of data collected to previous data (Glaser, 1978; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). As data are collected and analyzed, categories emerge. The researcher engaged in continuous data analysis as she compared new data to existing categories. This ongoing data analysis informed the researcher of further data to be collected. Emerging theoretical ideas were checked and filled out by collecting further data (Charmaz, 1994).

The data analysis procedure of constant comparison will be thoroughly discussed in the following sections. Four stages of constant comparative analysis were used to analyze data: comparing incidents, integrating categories and properties, delimiting the theory, and writing the theory. Components that are central to each stage of constant comparative analysis will be described: theoretical sensitivity, theoretical sampling, theoretical saturation, and theoretical pacing.

Stages of Constant Comparative Analysis

Constant comparative analysis (Glaser, 1978; Glaser, 1994; Glaser & Strauss, 1967) was the method used to generate a grounded theory focusing on teachers' perspectives of emergent teacher leadership in an elementary school. The researcher engaged in four stages of constant comparative analysis: comparing incidents, integrating categories and properties, delimiting the theory, and writing the theory. Systematically working through each stage assisted the researcher in producing theoretical ideas that were grounded in the data.

Stage One: Comparing Incidents

The researcher began by reviewing the data line-by-line and coding the data for incidents. Incidents are small units of data that tell what is happening in the research setting (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). As interviews were conducted and transcribed, the researcher used a hard copy of the data and highlighted each incident. Incidents were

labeled in the margins of the transcripts. The researcher kept a running record of the labels used to code incidents. As similar incidents were found, similar labels were used.

As the joint process of data collection and analysis continued, the researcher found similarities among incidents and preliminary categories began to emerge. Similar incidents were grouped together and labeled. These groupings became preliminary categories. Two kinds of categories emerged: those constructed by the researcher and those taken from the actual research setting (i.e., specific terminology used by participants during interviews). These beginning categories helped the researcher refine questions asked during later interviews in order to obtain necessary information.

Following the central premise of constant comparative analysis, the researcher, while coding an incident for a category, compared the incident with all previous incidents in the same and different categories. This required the researcher to continually review all previously-collected data and reflect on the true meaning of each category.

Throughout the coding process, the researcher recorded all of her ideas by writing memos. "Memos are written elaborations of ideas about the data and the coded categories" (Charmaz, 1994, p. 106). Memos functioned in several important ways during the data collection/analysis process. Memoing helped the researcher explore new ideas, shaped future data collection, broadened categories, and explained the researcher's thinking during the coding process. Memos were treated like data, in that they were sorted and integrated along with the data in the analysis process (Charmaz, 1994).

Stage Two: Integrating Categories and Their Properties

As coding continued, the researcher began to build properties of the categories that had resulted from the first stage of comparing incidents. All of the data that had accumulated became more integrated and related in a variety of ways. Further analysis included reviewing participants' responses and looking for common themes.

Additionally, the researcher reorganized her data, by copying and pasting incidents into

computer files named with each category. Many incidents fit into multiple categories, and were pasted more than once. This was a time-consuming process, however it allowed the researcher to refine the categories and their properties, as some became irrelevant and others emerged as more central.

Stage Three: Delimiting the Theory

During stage three, delimiting the theory, the researcher formulated a clear, simple theory within a smaller set of higher level concepts. Delimiting served to streamline both the theory and the categories. This was achieved during a process of reduction whereby similar or overlapping categories were combined and irrelevant properties of categories were removed. Those categories that no longer fit within the boundaries of the emerging theory were withdrawn (Glaser, 1994). Theoretical saturation (discussed in a later section) also served to delimit the list of categories. Saturation was determined to be reached when the collection of data no longer added new insight to a category (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Once the researcher was confident in her categories, she conducted follow-up interviews with each participant, as a way to confirm her ideas, as well as fill out the categories. The participants indicated that the findings represented their experiences, however they also provided the researcher with new ways of making connections among categories. The emerging theory was further refined following these interviews.

Stage Four: Writing the Theory

At this stage in the process of constant comparison, the researcher possessed coded data, memos on each category, and an emerging theory. Writing the theory began with collating the memos on each category. The researcher used these memos to create an analytic framework. When writing, the researcher returned to the coded data to provide specific examples as validation and illustration of the theory (Glaser, 1994).

Components of Constant Comparative Analysis

Essential components of constant comparative analysis are discussed in the following section. These components are: theoretical sensitivity, theoretical sampling, theoretical saturation, and theoretical pacing. These components were necessary for the development of an integrated and dense theory.

Theoretical Sensitivity

Theoretical sensitivity is the ability of the researcher to code and analyze the data in a way that gives meaning to the data. Theoretical sensitivity is a personal characteristic of the researcher (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Professional and personal experiences of the researcher increased her sensitivity. The researcher had many professional experiences as a teacher who relied on the leadership of her peers. She also emerged as an informal teacher leader in her school by taking on various leadership roles and working with other teacher leaders on school improvement efforts. These experiences provided the researcher with a better understanding of what was happening in the research setting. Reflection on experience also assisted the researcher in analyzing data and generating theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Theoretical sensitivity was also increased because the researcher was familiar with the general literature bases related to the area of study. Understanding the literature enabled the researcher to see connections in the data and to consider hypotheses that aided in generating theoretical ideas. Although reflection on personal experiences and exploration of the literature enhanced the theoretical sensitivity of the researcher, insight generated by the actual research was always given precedence (Glaser, 1978).

Theoretical Sampling

Theoretical sampling is a procedure used during joint data collection, coding, and analysis (Glaser, 1978). As the researcher began to collect and code data, she found similar incidents occurring. To further explore the significance of these incidents, the

researcher selected additional participants based on how they might add new insights. As the theory evolved, the researcher's sampling techniques became more selective.

Theoretical sampling allowed the researcher to compare incoming data to the emerging conceptual framework (Glaser, 1978).

Theoretical Saturation

Theoretical sampling ends when a category is theoretically saturated. Theoretical saturation was achieved when no new categories emerged in the data and new data failed to add insight to an existing category. Theoretical saturation is also based on the integration and density of the theory and researcher sensitivity (Glaser, 1978; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The researcher found it difficult to conclude that saturation had been reached, as she became so fascinated with the experiences of teachers at Northville Elementary. Although she was interested in meeting new teachers and hearing about each teacher's experiences, she determined that her categories were saturated and decided to end the data collection process.

Theoretical Pacing

Theoretical pacing refers to the pace at which the research study proceeds. Generating grounded theory takes time and cannot be rushed or forced. Glaser (1978) describes two stages of theoretical pacing: input and saturation. Input includes collecting data, analyzing data, and writing memos. As suggested by Glaser, two to four hours a day was regularly scheduled for input. All ideas concerning the data were recorded in memos. Saturation occurred when all ideas had been thoroughly fleshed out in memos and new data did not provide new insight (Glaser, 1978).

Theoretical pacing also refers to the balance the researcher must find between data collection and data analysis. Because these were joint processes, the researcher was sure not to collect too much data without analyzing it. Energy given to data collection and data analysis was balanced (Glaser, 1978).

Credibility

Credibility is a general term that refers to the trustworthiness of the research process and the theory generated from that process (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). A study can be considered credible if the findings represent the realities of the participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Several criteria were used to enhance the credibility of this study. These criteria will be discussed in the following section.

Grounded Theory Credibility Criteria: Fit, Work, and Relevance

Grounded theory methods include automatic ways to enhance the credibility of a study. The use of constant comparative analysis assisted the researcher in making a credible match between the categories and the participants' perspectives. Using joint data collection and analysis ensured the data's fit, work, and relevance to the emerging theory (Glaser, 1978; Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Fit means that the categories of the theory were directly derived from the data. They were not forced or selected to fit pre-conceived categories. Allowing the participants to speak about what they deemed relevant fostered better fit. Work means that the theory generated explained what was happening in the research setting. This was confirmed as follow-up interviews were conducted and participants indicated the categories were valid. A theory will work if its categories fit and if it is relevant. Relevance means the categories were meaningful to the research setting. This occurred as categories were not forced, but rather, emerged from the data (Glaser, 1978).

Prolonged Engagement

Prolonged engagement is spending a sufficient amount of time in the research setting to learn the context, to minimize distortions, and to build trust. Prolonged engagement provided scope and depth to this study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The researcher attended a school-wide faculty meeting to describe the research study, as well as to observe the meeting. Attending this meeting also allowed the researcher to speak

informally with staff members. This was an effective way of building trust with the faculty. Teachers were readily willing to participate in the study and appeared enthusiastic about the topic.

Additionally, most interviews were conducted at the school site. This also allowed the researcher to learn the school context and build trust. While waiting for the participants, the researcher was able to informally chat with the school secretary and other teachers who walked into the office. Many participants showed the researcher their classrooms and pointed out exciting leadership projects around the school. Conducting interviews with many participants, as well as follow-up interviews, added depth, in that interviews continued until saturation occurred.

Document analysis also assisted the researcher in learning the context of the school setting. Reviewing the school's literacy grant proposal, as well as test scores, provided the researcher with background information on the school's history, community, programs, successes, and challenges. Because the researcher was familiar with context, she was better able to establish rapport with the school's staff members.

Triangulation

Triangulation was also used to enhance the credibility of this study. Triangulation is the use of multiple sources of data and multiple methods to confirm emerging hypotheses and explain findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1998). Multiple participants were interviewed to gain multiple perspectives. Documents and field notes provided verification of participants' responses.

Member Checks

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), member checking is the most crucial technique for establishing credibility. Member checking is taking data, findings, and interpretations back to the participants for their agreement or challenge (Merriam, 1998). Member checking can be informal or formal, and occurs continuously throughout the

data process. Several methods were used to member check. During the interviews, the researcher often summarized the main points of the interview to the participant and asked for agreement or additional information. Occasionally, the participant clarified a response, but more often the participant added additional information that provided the researcher with a new insight or different view. The researcher found that the participants often summarized their own views at the end of the interviews, focusing on the specific areas that meant the most to them.

Additionally, insights gained from one interview were formulated into questions for other participants. For instance, the first two participants both mentioned the importance of the Accelerated Schools model and the process for shared governance. In later interviews, the researcher asked participants about their experiences with shared governance.

A final method was conducting follow-up interviews with participants after the majority of data analysis was completed. Follow-up interviews were conducted with all participants and were helpful in that the participants confirmed the researcher's findings.

These methods assessed the participants' intentions and allowed participants the opportunity to correct information, challenge interpretations, and provide further information.

Peer Debriefing

Peer debriefing, another credibility technique, is the process of communicating with a peer to provide an external check on the research process (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Peer debriefing helps keep the researcher honest, as biases, methodological procedures, and interpretations of findings are questioned and clarified. Communicating with a peer allows the researcher to clear her mind of "emotions and feelings that may be clouding good judgment or preventing emergence of sensible next steps" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985,

p. 308). The researcher regularly shared her findings with two fellow doctoral students, who provided insight, asked questions, and were willing to listen.

Thick Description

Thick description is a credibility technique used to assist others in their understanding of the findings of the study. In this study, thick description was provided concerning: (a) site and sample selection, (b) the research setting, and (c) data collection and analysis procedures. Thick description enables readers to determine how closely the research situation matches their own situations. This allows readers to determine the transferability of the findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1998).

Summary

This chapter presented a thorough discussion of the methodology of the study. The study was designed and carried out according to the symbolic interactionist perspective and grounded theory methodology. Data sources included interviews and documents. Constant comparative analysis was used to code and analyze data, and resulted in a working theory of teachers' perspectives of emergent teacher leadership. Several strategies were utilized to enhance the credibility of this qualitative study.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to describe teachers' perspectives of emergent teacher leadership in an elementary school. This research was conducted to establish a theory grounded in the data that explains teachers' experiences with emergent teacher leaders and the meanings these experiences had for them.

This chapter presents the findings from this research by providing the actual words of the participants. The first section includes an introduction to each individual participant, as well as a summary of each participant's perspectives of emergent teacher leadership. This will highlight the key points in the data from the individual point of view. In the second section, three main categories and 17 common themes are presented. These three categories include: relationships, interactions, and outcomes.

Individual Participants

In this section, each participant will be introduced. General information related to their individual experiences with emergent teacher leaders will also be shared. These introductions will highlight the topics that were most essential to each participant.

Kelly

Kelly taught at Northville Elementary School for seven years in various grades and previously taught in another school district for two years. She worked under two principals at Northville. At the time the study was conducted, she taught second grade, but was looking forward to moving to fourth grade in the upcoming school year.

Kelly was very interested in teacher leadership and had actively been taking on more leadership roles in the school. Her principal encouraged her to experiment with new roles and suggested that she work on her leadership degree. Kelly coordinated the

summer school program this year, an experience in which she learned many leadership skills and gained confidence in her leadership abilities.

Kelly shared the many experiences she had collaborating with teachers and learning from them. She initiated relationships with teacher leaders because she enjoyed sharing ideas and working together. She used words such as "symbiotic relationship," "professional give and take," and "team swapping," to describe the relationships and interactions she engaged in with other teacher leaders.

Kelly also spoke at length about the Accelerated Schools process. She was in favor of shared leadership and took an active role in participating in cadres and faculty meetings. However, she was impatient with the inquiry process and observed over the years that it was time-consuming. She was concerned that they were spending too much time on the process, rather than focusing on what their students needed.

Kelly noted that the staff shared a common vision which was student-centered. They also believed it was important to utilize their individual strengths to meet students' needs. She explained:

We work really hard to keep the students at the center of everything we do. If my strength is in teaching language arts, then that's used to help the students the best. If somebody else's strength is math, then we pull more from their strengths to do that.

Claire

Claire, a first-grade teacher, taught at Northville for two years, and previously taught in another school in the district for a half-year. Claire formed relationships with several experienced teachers, who she referred to as "mentors" and "role models." She valued the support they offered her as she learned ways to organize her classroom and implement components of the Literacy Collaborative program. She mentioned that teacher leaders provided her with many ideas, especially new ways of reaching children.

Claire recognized that teacher leaders had unique strengths and that they used these to improve the school. She also found teacher leaders to be "motivating." She noted that teacher leaders motivated her to work hard and keep a positive attitude when working with challenging students. Claire was reluctant to see herself as a teacher leader because she felt she did not have the knowledge or experiences to influence others.

Sharon

Sharon taught at Northville for one year and previously taught in another school district. She taught first grade, but volunteered to teach kindergarten in the upcoming school year. Sharon defined teacher leadership in terms of those who helped others and who had positive attitudes, even during challenging situations. She described teacher leaders as calm and respectful. In her experience, teacher leaders were always available and dependable. They motivated her to be positive and to try new things in the classroom.

Sharon was the only participant to discuss "negative leaders," those teachers who influenced others in negative ways, such as complaining, questioning authority, or speaking negatively about others. She mentioned that these teachers caused hurt feelings. Sharon indicated that she tried not to consider these teachers as leaders because they did not do positive things for the school.

Martha

Martha taught at Northville Elementary for two years in a first grade classroom. The year before that she taught pre-k in another state. She previously taught for seven years at another elementary school in the district as a Reading Recovery teacher. Martha viewed teacher leadership in terms of professionalism: teacher leaders were those who had expertise in certain areas and encouraged others to improve through collaboration, sharing, professional dialogue, and reflection. Teacher leaders were "shining examples,"

and "role models" for others to follow. They focused on student needs and instructional improvement.

Martha collaborated with two teachers leaders in particular, Nancy and Beth. These teachers helped her see multiple perspectives and helped her to make realizations about herself as a teacher. They motivated her to experiment in her classroom, and provided her with materials and suggestions that enabled her to provide different learning experiences for her children.

Martha noted that teacher leaders recognized strengths in others and used these to strengthen others. They also recognized needs and took initiative to fulfill these needs. Martha expressed that when teachers were empowered to take initiative, there were "no more excuses." Teachers could not blame others, such as administrators, when things did not get done; teacher leaders demonstrated that teachers had the power to take action.

Lisa

Lisa taught English for Students of Other Languages (ESOL) at Northville for three years. Although she was a veteran teacher, she was new to teaching ESOL and new to teaching literacy skills at the primary level.

She was not part of the Literacy Collaborative training, however, she sought out experiences that would help her improve her literacy instruction. She spoke at length about the relationship she developed with Nancy, the school's Literacy Collaborative coordinator. Nancy did not have a classroom of her own, but she was based in a different primary classroom each year to provide training and support to a classroom teacher. That classroom also served as a model for other teachers to observe.

Nancy invited Lisa to team teach with her during writing workshop time, so that Lisa could learn new strategies for teaching writing to her ESOL students. At that time, Lisa's ESOL students remained in this first grade classroom, and Lisa worked with them under Nancy's coaching and guidance. During this time, Lisa was able to observe Nancy,

try new strategies, and get immediate feedback on her instruction. Lisa said this "powerful" experience, "transformed [her] existence in terms of being a teacher of literacy."

Lisa also experienced teacher leadership at the school level. She was the facilitator of the Steering Committee, a type of shared leadership team which was responsible for guiding school governance processes including inquiry and decision making. She came to Northville with many leadership skills and classes, however she also learned some skills from her colleagues.

Lisa believed that teachers had a sense of shared responsibility in the school. Teacher leaders took initiative by recognizing needs and taking action to "get things done." Teacher leaders also served to maintain traditions and structures during times of change. She said that teacher leaders were a "stabilizing force," and that they acted to keep the school on an "even keel," especially when they got a new principal who was not familiar with the Accelerated Schools process and the way things traditionally "worked" at Northville.

Brian

Brian taught third grade for two years at Northville and had some previous teaching experience in another state. He was interested in coming to Northville Elementary because of their shared governance process and the Accelerated Schools model. He was interested in working in a collaborative environment in which teachers were encouraged to work together and use their leadership skills.

Brian defined teacher leaders as those with experience and expertise, who were "willing to take him under their wings," not necessarily those with "power." As a third grade teacher, Brian was not formally involved in the Literacy Collaborative initiative, however, he wanted to learn Literacy Collaborative strategies so that he could adapt them to meet his students' needs. He explained that he was experimenting with new ideas in

his classroom and did not have many models to follow in the upper grades. He turned to Nancy, who supported him in learning many reading and writing strategies that he could implement in his class.

Brian also valued shared leadership. He believed it was necessary for teachers to be involved in decision making processes in order to have "buy-in" and "ownership." He shared the following experience that he had before he came to Northville. He noted:

I had some limited experience as a director of a pre-school. At first, I was making decisions myself rather than involving my staff, and I quickly realized, even as much as I think I am into democracy, when it came down to it, I really wanted to be in control. And it was very hard to let go of that. But I realized that there was no ownership. They were just doing it because I said so, and that didn't feel very good to me. It didn't really come through in the way that my staff performed, that they really bought into it. That's why I kind of feel like teachers need to have some say in the decisions that are made if it affects them.

Brian was an active member of the Steering Committee and also experienced a new leadership role when he volunteered to work with a group of teachers to write a federal reading grant proposal. That experience allowed him to work with teachers he did not normally interact with and allowed him to use some of his leadership skills. He valued the "spirit of collaboration" that existed at Northville and used it as a model when teaching his students about community and cooperation.

Jenny

Jenny had an interesting career at Northville Elementary because she taught in several different grades during the seven years she was there. Also, many of her transitions from one grade to the next took place after school had already begun and it was determined that a class had to be added due to enrollment numbers. Starting a new

class, in new grade level, presented challenges to Jenny. She faced these challenges by turning to her teacher leader peers. She explained:

So, in all of those experiences, I kind of jumped into them, and when you do that you have to find some mentor teachers to know what you are doing. For example, when I was moved to third grade, I worked with Beth, who was my EIP teacher at the time and she would come in and help me out a lot, and she kind of took me under her wing. And to this day, still does that.

Teacher leaders also encouraged her to improve and gave her confidence in her abilities. She described herself as a "behind-the-scenes" kind of teacher who was willing to work but was reluctant to take on leadership roles. Despite of her perception, she provided many examples of her involvement in leadership-type activities, such as being team leader, supervising student teachers, teaching staff development sessions, and co-coordinating a family math night.

She recognized that there were many teacher leaders at Northville who had different strengths, talents, and areas of expertise. She maintained that each of these teachers influenced her in some way and influenced the school as a whole. By being involved in all school decisions, Northville teachers "made the school what it is." Jenny concluded that all teachers had the opportunity to lead because they could voice their opinions, and that all teachers were leaders in their classrooms.

Rachel

Rachel taught kindergarten at Northville for two years. She had several years experience working as a pre-kindergarten teacher at other schools in the district. Rachel viewed teacher leaders as "experts" who served as role models for others and helped teachers improve. Rachel learned a great deal about literacy instruction by observing expert teachers and asking questions. Because of the coaching and guidance she

experienced, she said that she was "completely sold" on the Literacy Collaborative model, and that the strategies would always be a part of her teaching.

Rachel also maintained that teacher leaders at the school level were those who spoke out at faculty meetings and voiced their opinions in professional ways. Rachel learned about leadership skills by observing how teachers interacted at meetings, and by reflecting on her own interaction style. She used positive, professional teacher leaders as a model for her own behavior. Teacher leaders also ensured that all voices were heard, which made teachers feel "validated." Teacher leaders had a positive impact at the school level because they brought people together and made the school community feel like a "family."

Common Themes

Following intensive, ongoing data analysis, three main categories emerged from the data as significant to teachers' perspectives of emergent teacher leadership: relationships, interactions, and outcomes. According to the teachers in this study, teachers formed relationships and interacted with emergent teacher leaders. Teachers also experienced many outcomes from these relationships and interactions. Within these 3 categories, 17 sub-categories or themes were commonly discussed by the participants as being important to understanding their perspectives of emergent teacher leadership. Figure 1 provides the reader with an overview of the categories and subcategories. Following this chart, each subcategory will be discussed at length, with supporting examples from the data.

Category 1 – Relationships

Theme 1: Shared Experience	Theme 3: Availability
Theme 2: Expertise	Theme 4: Taking Initiative

Category 2 – Interactions

Classroom-Based Interactions	
Theme 5: Curriculum Support	Theme 7: Collaboration
Theme 6: Instructional Support	Theme 8: Observation

School-Based Interactions	
Theme 9: Inquiry and Problem Solving	Theme 10: Shared Decision Making

Category 3 – Outcomes

Theme 11: Teacher Improvement	Theme 15: Stability
Theme 12: Student Benefits	Theme 16: Improved Morale
Theme 13: "Collective Ownership"	Theme 17: Challenges
Theme 14: Increased Leadership Capacity	

Figure 1.

Common Themes of Teachers' Perspectives of Emergent Teacher Leadership.

Category 1: Relationships

Every participant began their discussion of emergent teacher leadership by describing the relationships they had formed with specific teacher leaders. These relationships were formed in a variety of ways and with a range of different teacher leaders. Most of these relationships started as "professional friendships," and some evolved into personal friendships.

Relationships-Theme One: Shared Experience

Teachers formed relationships with emergent teacher leaders because they had something in common, often a shared experience or similar teaching philosophy. Finding something in common helped teachers feel more comfortable as they sought help from teacher leaders.

Kelly, a second grade teacher, initiated a relationship with a teacher on her grade level team who she felt shared in her teaching philosophy. As their relationship grew, they began sharing lesson ideas. Kelly explained:

It was kind of like, she and I did a better job of communicating with one another about, "Ok, I've got this unit and this unit and if you want to make copies of it, here it is." She would come back and do the same thing for me and the other two, would sort of, I don't know. It was kind of like if peoples' philosophies differ and sometimes when your philosophies differ, you tend not to have as much in common as far as how you teach. And I think the other two teachers, they were a little more loose, not as structured in the classroom and this teacher and I were more on the side of having a little more structure and the behavior being a little more under control in the classroom. And so, we sort of had the same ideas on a lot of things. It just sort of turned into more of a professional friendship type thing. And I've worked really hard to make her feel comfortable so she would

open up a little bit too and it ended up that she was a friendly person once she felt like she could, I guess, let her guard down with you and that helped a lot as far as the professional end of it too, the give and take professionally.

Lisa, an experienced teacher who was new to teaching ESOL, sought out teacher leaders with similar philosophies, as well. She described teachers who were "proactive" in their teaching:

I think some of it is that people who are active in their teaching often congregate together. [Some people] tend to be more active in their teaching and more proactive, looking for information or looking for assistance, trying to make a difference in a bigger kind of way. And it might be that those people also come together. But that's sort of your shared philosophy kind of thing, in terms of how one goes about the business of teaching.

Brian also worked with a teacher leader who had a similar teaching philosophy as his. He was eager to find someone he could learn from, as he was experimenting with new literacy ideas in his third grade classroom.

Nancy is an amazing leader, who primarily works with K-2 kids with the Literacy Collaborative, but she's been an incredible mentor to me in terms of, we have similar philosophies of teaching, and just her training and her experience at Ohio State and with Literacy Collaborative.

Brian also explained that personality was a determining factor in who he went to for help. He said:

Well, I developed a relationship with Beth who was just two doors down from me. And although she wasn't at my grade level, our personalities just clicked and I went to her a lot for advice and for ideas about curriculum and about how to teach certain things like math.

Like Brian, other teachers mentioned that physical proximity often fostered relationships. For example, Lisa noted:

I think that sometimes it could be as simple as a shared teaching space. I may not have talked about the person that shares this space, or the other part of this small trailer, but there have been many times when she's helped me and I've helped her, I think. So, sometimes it's physical proximity that makes a difference.

She also discussed a relationship she developed with Beth, a teacher leader who used part of Lisa's room to store her reading materials.

I have always been able to go to Beth with questions, because she also uses the literacy-based stuff; she's also kind of the science lady at Northville. We had a bond anyway, because in my first classroom there, she had one of my cabinets full of her books—she is the Accelerated Reader guru, and she gives out the prizes.

And so she said, "Please, could I keep all these books here? I have no other place to put them," and that was fine.

Lisa continued by saying, "But being able to go and ask, sometimes just simple questions about, 'What do you think about this? Do you think I should do this? Would this be better?'" Martha, a reading resource teacher, agreed. When asked if a shared experience was part of her relationships with teacher leaders, she mentioned:

Yes, I have experienced that. I sure have. And even seeking out help from each other, whether it's a leader or not, we might just run across the room to seek help from each other. It might just be close proximity that brings you together.

Martha also spoke of another shared experience that helped her develop relationships with two teacher leaders:

Through [working on National Teacher's Certification], we established a relationship. Every morning, we'd each come in and informally just get to know each other better; but it always leads to what's going on in the classroom. She'll

just look around and say, "Oh, what are you doing with this?" So, she'll ask me questions and then I have to understand why I'm doing it and explain it to her. But then she'll always say, "Oh, I've got great books," or "I've got these resources."

For Martha, working on professional certification requirements with other teacher leaders was the beginning of two valued mentor relationships.

To summarize, teachers developed relationships with emergent teacher leaders because they shared a common experience, philosophy, or space. These relationships provided the foundation for the interactions that took place.

Relationships-Theme Two: Expertise

All of the teachers interviewed mentioned that they formed relationships with teachers who were leaders in specific areas of expertise. Teacher leaders had individual strengths, interests, experiences, or knowledge areas that were valued by other teachers. Teachers learned who "to go to" when they needed help in these specific areas. In fact, some teachers were commonly referred to as: "the science lady," or "the Accelerated Reader guru," because of their strong areas of expertise. Additionally, teachers mentioned that these teacher leaders were "natural leaders."

Several teachers mentioned their relationships with teacher leaders who had expertise in literacy. Because Northville Elementary adopted Literacy Collaborative, a K-2 integrated literacy initiative, there had been a great deal of literacy training in the primary grades. Many teachers described their interest in improving their literacy instruction. They turned to the teacher leaders who had literacy expertise and who could model effective reading and writing strategies.

For example, Rachel, a kindergarten teacher, was asked about her experiences with emergent teacher leaders. She responded:

I guess the first person that comes to mind is another kindergarten teacher who is just exceptional in carrying out the Literacy Collaborative program in her classroom. And, I would see her as a leader because it is somebody that I knew I could always go to and ask questions, or go to her classroom and see what she was doing, or even after school sometimes. She made her classroom very open to anytime, just come in here, kind of thing.

Claire described a teacher who was new to her team, but had previous experience working as a Reading Recovery teacher.

One of the teachers that came in was a Reading Recovery teacher from the year before and she's a veteran teacher. I feel like I kind of depended on her a lot this past year for a lot of reading ideas because obviously, teaching Reading Recovery, she's very knowledgeable.

Although Brian was not part of the Literacy Collaborative training, he sought out support from Nancy, who was an expert in the program. He said:

Even though I'm not teaching [the Literacy Collaborative], it's just been incredible for me to see because she is an excellent diagnostician in terms of finding out quickly where a student's reading level is and what to do, how to work with kids who are falling behind or who are ahead of their peers, or whatever.

Several other teachers talked about the "Accelerated Reader guru," who was an expert in that individualized reading program. Claire pointed out:

This one teacher has popped into my head that I can't believe I didn't think of earlier. She's so into reading. And she has all the kids excited about Accelerated Reader. She has all the kids all excited about getting a library card, and she's been on this whole push for everybody in the whole school to have a library card. And so that kind of stuff, that gets all the kids excited.

Brian agreed by saying, "Well, one of the things I went to Beth for was Accelerated Reader stuff because she is sort of our guru of Accelerated Reader. I was having some trouble with using it in my class." Jenny provided further information:

Yeah, like I said, Beth does the Accelerated Reader in our school. You can go to her classroom and get any book you need. If the library doesn't have it, Beth does. And her sister works at the public library, and she always comes in and does puppet shows and stories. And Beth pushes getting library cards for all of our kids at school. She has a little program, if you bring your library card you can get a cookie. Because a lot of our kids do not have library cards.

Teachers spoke of leaders in other curriculum areas, as well. Kelly described a teacher leader she worked with who had a strong background in curriculum and who helped her with ideas for learning centers. She noted:

Another second grade teacher that I worked with this past year, she is very well-organized, and she really knows her QCC objectives, and she had come up with a lot of really good center activities where the kids got to do an activity, but then they also had work that they had to show that showed that they really did know the skill they were working on.

Kelly also mentioned a teacher leader who was a computer expert. She stated, "This fourth grade teacher is also very good with computers. So she has sort of taken on a leadership role as far as, people know they can go to her when they have computer questions." She went on to describe a teacher who had been trained in techniques for accelerating student learning.

Well, for instance, this year, one of our teacher leaders has helped fourth grade as far as the acceleration process goes, because she has some extra training on acceleration. So, she's worked to help organize us a little bit more with how to use acceleration in different subject areas.

Claire, Jenny, and Brian all talked about teachers who were leaders in math. Claire noted:

She teaches fourth grade and they change classes, and she teaches math. And math is her subject and she is very good at math, and she has done lots of research, and has done lots of classes, and taught staff development classes on math and problem solving.

In talking about a teacher leader with expertise in math, Jenny also highlighted her own area of strength. She noted:

There's just a lot of teachers at Northville who kind of stand out and [lead in a certain area]. Donna does that in math. We also did a math study when we were [working on our Master's]. Donna is a math major—she has a middle school degree, so math and technology are her thing. Technology has become kind of my thing. I don't know, there are a lot of teachers at Northville with strengths.

In discussing a relationship he formed with Beth, Brian mentioned Beth's expertise in math. He said, "She gave me a bunch of manipulatives and I knew that she taught Math Their Way independently of Northville; during the summers she would do workshops across the country." Brian also talked about Joyce, a leader with multiple strengths.

Joyce is the facilitator of the student responsibility and behavior cadre. She's also in charge of all the musicals at Northville and bringing people together, and a great collaborator. So people would go to her for stuff about student behavior, classroom management, that kind of thing. She's really good with the kids.

Sharon depended on several teacher leaders for specific tasks. She explained:

If I had a question about reading with a child, or helping them read, I either went to Martha or my EIP teacher, Jane was wonderful, either one of them, because they had that special knowledge. Paperwork, things like that, I went to Julia but sometimes I'd go to Claire, just whoever was the first available.

Jenny described a teacher leader in the area of special education. She noted:

Kate, Kate has been wonderful, as far as special ed. I've had a lot of experiences with special education kids and she's been great to go to as far as those questions and working with pulling out kids.

Some teacher leaders had expertise in school processes and micro-politics. Lisa explained how this helped in her role as Steering Committee facilitator.

Her insight about overall school matters has particularly helped me to orient myself to the school and in my role as a leader, this past year, as facilitator of the Steering Committee. Her insight and her ability to see the whole picture of the school, and having been there, and being able to say it in an honest way that is not negative, has made me really appreciate being in a school where that can happen.

Martha described another teacher leader with specific areas of expertise. She pointed out, "Another [teacher] that I was thinking of is Lilian, who's extremely knowledgeable about politics, and about the African American culture. And she's a wonderful model for the students as well as for all of us."

Several teachers talked about Matthew, who was the school's expert in the Accelerated Schools governing process. For example, Brian explained:

And Matthew, people go to all the time for ideas about Accelerated Schools model or how to adapt it to our school to meet our needs, how to use shared governance. What do we do? How do decisions get delegated? What's the flow chart of our leadership at our school? Or, what does it look like in terms of where do decisions need to be made and who is responsible for bringing it back to SAW? And he's really good with that. He's been trained in that.

Rachel concurred by saying, "He has made it his project, I guess, to be familiar with [the Accelerated Schools model] and to guide and to lead in that way." Lisa also described

Matthew as, "the kind of person that everybody in the school goes to if they have a gripe or a problem." So, some teacher leaders were expert listeners.

While teachers spoke of individual teachers who had expertise in specific areas, many also spoke generally about the wealth of teachers who had talents to share.

Teachers agreed that almost everyone in the school had a particular area of strength and that these were used to help strengthen other people. Also, people knew who "to go to" for certain things. Brian described it this way:

I feel like there's a lot of strong informal leadership in this school. And like you said, people have their own specialty areas and word gets around, you know, if you need help with something, this is who has expertise in this area.

Kelly explained, "And you learn who is who. You learn, oh, I am going to go this person because she knows everything about computers and she can answer the questions quickly." Martha also talked about having multiple leaders. She noted, "I mean, we all have our own gifts and the leaders in our school, I think recognize everybody's gifts and are willing to share those." Jenny provided further insight, by noting:

So, everybody has great ideas: teachers who've been teaching for a few years or teachers who've been teaching forever—it's all experiences and staff developments you've taken, and personally what you believe in, whether it's math or technology. In Beth's case it's reading, although she is pretty big in Math Their Way—she teaches staff developments on that. Teachers have specific things that they are focused on.

Kelly explained that when two teachers use their individual strengths to help one another, it becomes a "symbiotic relationship."

There are a lot of times, that I have found that, I don't know if it would be as much as someone being a lead person, but you sort of find somebody and you help them with areas that you are stronger in and they help you with areas that

they are stronger in. And it sort of becomes a symbiotic relationship that works out really well.

Kelly summarized her view of multiple school leaders by proposing that there was a good balance of teacher leaders at Northville. She said:

And I don't think that we have too many people that take on leadership type things. Sometimes you worry about too many chiefs and not enough indians. But I think we have a good balance of, well I know I am strong in this area, so let me help you out with these things, and people know I am strong in this area, so they come to me for these things. But we know that this person is strong in this area, so let's go to her for this. There is a really good balance of give and take.

Finally, teachers described these emergent teacher leaders as having skills in leadership. In fact, many described emergent teacher leaders as "natural leaders."

Teachers formed relationships with these teachers who had natural leadership ability.

Martha was one teacher who recognized this. She said:

I've always looked to her as a mentor and leader and she really does come in and help, collaborate with us and look at what we're doing, and reflect with us and make us better practitioners. She's just a natural at that. And the other one is Beth, who has no formal leadership role, but she's awesome in that she asks you about what you are doing, and she offers her resources, she offers her ideas. I guess the years of experience and knowledge that she has; she's just so willing to share with everybody else.

She continued by saying:

I guess leaders just naturally flow to the top because they are willing to take on more, to do more whether it's because they have the time or the knowledge or the ability. I think that's just how it seems to surface.

Lisa, who worked with Nancy during writing workshop time, referred to Nancy's natural ability to lead as "powerful."

But her ability to lead me through that process as a co-worker was very powerful. And I think even when she is teaching a class, it's not, Nancy on one level and everyone else on another level. It's very much a sharing. And the things that she knows, if somebody says something that she knows is not supported by research or she knows isn't right, or isn't fair, or isn't consistent, or whatever, she will say that. She's not shy about speaking assertively that way. But she does a really excellent job of helping people learn and being supportive.

Brian also desired to form relationships with teachers who had natural leadership ability. He said, "I guess I wasn't necessarily going to people who had power or roles within the school, but just who were natural leaders and who could take me under their wings."

When asked about whether the ability to lead was an important factor in determining who he formed relationships with, Brian added:

Yeah, I see that, particularly with a few people that I'm close to like Lisa, who, I just think she has an incredible amount of leadership. I don't know about experience, I mean I think she's supervised in other fields. But she is just a natural leader. And other people, Nancy and Beth, who I've worked with. So, yeah, that's true.

Jenny talked about Donna, a teacher leader who she eventually became very close to. They served on a cadre together, in which Donna was the cadre facilitator. Jenny described her in this way:

But Donna, I don't think she cannot *not* take a leadership role—she has that type of personality. I think even if I wanted to, I couldn't [be the facilitator] because Donna is just that way. Because she is talking about things she knows—she

knows math and she knows technology, and I've learned a lot from her in those two areas.

Rachel discussed her relationships with two teachers who had natural leadership ability. One supported her with Literacy Collaborative, while the other provided leadership at the school level. She noted:

The Literacy Collaborative coach—she just has the ability to guide and to lead you into something, and to educate you about something, but not make you feel like your ignorant for not knowing it already, or that you're wrong in your own way of thinking. And always offering assistance, and available, that's another thing I saw with her.

Rachel continued by talking about another teacher who often facilitated SAW meetings. She explained that she admired this teacher's "ability to really manage a whole group discussion and to allow different voices and different opinions to be heard." Rachel observed that when people left one of these meetings, they felt like their voices were heard. She also noted that her relationship with this "co-worker" turned into a professional friendship.

In summary, teachers formed relationships with teacher leaders who had specific strengths. Teachers especially admired and valued teachers with expertise, practical knowledge, experience, and natural leadership ability. Teachers looked toward these teacher leaders as sources of support.

Relationships-Theme Three: Availability

Teachers also formed relationships with teacher leaders who were available or made themselves available as sources of support. Teachers expressed that teacher leaders were more available and accessible than administrators. Teachers described that they felt they had "someone to go to" when they needed questions answered or help with

something. Data from several teachers will illustrate this point. Sharon described a teacher leader she knew she could depend on for support.

I know that no matter what there is I need, if I need just to go to have a kind word said, or if I'm upset about something that's happened with one of the children, or something that somebody has said walking down the hall or something—I can go to her and she will help me just, become positive.

Lisa described the supportive relationship she formed with Beth.

So, Beth has provided a sounding board and general support for me. So, it's made it easier for me to feel comfortable and to know that if I'm distraught or have a particular question, I can go there and she is happy always to spend time with me.

Brian pointed out two other teachers who people "go to."

But other examples, Matthew and Joyce both, they're resource teachers, but they have such leadership roles within the school, in terms of, and I guess that was kind of surprising to me because I wouldn't have thought of an art teacher or a music teacher as someone who would have so much clout and power and influence over the way things go in a school, but they do and I think that's great. And it's kind of nice to see. I'm not sure how to articulate it, but, just people go to them.

Jenny also described the availability of a teacher leader she worked with. She noted, "I would go to her a lot of time, not just in that third grade experience, she also worked right across the hall from me, so we worked a lot together." A teacher leader that Rachel turned to was available at any time of the day. She explained:

I would see her as a leader because it is somebody that I knew I could always go to and ask questions, or go to her classroom and see what she was doing, or even after school sometimes. She made her classroom very open to me, anytime, just come in here, kind of thing.

Like Rachel, other teachers also mentioned teacher leaders who had an open door policy. In describing his relationship with Beth, Brian said:

I could interrupt her pretty much any time of the day, and she would just drop what she was doing and work with me right then. She would just always go way above and beyond what was expected.

Jenny had a similar experience with Beth. She explained, "And she has great resources—I think she has more books in her room than the library does! So, I could always go and borrow anything from her and she didn't mind." Lisa shared an experience she had with Nancy, a teacher leader who she learned from by working side-by-side with in the classroom.

The relationship [with Nancy] was mostly one of being supportive and of being responsive if I needed something. As I got a little better at [instructing students in writing], we were just there together, and there may not be much interaction. I could walk in to that classroom if she was teaching, almost any time, and just see what was going on and slide in. She was open to having me in there, and others too.

Some teachers mentioned that they could easily "catch" teachers in the halls or after school when they had a question. Kelly described her experiences by saying:

So it was very nice to have a person in the building that you knew you could go to, you know, walking down the hall, "Nancy, I'm so confused! I don't understand how to do this; it's very frustrating. I can't think of any more centers."

Martha had similar experiences. She stated:

Anytime I need her to come in and say, "Nancy, just look at what I'm doing and help me figure it out." And she's right there and ready to help with that. Like I said, informal conversations in the hall, having her come in to observe, talking

about that, and then individual students that come up, we'll talk about that as it comes up—you know, issues that they have.

Teachers also mentioned relationships they had formed with teacher leaders who did not have classrooms of their own. This arrangement allowed them to be available to support teachers. Kelly was one teacher that brought this up. She said:

And another thing that is very beneficial is two of our teacher leaders do not have their own classroom. They are outposts. We can go to them because they are available and they can come and teach for us. Or we can watch them teach or they can watch us teach and offer examples, or team teach with us. So, there's not the schedule rigidity that there would be otherwise.

Lisa also discussed this arrangement:

I think the way the whole [Literacy Collaborative model] is set up, works. It's a position where she does not have a classroom that is hers. Now throughout the year, she works collaboratively with a particular teacher and a different teacher is chosen each year. That has to be a really good way to learn this. Both of the past two years, she's been with new or newer teachers and teachers new to our building. So, to me, that's a wonderful way to get that kind of support.

Some teachers also mentioned that their teacher leader peers were more available than their administrators and they felt more comfortable going to them with their issues.

Sharon had one example to share:

Also, just anything that anybody ever asks of [Matthew], he had the time to do it, whereas the administrators, unfortunately, you can't always find them. They're dealing with parents, they're dealing with behavior, which, he didn't have to do those things. I think a lot of times, teachers forget that there's those kinds of things, and the board office and all that, that administrators are dealing with that.

The counselor and other people who are still here in the school do not have to go and deal with those things.

Lisa also noted that the availability of teacher leaders was especially helpful for new teachers. She explained:

If the principal is not available, there are other people who know what to do, and know how to do things, and will help [new teachers]. I don't think you could go to any teacher at Northville, even the newest ones, and ask for help and not get it.

Lisa went on to say that, "the availability of another teacher is one of the key things," in determining who relationships are formed with.

To sum up, teachers formed relationships with emergent teacher leaders who were available and accessible. Many of these teachers leaders opened their rooms as places to seek assistance, to observe, to gather materials, or to have questions answered.

Relationships-Theme Four: Taking Initiative

Both teachers and teacher leaders took initiative in forming relationships with one another. Many teachers were proactive in seeking help or guidance from teacher leaders. Teachers also described teacher leaders who were active in offering their support. Some of these teacher leaders had the ability to recognize needs at the classroom-level or the school-level, and took initiative to respond to these needs.

Most teachers expressed that they were very active in seeking out help or support from emergent teacher leaders. These teachers were proactive in forming relationships with those peers they knew they could learn from. Offering an explanation, Kelly noted that, "When you have teachers who are truly interested in improving themselves, they will seek the help of the teacher leaders."

Brian was one teacher who took full advantage of the teacher leaders around him. He provided many examples of seeking the help of teacher leader peers. For example, he noted:

Right away I noticed that there were a couple of teachers who had ten to twenty years of experience under their belt who I went to for advice and for help. And I noticed some emergent or some leadership skills there, informally working with them one-on-one.

He gave an example of a relationship he formed with Beth.

I developed a relationship with Beth who was just two doors down from me. And although she wasn't at my grade level, our personalities just clicked and I went to her a lot for advice and for ideas about curriculum and about how to teach certain things like math.

He also sought out help from a veteran teacher on his grade level team.

And then Ingrid was right across the hall from me and she was my grade level. I knew that she had been the Steering facilitator the year before, and she had been teaching for over 20 years, so I knew that she had some real practical knowledge that I didn't have as a new teacher, so I went to her a lot my first year.

He continued by saying, "I went to [Ingrid and Beth] for a lot of things. Well, one of the things I went to Beth for was Accelerated Reader stuff because she is sort of our guru of Accelerated Reader." Another example he provided was his relationship with Nancy. He sought out her expertise in reading workshop strategies. He explained, "I would just go when [the class was] working independently and I would brainstorm with Nancy, just trouble-shoot certain areas that I was unsure about." Brian initiated relationships with emergent teacher leaders because he wanted to improve and he knew he could learn from his peers. He also wanted the opportunity to interact with people he did not normally get to work with. He explained:

[There were] not as many formally-structured opportunities [for working with my peers], so I think that's probably why I sought it out, to work with Nancy, and

Beth, and Ingrid, Heather, people who I normally might not get a chance to interact with, but I knew that they had some leadership skills that I could benefit from.

Other teachers also provided examples of seeking help from teacher leader peers. Sharon experienced a difficult situation in her first grade class one day, when students began picking on a "neglected" child. Unsure of how to handle the situation, she sought help from a teacher leader peer.

I sent a note. I said, "Please, send Sydney, I need help." And she came in and talked with [the students]. And you can always count on her to come and any time a child was having a problem, talk with them and help them.

She went on to say that even if she was having a problem, she could always, "go in there and talk with her about it." Sharon also noted that this teacher leader would "go out of her way to work with the children and check into issues that you had." She especially welcomed this support, because at her previous school, she had not experienced this.

Jenny also turned to her teacher leader peers. She described a relationship with a teacher who had just started to emerge as an informal teacher leader:

She has definitely, more so in the last two to three years, taken on a lot more leadership roles at Northville and she is really good at it. She's outspoken, she has great ideas, she's very organized, behavior management is great in her classroom. I would go to her a lot of time, not just in that third grade experience. She also worked right across the hall from me, so we worked a lot together.

While some teachers sought help from their peers, many teachers also discussed emergent teacher leaders who offered assistance or support at the classroom-level. To begin, Jenny offered an explanation of the difference between offering support and seeking help. When asked about how relationships developed, Jenny explained:

Beth offers. You don't have to seek, she's just always there. She kind of has a way to read your face—what's going on, what do you need. She definitely offers. Teachers do, if they see that something is not going right or you're having trouble, I mean, you can see it in a teacher's face if something is just totally blown to pieces. It's both. There are teachers who just offer and there are teachers you know you can go to. Sometimes you don't want someone always over your shoulder watching you. And then that's when you go to the other teachers, the quiet teachers who have great ideas who just kind of wait for you to ask. That's Heather. And Beth is the opposite. Where Beth has been teaching for years, she has great ideas, she's bursting at the seams! So, sometimes you need a little of both and you have that at Northville.

Sharon was one teacher who was offered help by a colleague. She talked about the role Amanda played in offering support, and helping her keep a positive outlook.

[Amanda] is always very positive and tries to make people find the positive things. She would come down any time she had free time and ask, "Can I help you do anything?" She went and got a child a toothbrush for me and toothpaste. And she's just that kind of person. And she was in a position in the school where she did not have a classroom so she could do that. But, she's like that with everybody, just very helpful, always positive. And I think that's one thing that makes a good leader, is always looking for something positive, even when something negative is happening.

Lisa had many experiences of teacher leaders offering their support or advice. She began by saying:

What I found was there was a really strong staff, in terms of its cohesion and its ability to work together. Several people, a couple of people in particular were

very helpful, if not eager, to let me see what was going on in their classrooms, so that I could do a better job of teaching my ESOL kids.

For example, one teacher, recognizing that she was having challenges as a veteran teacher teaching in a new field, invited her to observe in her classroom. Lisa noted:

But what she did do, and this was informal, and she knew of my interest and that I was certainly struggling in some ways having never taught ESOL and not having any kind of curriculum: She invited me to come in to her classroom and observe any time I wanted to, which I did.

This teacher leader offered further support by suggesting that Lisa team teach with her during a portion of the week. As an ESOL teacher, Lisa taught five of her ESOL students in a pull-out model. Lisa went on to explain:

She said, "Well, during the times when those students come to you, that is the time in our classroom when we do something called 'writing workshop' and if you'd like to come here into this classroom two or three times a week and assist the students with their writing during that time, that means they wouldn't miss their writing, which is a critical piece, and you could learn about it." And so that's what I did.

While working in the classroom together, the teacher leader offered specific feedback on Lisa's instruction. She added:

Especially at first, she really approached me. If she overheard me saying something and thought there was a better way, she would step in, in a most gentle way, not certainly in any way that a child would know that she was helping me or correcting me. Or if I asked a specific question, she would say, "This is how I've done it and it seems to work," or "You might do this and that."

While Lisa received a great deal of support from other teacher leaders, she also described a situation in which she offered support to a new staff member.

We have a Spanish parent liaison and the first year she was in my classroom most of the time because it was the first time we ever had one and she didn't have an office anyway. And I tried to do lots of things with her, to help her figure out how to do stuff. Not only just include her in decision making, but give her parts of things at first that she could just take and do on her own. And now, she doesn't need me anymore and it's great to see. I can't take full responsibility for that, she has at least equal, but I think that I did a lot to let her know that, yes, you can do this and you will have support. And now she comes to me for ideas, but she doesn't wait for me to have an idea before she does anything.

Lisa added, "And I think other people do that as well. And I think that maybe we should do it more consciously, as I've done with her. I think maybe we should do it with other people too." Lisa was not the only teacher who emphasized the importance of helping others by offering support. Kelly shared a situation in which a teacher who had a difficult time working with others, moved to teach in her grade level. She explained:

Well, she had been teaching a different grade and then she moved up to second grade and it was sort of, at first, like I just said, "If you need any help . . ." I think most people feel that she seems real stand-offish and kind of negative and so they don't really approach her, but I was the team leader that year. And, I told her, "If you have any questions, if you need any help with anything, I'll be more than happy to help you," and so she came to me at first, asking me for things.

Kelly went on to explain that the relationship developed into one in which they shared ideas back and forth and began relying on one another for support. Kelly discovered that this teacher had a particular strength in finding lesson ideas on the internet and fitting the ideas into her instruction. Also, the more they worked together, the more they found they had in common. Kelly's willingness to initiate a relationship with this teacher who had previously struggled resulted in benefits for both of them.

Finally, teachers told of their experiences with emergent teacher leaders who recognized needs within the school and took initiative to fulfill those needs. Martha offered two examples:

Well, okay, Kate is wonderful in [taking initiative]. I think it's by assuming roles that no one else is either willing to take or they were really wanting to take, because she takes care of the Relay For Life every year. And she's our team leader for that. I know she has personal reasons for doing it, but it's also being willing to go above and beyond the everyday thing. She does that. Heather is an amazing example of the service learning projects.

Martha went on to describe Heather's initiative in involving her students in a project to beautify the preschool special education outdoor play area. Martha continued by sharing her views of teacher leaders taking initiative within the school:

Well, I see that they model for us. When something needs to be done, you don't have to wait for administration to take care of it, or you don't have to wait for someone else to develop a plan and have it come through. A lot of it you can just take on and do it yourself. And I'm not saying not let anybody else know what you are doing; certainly talk with administration and talk to your peers. But, it's like, no excuses any more. You just try and take care of it. Whether it's going to other professionals or trying something yourself, being willing to try something else. So I think that's from all over. I think all the teachers would feel like that.

Lisa completely agreed with this viewpoint. She added:

People are willing to take responsibility to do what needs to be done. They don't wait to be told. If something is important and there's been some discussion about it, and there's often very much discussion about everything, and that is a good thing, people won't wait to be told. If there's something that needs to be done, they'll work together to do it. They'll ask questions. They will just say, "Would

you like me to do this so that it can be taken care of?" And the main thing, and I think that it's a real huge thing, is that people take initiative and they don't wait for somebody else to do it.

Brian also observed this at Northville Elementary, while working with a group to write a federal grant proposal. He described:

Like with this grant writing process for the Georgia Reads grant that we applied for this past year—that was an incredible example of people coming together and really showing leadership. Nobody assigned a task force, nobody said, "Okay, here's the list of people who are going to write this grant"—people just stepped up. Some of it was people who had more time, who weren't totally bursting at the seams with other things at that moment. But it was incredible just seeing how much leadership there was in that group.

Brian's experience particularly provides evidence that teachers formed relationships with one another by taking initiative. Even when teachers took initiative in a general way at the school-level, it fostered new relationships, as people were able to work together. Through collaboration and even observation, teachers had common experiences which provided another support for building relationships.

To summarize this first common theme, teachers formed relationships with emergent teacher leaders based on a shared philosophy, personality, proximity, or other common experience. Teachers learned "who to go to" for specific areas they wanted assistance in, as teacher leaders had particular strengths, interests, knowledge areas, resources, or abilities that they could share with teachers. Teachers took initiative in forming these relationships by offering support, seeking help, or taking initiative at the school level. These relationships between teachers and emergent teacher leaders provided the support for interactions to take place and for these interactions to be meaningful.

Category 2: Interactions

Forming close relationships with teacher leaders supported teacher-teacher leader interaction. Teachers felt more comfortable seeking help and working with teacher leaders when they had a bond. Teachers interacted with emergent teacher leaders at the classroom level and school level. Classroom-based interactions were associated with classroom instruction, while school-based interactions were related to school-wide inquiry and decision making.

Classroom-based interactions included those activities teachers engaged in that related directly to their classroom instruction. At the classroom level, they engaged in activities such as curriculum and instructional support, professional dialogue, collaborating with one another, and observation.

Interactions-Theme 5: Curriculum Support

Teachers received curriculum support from emergent teacher leaders. Teacher leaders helped teachers learn or understand the curriculum better, and shared their materials and resources so that teachers could use them to support the curriculum.

When Kelly moved from second to fourth grade, there was a veteran fourth grade teacher who provided curriculum support. She explained:

There were two new teachers to fourth grade and she helped by giving us ideas to use for curriculum maps and helping us by getting the QCC and CRCT things for us in the areas we knew we needed some extra help in. And, she gave us some release time so that we could do some planning in those areas where we had trouble.

Jenny also had a teacher who provided her with curriculum support when she began at Northville as a long-term substitute in third grade. She said:

When I [became long-term substitute], I met a third grade teacher who was a mentor teacher—she didn't go through the TSS, but she was in the third grade team and I worked with her in getting to know the grade and the curriculum.

Jenny also received support in the area of science, an area that she felt weak in. She noted:

She helped me with science. I wasn't very good at science the first time and learning the units, the materials, and things like that. And she really helped me organize everything—kind of showed me step-by-step what to do and she was in the classroom with me when we did some science units together.

While this teacher worked one-on-one with Jenny, she also provided curriculum leadership at the school level by organizing school science materials. Jenny continued by saying:

She's really big on science and she does some really great science things. And she organized all of our science materials in the media center and she took on that whole role. And the outdoor science lab that we have there, as well. This year, that classroom, the EIP class, did a service learning project with the outdoor science lab.

Another teacher helped Martha and Brian by providing them with science materials to enrich their curriculum. Martha described her support in this way:

We have the room right next to the butterfly garden, which you saw yesterday. So she made sure that we had the bird seed, went to the bird feeder. She made sure that we had the caterpillars that were going to develop into the butterflies for our classroom. So, she was just, just by knowing that we were there, she would bring in all of the things she had.

Brian also discussed the butterfly garden, adding:

From my understanding, in years past, we have two butterfly gardens at Northville. I think Beth is responsible for one that is outside her room and I know that, oh, now I am thinking of more examples with her—of her just bringing in caterpillars for us, for my class because we study life cycles in third grade. She just has the resources, she grows the plants, the milkweed and the fennel and these things that butterflies like.

This teacher leader provided Martha and Brian with the resources needed to work with their students in the butterfly garden. This gave them and their students a new experience they might not have engaged in without her support.

Brian also interacted with teacher leaders for math support. During his first year, one teacher leader, a former third grade teacher, shared her math materials, books, and other resources with him, as she no longer taught third grade. Later, as a second-year teacher, he recognized that his students were having difficulty learning certain math concepts and a teacher leader provided materials and new ideas. He said:

I went to her a lot for advice and for ideas about curriculum and about how to teach certain things like math. She gave me a bunch of manipulatives and I knew that she taught Math Their Way, independently of Northville, during the summers she would do workshops across the country. In third grade we didn't really do Math Their Way, but I noticed that my kids needed some more hands-on, concrete support and that she was able to help me with that, as well as literacy and other things.

Lastly, many teachers described their interactions with Beth, who was the "Accelerated Reader guru," as well as the teacher with a book "warehouse." These teachers valued the wealth of materials she offered to share and the knowledge she had concerning appropriate books for different parts of the curriculum or student levels.

Martha said, "Beth is, she has a wealth, a warehouse of resources, math and science resources. Plus she has her own little bookstore in her room. She lets us borrow books whenever we want to." Brian explained further by saying:

Accelerated Reader is just one example, but it could be anything, the math or literacy. She has this huge collection of books, of children's trade books in multiple sets, and any time I needed—I was doing small groups and the other teachers really weren't, and so I didn't really know where to go to get small group sets of books, and Beth just had tons of stuff. I would go into her room, both years, not just my first year, and whenever I needed a set of books she would just find something that was at the level I told her the group I was thinking of needed to be.

Jenny agreed, "And, she has great resources—I think she has more books in her room than the library does. So, I could always go and borrow anything from her and she didn't mind." In fact, Jenny went on to say, "You can go to her classroom and get any book you need. If the library doesn't have it, Beth does." Rachel also talked about her interactions with Beth. She said she went to Beth, "for resources, as far as materials to use in the classroom—if I was looking for books related to a specific topic, or something like that."

To summarize, teachers interacted with teacher leaders by receiving curriculum support. This support helped them learn the curriculum and use materials, which they borrowed from teacher leaders, to better enhance the curriculum.

Interactions-Theme 6: Instructional Support

Teachers also received instructional support from teacher leaders, specifically, learning new ways to teach their students or implement programs. Many teachers simply described this kind of support as getting "new ideas." Teachers often initiated the interactions by asking questions. The most frequently discussed instructional areas were reading and writing. Teacher leaders used their expertise in literacy to provide direct

support to teachers. They did this by talking to teachers about new ideas, allowing them to observe in their classrooms, and sharing lessons.

Claire, a new first grade teacher, received a great deal of support from a teacher leader who was a former Reading Recovery teacher. She began by saying, "I feel like I kind of depended on her a lot this past year for a lot of reading ideas because obviously, teaching Reading Recovery, she's very knowledgeable. And we share stuff back and forth." Providing more details, she added:

Well, in Literacy Collaborative, there are boxes for writing. She provided me with these little slips that you can put in their zip-lock bags, "I can read this book", "I can't read this book", "I can't read this book—read this book to me." After the first few weeks of school, [the students] have to take books home that they can read over and over and over again and be completely fluent in. What other stuff? Just how she has set up her groups, how often she does running records and moves them around, because I found in these two years, that's hard for me to do—to do running records and to move everybody around. So that kind of stuff.

Lisa, an ESOL teacher who went into Nancy's class during writing workshop time, provided further details of their interactions during that time. Lisa elaborated:

Of course at first, I just watched and I got to ask questions. I got to watch her do the mini-lessons at the beginning. I got to shadow her and the other teacher and the paraprofessional, who was also quite good, as they worked individually with the children so that I could learn what was expected. You know, if you're not going to spell a word for a child, there are resources in the room, and I had to learn where the word wall was and all those kinds of things. And then, after that, I got to watch her follow-up the writing lessons with the kids. And that's probably the best teaching about literacy that I've ever had in my life. Just to be

there, and to be able to watch her in action and watch the children respond, and then have a chance to practice that. And if I got stuck, if a kid asked me a question, or something was happening and I didn't know, I'd just look at her or ask her and she'd come over, and I'd get some feedback like that.

Lisa added:

She was very easy with suggestions and things that make sense. But almost always, for instance, "This is what I found to be successful." And observing her in that particular venue with the writing, but also popping in to her classroom at different times and seeing her with kids—getting the kids lined up to go to recess or bringing them in—those transition times are really tough, especially at the beginning of the year with a bunch of first graders.

Lisa learned about writing instruction by "shadowing" and "observing" Nancy while they worked together with students. She was able to ask questions and get instant feedback. Through this experience, she was also able to observe Nancy's approach to transitioning first graders from one activity to another.

Brian also interacted with Nancy to learn more strategies for teaching reading and writing. He began by saying:

And she's worked with me because this past year I had a self-contained class. I prefer to keep my kids together so I can integrate the curriculum more and really focus on building community with my group of kids. And she helped me come up with some ideas of how to teach reading workshop and writing workshop, which is something different than what the other teachers were doing. And so I kind of needed more support and I got a lot from her.

Brian continued:

I was doing some pretty different things and I felt like there weren't a whole lot of models in the other classrooms at my grade level or higher. But I was doing a lot

of the things Literacy Collaborative was doing in K-2, especially in second grade where Nancy happened to be working last year, so she could help me adapt it to meet the needs of third graders, even though some of the things we were doing were more along the lines of what second grade was doing—but how to adapt it, because third graders are more focused on comprehension, not so much on decoding, and that kind of thing, as the lower grades.

Nancy was able to help Brian adapt the Literacy Collaborative components and strategies so that they were appropriate for his third grade students.

As a teacher new to the school, and to the Literacy Collaborative model, Rachel also received support in reading and writing instruction. She explained:

I know one of the components of the Literacy Collaborative program, the shared interactive writing, was something that the first year, I heard about it and I read about it, and I tried to do it, but I just felt like I wasn't doing it right or doing it enough. So I really, I went to her and I said, "How do you use this?" And that's when she explained to me that she used it a lot with her science and social studies, things in the curriculum that needed to be covered, that she would use that time for shared interactive writing. So, then I was able to take that idea back into my classroom, and say, "Okay, we're talking about plants and living things, and how could I incorporate that into a shared or interactive writing experience?"

So, Rachel interacted with Nancy by asking specific questions and receiving ideas for integrating writing with science and social studies.

Brian also wanted new ideas about implementing the Accelerated Reader program in his classroom. He received support from Beth:

Well, one of the things I went to Beth for was Accelerated Reader stuff because she is sort of our guru of Accelerated Reader. I was having some trouble with using it in my class. My kids either weren't motivated or were so motivated that

they were just taking Accelerated Reader tests just to get points and they weren't reading books that were at their level—they were finding the easiest books that they could, just to get the points, and it became this competition, and it felt like it wasn't meeting the goals of the program which was to motivate them to increase their reading capacity. So I talked with her and she gave me advice on how she did it by setting minimum book level requirements for each student when they take tests. And that was helpful.

Sharon worked with two teachers while planning for summer school one year, and in the experience learned ways to better capture student attention. One teacher, Amanda, was the school's expert in the Learning Focused Schools approach, which was used in the upper grades at Northville. Sharon noted:

We looked at [the learning-focused model] and the charts they use to help the children, to spark their interest, and that's really helped. I had to back up how I could use them with the kindergarten age group, but there are ways to use it and I went and showed Amanda what I had done, and she gave me ideas, and Nancy, who is the Literacy Coordinator, she gave me some ideas. They are just wonderful.

Sharon added, "I think that Amanda has been, she has been a resource for those upper-grade teachers and she tries to help them pinpoint things to make the lessons more exciting for the kids."

Kelly shared some of her interactions as well. She spoke generally about getting, "some advice from Beth because she taught just about every grade and she helped me a lot with books, and ideas for things to teach, and writing activities." She also turned to Nancy for ideas about implementing literacy centers, a central component of Literacy Collaborative. She said:

That was my hardest thing, centers. To me, centers equal chaos in the room. And I don't do well with chaos. So she helped me to figure out a way to set it up and to make it so that it wasn't so difficult for me and it wasn't so chaotic. That was very beneficial.

Lisa also sought support with literacy centers, but from Hazel, a kindergarten teacher leader. Lisa explained:

Hazel is a kindergarten teacher who has mostly just let me be in her classroom and let me ask questions. She's pretty much involved in Literacy Collaborative, kindergarten level. I've learned about teaching children to use centers from her and I haven't succeeded very well in that yet, but I understand the concept now.

To summarize, teacher leaders provided teachers with instructional support by sharing ideas—especially in the areas of reading and writing. Teacher leaders also modeled strategies, encouraged experimentation, and provided teachers with feedback.

Interactions-Theme 7: Collaboration

Teachers collaborated with emergent teacher leaders by engaging in professional dialogue, planning together, and sharing lessons. While these activities were centered around curriculum and instruction, collaboration is presented as a separate sub-category because in these examples, both teacher and teacher leader contributed to supporting one another as they interacted together. Also, teachers particularly emphasized the importance of collaboration.

Many teachers mentioned the discussions they had with one another. Teachers engaged in problem solving, brainstorming, and reflecting on practice. When Kelly was asked specifically about professional dialogue, she stated:

I think that especially in a profession like this, it's hard not to have professional dialogue. I mean how many teachers have you ever spent, even social time with,

where work doesn't come up? And it's not always griping. It's like, "I was trying to do this the other day, and I just couldn't get"—you know whatever. In fact, no one mentioned griping when talking about their interactions with teacher leaders. Martha's experience was quite the opposite. She discussed two teacher leaders who modeled appropriate professional dialogue by saying:

Well, I can say they are both very good examples of professionalism, in that they don't spend their time standing around talking about other people in the building. It's always about content, how we're doing, reflecting on ourselves, giving ideas to each other, or what the students' needs are. And I think they are shining examples of that. It's been wonderful. That's what I feel Northville has, most everybody I think falls in that category.

With a school climate that supported professionalism, reflective dialogue thrived at Northville Elementary. Martha had many experiences. For example, one teacher leader encouraged her to reflect on her practice in several ways. Martha explained:

I guess because I admire her so much and feel that she has such a good diagnostician role. She really is good at looking at something and helping you see it from a new light, or looking at it from a different perspective—that by talking with her I can go back and maybe try different things or just realize that maybe I have accomplished something that I didn't think I had because she's willing to see it. She gives me articles, points me in the direction of professional readings, of just the conversation that I can take back and reflect on and do better tomorrow and the next day. That's how it affects me.

Martha also explained that this teacher "really does come in and help collaborate with us and look at what we're doing, and reflect with us and make us better practitioners." Martha also experienced having dialogue with another teacher based on the materials she was using in her classroom. She explained:

She'll just look around and say, "Oh, what are you doing with this?" So, she'll ask me questions and then I have to understand why I'm doing it and explain it to her. But then she'll always say, "Oh, I've got great books," or "I've got these resources."

Brian also engaged in professional dialogue with a teacher leader peer. His participation in a literacy conference motivated him to learn more. He explained:

But as far as reading workshop and writing workshop, I would just talk to her because I had gone to a conference through the Ohio State University on comprehension—so I got a little understanding of it, but not enough to really—I still had questions about, "What does this look like? I have a small reading group right now, and I'm monitoring the rest of the class independently." I would just go when they were working independently and I would brainstorm with Nancy, just trouble-shoot certain areas that I was unsure about.

Brian followed up with this by saying:

Whether or not there is a structured environment for professional dialogue, people do it. If there is not a built-in structure, weekly meetings among grade level teams, then we catch each other whenever we can in the halls, and ask about curriculum or student support.

Brian explained that at some grades, teachers automatically engaged in meaningful dialogue because they met regularly to discuss grade level concerns. However, even without that support, teachers sought opportunities to discuss issues with their peers.

Kelly and Jenny both discussed collaborative planning they did with teachers at their own grade levels, as well as other grade levels. During her follow-up interview, Kelly explained that she had moved from teaching second grade to fourth grade and described her collaborations with a former fourth grade teacher, as well as the new second grade teacher who took her place. She explained:

[The former fourth grade teacher] and I will talk about what she did and what kind of activities she did in this particular theme in reading. She's given me a lot of the stuff that she's not using now because she's teaching a different grade. Even though I don't teach fifth grade, she's asked me questions pertaining to American history and if I had any ideas for what she could do as activities. And I've offered her some ideas for things like that. Then one of the teachers who is new to second grade who took my classroom, I helped her with some ideas about writing.

Jenny collaborated with Kelly when Kelly was a second grade teacher. She was in a unique collaborative situation because she had developed close relationships with teachers from multiple grade levels. These teachers met to plan together and provide the students with some consistency as they moved from one grade to the next. Jenny stated:

Another teacher I work a lot with is Donna, and she's in fourth grade. So, with Kelly in second grade, me in third, Donna in fourth, and Heather in fifth, we really try to, we get together a lot and see what everybody else is doing in their classrooms and we kind of build on that. So, like one thing we did was literature circles. Kelly didn't so much as do it, but she's doing guided reading groups with the Literacy Collaborative, so she kind of starts there. And then I would do modified literature circles in third grade, and then Donna would do literature circles in fourth grade and delve more into it, and by the time they got to Heather's class, she did literature circles, and they knew exactly what they were doing. And we do a lot of things like that. For the writing assessment, third grade does writing assessments on their own. In fourth grade, Donna would do timed writing, like they were doing in fifth grade, so they were ready for the writing test when they got there. That's just getting together and seeing what the kids are expected to do in each grade level and then trying to build on that. And that's

what you are supposed to do. I don't know if a lot of teachers get together and talk like that. But, that's because we are not just teachers, we are all friends.

While that is an example of rich collaboration and planning, other teachers shared their experiences with trading materials or lesson plans with one another. Sharon gave a simple example:

I'm the sort, that if I made a worksheet for the kids, or if I found—I had a lot of poems, and Hazel came and said, "Do you have any poems?" And I said, "Yeah, here's my whole folder." I like to share things.

Kelly also interacted with another teacher by trading materials and ideas:

She and I would trade out things, you know, she would talk to me about how to do [an activity] and how to set up the centers for that and I would use her actual sheets and her centers the weeks she wasn't using them and she would borrow some of mine that I had created for other skills. And so we swapped off things that we had used for center time and discussed writing workshop mini-lesson ideas and shared behavior plan ideas with one another. And that is probably the most real, I guess what I would call, 'team swapping', team teaching, that I have done on an ongoing basis. And we really worked together off and on throughout this whole year, swapping science and social studies units, science activities and literacy center activities back and forth with each other.

Martha described her experience as a "mutual sharing." She noted:

And a lot of times we'll just see things in each other's rooms which prompts questions or curiosity, so we'll just talk about, "Well what are you doing with this?" Like I said, it's just a mutual sharing.

Martha's experience also included collaborating with two other teacher leaders on the requirements for National Board Certification. While she could not continue working on the certification requirements, she did collaborate with these teachers in other ways.

In summary, teachers interacted with emergent teacher leaders by collaborating with them, planning together, and engaging in professional dialogue. These interactions were characterized by "mutual sharing" of materials, lesson plans, ideas, and thoughts.

Interactions-Theme 8: Observation

This sub-category provides an appropriate link between the classroom-based and school-based interactions teachers described because teachers observed teacher leaders in multiple ways. Some of the interactions teachers identified included observing their teacher leader peers during classroom instruction. Many of these examples were included in previous sub-categories, such as instructional support. However, teachers specifically described noticing the work of teacher leaders who "led by example," both as instructional leaders and school leaders. While "observation" may be considered a passive, independent activity, it is included as an interaction because it was an activity teachers specifically engaged in. Also, teachers valued the teacher leaders they observed and felt the leaders served as models for their own behavior. Kelly provided insight on the value of observing her peers by saying:

I mean, there are teachers in this building that lead by nothing more than example. They don't really have what you would say a leadership role, but you just watch them and you think, wow, they really do this well, so let me try that. And without really even knowing it, they may have influenced you to become better in a certain area. Then you have some that really do have leadership roles and they also influence people. Like she's really organized or I really like the way she has presence when she gets in front of people and speaks, or I like how she deals with people, she's very fair.

Kelly's statement provides examples of teachers who were not necessarily considered "leaders," yet they influenced people through their actions.

Many teachers talked about Heather as an example of a teacher who "led by example." Heather, a fifth grade teacher, chose to have an EIP self-contained class for the whole school year. The EIP (Early Intervention Program) was a state program designed to provide extra support to students who were performing below grade level. Heather decided to use a theme-based, service learning approach to teaching her self-contained group. The work she did over the course of the year served as a model for other teachers. Brian, Claire, Jenny, and Kelly all mentioned that they were influenced by Heather. Brian's statement best represents their experiences. He noted:

Well, I think each of us has our own different leadership styles. Like Heather, who's fifth grade, she took on this whole new project of having an all-EIP self-contained class, when the other teachers are changing classes for each subject and she kept her own kids and did a project-based, learning-center teaching approach, which is pretty unusual at our school for upper grade kids. They did this huge project with one of the courtyards at our school and totally—well it was curriculum-centered, based on Trumpet of the Swan—totally revitalized this courtyard that had no paint on the walls and was just bare concrete floor, that pre-k special ed. uses as a playground because it has clear walls around all the sides, so you can keep an eye on them. They can't go anywhere. That was a good example of a leadership project that was informal—she didn't take on any leadership role, it was just something that she did with her kids.

Brian added:

I don't think Heather meant to influence anyone with that, but I think that is the result of that and that it's inspiring for other teachers to make connections—just to use that as a model for what they could do with their kids.

In describing Heather, Jenny said that she was one of the "quiet teachers, who have great ideas, who just kind of wait for you to ask."

Jenny also described a veteran teacher leader at her grade level who she admired because of her experiences and knowledge of Northville Elementary's beginnings. She also described this teacher as one who led by example. She said:

She's kind of been like a mom, actually, when you come to those things that you don't understand. Why are we doing this? Or why aren't we doing this? We'll go and talk to her about that. Things about programs we've taken on—"I don't understand, explain this to me." She's more of a friend, really. But she has just done wonderful things in her classroom and you really try to mimic that in your classroom, and she's just a great person, overall.

When asked to elaborate on this teacher's leadership style, Jenny added:

She leads, but not outwardly. It just happens. She doesn't take on a lot, like she's not a chairperson a lot of times. But in meetings she will give her opinion and she has great ideas and she kind of sees the long-run. Yes, I do think she stands out, but not purposely. You know she's doing great things, you see it.

This teacher leader did not actively take on leadership roles, but rather, led by example, as described by her teacher peer.

Rachel discussed observing teacher leaders at faculty meetings. Teachers influenced her by the way they interacted with others. Rachel noted:

With other leaders, I guess I think of the people who, at faculty meetings, would speak up, and who would voice their opinion and who would do it in a professional manner—that maybe another perspective needs to be seen or another something else needs to be considered.

Rachel elaborated by saying:

I think one of the biggest things for me in thinking about people as leaders is that they do so in a way that doesn't make people defensive. Because others, well in situations where something may be said that is almost combative, I wouldn't

classify that as a leader. They have to be able to do that in a professional, not defensive, or not combative way.

Rachel continued, saying that she observed teachers at meetings and whether they interacted in positive or negative ways had an influence her. She said, "It's made me use them as an example for my own behavior."

To review, teachers observed emergent teacher leaders, many of whom "led by example." These teachers had influence at the classroom-level and school-level.

The school-based interactions teachers experienced included inquiry and problem solving, as well as shared decision making. The experiences teachers had with these two kinds of interactions often over-lapped, as inquiry and problem solving were part of the school's shared governance process. Also, at the time the study was conducted, the faculty was examining their governance approach and was using the inquiry process to design a shared decision making model that would better meet their needs.

Interactions-Theme 9: Inquiry and Problem Solving

Teachers engaged in school-wide inquiry and problem solving with emergent teacher leaders. This was part of the Accelerated Schools model, so there was a formal structure in place to support inquiry and problem solving. Although it was a formal structure, teacher leaders emerged to fulfill a variety of roles and carry out multiple activities.

Traditionally, the inquiry process was carried out through the cadres, which met weekly to identify school problems, brainstorm solutions, make recommendations, and then help with implementation. Kelly described her experiences on the language arts cadre:

In the language arts cadre, we did a survey where we listed the different programs that we use for language arts—Literacy Collaborative, Reading Recovery—and the different things we do, and we had teachers rate them one to five, if they used

it and how frequently they used it and what they thought of the program, if it was applicable to them. And based on some of those results, we took them back to the Steering Committee. You know, 75% of the people felt like STAR time, which is Stop Talking And Read, was not really used the way it should be. It would be nice if we had that amount of time, but we don't always have the 20-minute time that we need for it.

Jenny talked generally about the inquiry process by saying:

Well, I think it's been wonderful, because what you do is you inquire about what the problem areas are, what we all think as a faculty needs more focus and attention. And from there, you develop your cadres. And you do it mostly in the beginning of the year, based on information from the year before.

Jenny continued by sharing her experience as a member of the math cadre:

You come up with a question, "What is it we want to do? What is the purpose of this cadre?" And what we do is, we look at test scores to see where our areas of weakness were in the school. And that's where we came up with the [math] problem solving. We came up with other things, but that was one of the most important things, and that is what we focused on this past year.

She elaborated by providing details of their recommendations including staff development and a family math night. She shared this experience by discussing the final activity, the math night, and then backing up, discussing the events that led up to it.

We wanted to do a math night. One teacher in each grade level would come up with some math activities and that teacher would teach the [grade level's] math activities. Basically we focused on problem solving. We came up with activities to teach the parents how to teach problem solving. So we had each grade level, and they would rotate to the grade level that they needed—whatever the grade level their children may be in. And I did third grade—I came up with the third

grade activities and I taught it that night at the math night. In order to do that, we had to have [a consultant] come from RESA who would come and give us some math suggestions. Because we all teach math, and sometimes you kind of get one-track, I don't know, you kind of have blinders on. So she came to open our eyes to new activities, focusing on problem solving. I guess I was the lead person there, because I was the one who had to call her and schedule everything. So I got that math staff development organized, where the teachers went, and they did math activities and she talked about problem solving and how it coordinated with our testing. Because that's what we were worried about. We noticed that our scores were kind of low in problem solving areas and that was our inquiry process for the math cadre. So, our first step was to have [the consultant] come and do a staff development on math problem solving, and the second part of that was to take what we learned there and incorporate it into the math night for the parents. So we did that.

Other teachers described their experiences working in groups as they searched for a better way to govern themselves. Kelly explained the reasoning behind this school-wide inquiry:

You know, there just has to be a better way to manage the time and the information, and it got to the point where a lot of the people were starting to feel that way. So, we decided to try to find better ways to communicate with each other and ways to not have so many meetings and have committees that do something and don't just sit there. It's not like we didn't want to work; it's just the way the process was set up, it sort of inhibited you from coming in and saying, "You know what, this is a problem, let's solve it." I want to get it done and move on to the next thing. You know, because we only have 180 days with these kids each year and if it, especially if it has to do with instruction, let's nip it in the bud,

let's get it the way it needs to be and take it into the classroom and do it. That was my biggest problem with the Accelerated Schools process.

Kelly acknowledged that toward the end of the year, the faculty began the process of reviewing the Accelerated Schools model.

We started discussing that a lot of us seemed not so thrilled, shall I say, with the Accelerated Schools process. That it just didn't seem to be really what we needed. So we got together and sort of worked in small groups to create what we thought we did need that was more beneficial and really more personalized to our school and our staff and our students.

Brian also shared his experience, explaining that the faculty was working together to discuss which decisions should be made by the administrators and which should be shared with the faculty. He stated:

I've had limited experience in the role of an administrator, but maybe certain personnel decisions that have to be made quickly. If there's a vacancy and something has to be done really fast and there's not time to collaborate with a whole group of people, that certain times there might be decisions that it's okay for one person to make that. As long as there's that trust there, and that there's clearly defined roles, and that communication is flowing openly. So, I think that's where we are now with our shared governance and our shared leadership, is trying to create a communication system so that we know what's shared and what's not and no one is going to feel left out if decisions are made without them. It's sort of like trying to strike a balance between feeling like we all have to make decisions about every little thing including the color of paint on the walls and the brand of soap in the bathrooms, between that and, I'm hearing a lot of people are frustrated with that and we don't want to always be included in everything. That's one side and the other extreme is not having a voice in anything. So then people feel left

out—"This affects me, why wasn't I in on this?" That kind of thing. Right now we are sort of in the process of inventing our own model for striking that balance.

Rachel also described her experiences:

So [the governance structure] really just seemed to dissolve and that was one of the biggest things at the end of the year—if we're going to say we're doing this model, then let's do it all. And if we're not going to do it, which obviously we haven't been, then what are we going to do instead? But we need something in place that will offer us guidance and structure and governance. Not just something we're going to pay money to each year to say we're doing it, and not really be doing it.

She added:

I guess it would be a very hot topic in any school, but basically, what are things that are working and what are things that are not? And thinking specifically about the issue of governance and communication, and what would you like to see done differently and what is okay the way it is?

Some teachers also experienced inquiry and problem solving separate from the Accelerated Schools model. They described it in terms of looking for ways to improve as a school. Claire stated:

It wasn't like this where I student taught. But I just feel like everyone is really aware of what's going on, and maybe that just comes with the times too. All the stuff that's going on. What's going on? What's coming next? What can we do? How can we help our kids do well on this and this and this? What can we do different? Okay, now the results are back—what are they lacking in? How can we hit that? I just feel like that's just real positive for us.

Martha's experiences also included working with teacher leaders on ways to improve as a school. She shared this explanation:

I mean, we all have our own gifts and the leaders in our school, I think recognize everybody's gifts and are willing to share those, instead of coming in as a power trip and trying to tell everybody, "Well I know, I have had more experience or education." It's getting them to come to that realization of somehow, maybe there's a better way and we have to keep always looking for that better way.

To summarize, teachers engaged with teacher leaders in the inquiry process. While the Accelerated Schools model provided the structure for this to happen, teachers also used inquiry and problem solving techniques to create a shared vision of school governance, one that would better meet their needs for shared decision making.

Interactions-Theme 10: Shared Decision Making

Teachers engaged in school-wide shared decision making with emergent teacher leaders. Teachers described the process and explained that through shared decision making, their voices were heard and they were able to keep each other accountable. Again, the Accelerated Schools model provided the formal structure for shared decision making to take place.

Kelly began teaching at Northville near the time when the Accelerated Schools model was adopted. She had several years of experience working through the process of making decisions. She was able to provide background on this process.

The Accelerated Schools is a type of shared governance and basically, the most important thing is that everybody has a voice. Everybody knows what's going on in all facets of the building and we work really hard to keep the students at the center of everything we do. If my strength is in teaching language arts, then that's used to help the students the best. If somebody else's strength is math, then we pull more from their strengths to do that.

Kelly also shared how decisions were made through the Steering Committee and the SAW meeting. She continued:

Then as the Steering Committee, all together we would decide okay, well, if that many people feel like STAR time is really not that beneficial, maybe we need to bring it to the whole staff to see about either changing the amount of time or changing the time of day or dropping it completely. Then we would, the Steering Committee would make a recommendation, say, "Okay, well let's say as long as sometime during the day there is 20 minutes of silent sustained reading, that's fine." And, they'd bring that to SAW and we do something called fist to five. Fist means you can't support it at all, and you have to be willing to discuss why you won't. And five means you're in total support and then there's varying degrees within. And that's the way we hold each other accountable for how we each feel.

Brian added his perception of the school governance process:

From my understanding of Accelerated Schools and our leadership, or at least how it's played out at Northville, we really utilized it for shared governance, in terms of School-as-a-Whole which is supposed to include everyone, and we really don't have faculty meetings or staff meetings, we have SAW meetings, and decisions are made there, and anyone can bring up an issue. But in order for it to get on the agenda we have Steering, which is our leadership team which includes representation from all the cadres and all the grade levels or instructional teams. And then we have task forces for specific things, like if we want to have an Accelerated Reader night or if we want to have, we had a couple Hispanic celebrations during the year, then we'll have task forces that will work on those. Then we have the cadres which we're sort of revamping for this coming year. But the ones that we had were based on instructional areas. And then we have grade level teams that meet regularly. And so all those groups sort of feed into Steering

and then it goes to SAW for decisions that need to be made. So it feels coherent—it's not always used to the fullest.

Teachers also interacted with teacher leaders who facilitated the SAW meetings.

Claire mentioned that she valued this part of shared governance. She noted:

I think it works well. It works very well, especially in the faculty meetings because, well for one thing, you get a sense of, that's a peer up there running the—and not everything, but main things where we need to make decisions, if there's information that needs to be given, something we need to vote on, that's the type of situation when they're up there.

Martha shared similar feelings:

Well, I love the governance process at Northville. Very seldom is it the administration that is running the meetings. I don't think it's ever been the administration that is running the meetings since I've been there. And however the facilitator is selected, I think it's through the Steering Committee, which assigns roles that everybody is going to do. That's just amazing to me, that it's all coming from us.

Martha went on to say that "it's certainly not a top-down governance at all. It's working together, collaborating together."

Martha, Lisa, Rachel, and Jenny all mentioned teacher voice when referring to the shared governance process. Martha discussed that when they were deciding on their new form of governance, everyone's voice was heard.

I think everybody was heard and their answers recorded and the Steering Committee tried to reflect on that and go back and say, well this is what we hear you saying, now let's vote on what we want. It's a good process.

Lisa described a particular teacher who made sure her voice was heard at faculty meetings. She said:

Lilian has not had so many school roles, but I noticed the very first meeting that I ever went to at Northville, she has a good way of questioning and making sure that things don't get passed over or left out, making sure that things are clear. And I think that that's a real strong form of leadership.

Rachel also was concerned about teachers expressing their opinions. She experienced that sometimes, people would not speak up about an issue, even though many people were thinking the same thing. Often, it only took leadership by one to start the discussion.

I think what happened is in these situations, is something would be said and that wasn't the only person who was thinking that and it actually did lead others into being able to share their own opinions or voice their own attitudes about things.

When asked to provide an example, Rachel said:

Well, I know one issue dealt with the grant and applying for the grant and what all that exactly would mean. And I was sitting at table where I did hear mumblings of, "They're just going to be telling us more stuff to do." And finally, one teacher spoke up and said, "What exactly does this mean as far as more stuff to do?" And the issue immediately, the question was able to be addressed. And there were still some questions left after that even, but I felt like it was not so much speaking for the masses, but speaking for yourself and some of the others that have the same questions.

Jenny explained that everyone had the chance to take on leadership roles by voicing their opinions.

Oh, I think [the inquiry process] has helped tremendously. We really focused in on our students' needs, specific to them, what our strengths and weaknesses are at Northville, and what we need to work on. Having people designated to certain cadres, the work is really getting done, do you know what I mean? It doesn't just

stay in the cadre either. It then comes to SAW, which is a faculty meeting, and we discuss it all together and we all have a say in it and we all vote—we do a fist to five. So, in a sense, everybody has a leadership role at Northville because you have the opportunity to give your opinion, what's going on at Northville.

In fact, Jenny shared that at the end of the year, she felt uncomfortable voting on the new shared leadership model, because she knew she was moving to a new town and would not be at Northville during the next school year. The faculty communicated that they valued her voice. She explained:

That's what they were voting on at the end of the school year, which I sat in on the meetings and I gave my opinions because I have been there for so long, but I didn't feel like I should be voting on what they should be doing in the future since I wasn't going to be there. But they said, no, that they valued my opinion.

Brian and Rachel admired the leadership abilities of Lisa, who facilitated the faculty meeting during which groups worked out their ideas concerning a new governance structure. Brian noted:

I've been really impressed this past year with Lisa, our Steering facilitator, has really allowed us, or pushed us to use nominal group process for decision making at our SAW, School-as-a-Whole meetings, and people love it. It's worked so well. That was one of the best examples for a group that size, 70 people at a meeting, all breaking up into small groups, working individually, then in small groups, then bringing it back to the whole group, and synthesizing all that information. That's one of the best examples I've seen recently and that happened towards the end of the school year this past year, of shared leadership, where no one person or not even a small group was responsible for a decision. There was collective ownership from pretty much the whole school or at least people who attended, and everyone was invited. I know it can work.

Rachel also mentioned Lisa's ability to facilitate the SAW meeting and make sure that voices were heard.

And so, instead of saying, okay, we're going to talk about this or let's write it down as a group, we broke up into small groups. And that was a decision that had been reached by a leadership group within the school. But this person was the one that led us in the whole activity and it was just a situation, where, because of small group work, everybody really got, at least had the opportunity, and from what I saw in my group, did voice their opinions. What they thought worked, what they thought didn't, and what they'd like to see done differently. And then it was a coming-back-together process. And facilitating that discussion in a recap, bringing everybody back together, and every group gives their synopsis, and making that available to all the faculty after its typed up. Just very well-informed and very communicative with others, is what I saw with that. And not, she didn't cut anybody off, she allowed every voice to be heard that had something to say, but at the same time not allowing any one side, or voice, or issue to dominate the whole group discussion.

To review this second category, teachers interacted with emergent teacher leaders in a variety of ways. They engaged with one another on classroom-based situations which involved curriculum support, instructional support, collaboration, and observation. They also interacted with one another through school-level shared governance processes that involved inquiry, problem solving, and shared decision making.

Category 3: Outcomes

Teachers described many outcomes of their relationships and interactions with emergent teacher leaders. These outcomes of emergent teacher leadership provide evidence of what teachers valued and what they found to be most significant. Shared outcomes of teacher leadership included: teacher improvement, student benefits,

"collective ownership," increased leadership capacity, stability, improved morale, and challenges. Each of these areas will be discussed in detail, using the words of the teachers.

Outcomes-Theme 11: Teacher Improvement

Teachers revealed that working with emergent teacher leaders helped them improve in a number of ways. Teachers improved their instruction as they learned to plan better, to experiment with new ideas, and to implement programs more effectively. They also were inspired and motivated by the teacher leaders who they directly worked with, as well as those that led by example. Teachers provided evidence of their own learning, but also believed that others learned as well. For example, Kelly mentioned:

I think, like I said, if [teachers] are receptive, definitely they improve. And I think even the ones that aren't all that receptive, pick up a little something—how long they hold it, remains to be seen. Yeah, but I think they would have to make some sort of improvements.

Some teachers believed that emergent teacher leaders helped them plan their instruction more effectively. When Kelly moved to a new grade level, one of her teammates provided her with a curriculum map and showed her ways to organize her lessons. She also provided Kelly with time to learn. Kelly noted, "Well I feel like having a curriculum map that I got help with from one of the teacher leaders has helped me to get more focused on what I need to be teaching the kids." Kelly continued:

I feel like I am more together and that my lessons are more organized and focused now. I know where they're headed and I know how to look back on them to see if I've left something out, what I left out, and how to put it in the next day. My assessments are a lot more on target. One of the things I planned in social studies is a whole unit I did myself, so I think it really made a difference to have the extra time and support to make sure that everything was where it needed to be.

Kelly mentioned that although she was an experienced teacher, she still needed the support from a colleague when she changed grade levels. The curriculum was more challenging, and the students had different learning needs than her previous primary-level groups.

Many teachers also mentioned that they learned new ideas that they could experiment with in their classrooms. As a new teacher, Claire appreciated learning strategies for organizing her classroom.

Having just taught for just two years, I love to be able to rely on teachers for ideas, because it helps me be a better teacher, it helps me have my classroom organized, it helps me be more organized so that I can get more things done while the kids are there, so I am not spending time worried about so and so is in the wrong. Just being able to learn from other teachers how to get my room running smoothly at the beginning really helps set the tone for the rest of the year. Being able to have ideas, feel support—that's just been real invaluable to me.

Claire mentioned that by learning to be more organized, she was able to spend more time working directly with her students. The strategies she learned "set the tone" in her classroom for the rest of the school year. Claire also noted that teacher leaders were able to give her more ideas for working with children, especially when she felt like she had tried everything with particular children. She said:

Yeah, being able to implement things better, having more ideas. More ideas for what to do with this one child, or this one situation. You know, "I've taught it five ways and they still don't know it. Give me another one."

Jenny also needed help when she became a third grade teacher. Wanting to improve her science instruction, she turned to a teacher leader peer, who helped her "get organized."

She helped me with science. I wasn't very good at science the first time and learning the units, the materials, and things like that. And she really helped me

organize everything—kind of show me step-by-step what to do and she was in the classroom with me when we did some science units together. She helped me get organized.

Martha, an experienced teacher, also benefited from working with emergent teacher leaders. For example, Nancy encouraged her to examine her own instructional practices. By discussing her practice with Nancy, Martha was often able to get new ideas that she could try.

She really is good at looking at something and helping you see it from a new light, or looking at it from a different perspective—that by talking with her I can go back and maybe try different things or just realize that maybe I have accomplished something that I didn't think I had because she's willing to see it. She gives me articles, points me in the direction of professional readings, of just the conversation that I can take back and reflect on and do better tomorrow and the next day. That's how it affects me.

Martha also mentioned that Nancy allowed her to make realizations about herself as a teacher, realizations that she might not have made on her own.

Lisa was another teacher who benefited from working closely with Nancy in the classroom. As Lisa worked side-by-side with Nancy during writing workshop time, she was able to learn new strategies for teaching writing, practice these strategies with the support of her peer, and get immediate feedback on her instruction. This ongoing experience had incredible meaning for Lisa. She expressed:

And that's probably the best teaching about literacy that I've ever had in my life. Just to be there, and to be able to watch her in action and watch the children respond, and then have a chance to practice that. And if I got stuck, if a kid asked me question, or something was happening and I didn't know, I'd just look at her or ask her and she'd come over, and I'd get some feedback like that.

Lisa continued, by stating:

But I would say that as an informal leader, that experience probably transformed my existence in terms of being a teacher of literacy. And I would say that I do what I can, I intend to more every year. But her ability to lead me through that process as a co-worker was very powerful. And I think even when she is teaching a class, it's not, Nancy on one level and everyone else on another level. It's very much a sharing.

Lisa mentioned that this experience was powerful for her as a learner and a teacher, as it totally changed her approach to teaching literacy. She went on to say:

I've learned an awful lot about how children learn to read, write, and talk. I am seeing how [using those techniques] has been successful, so that has impacted me to at least try to understand it more and to do what I can within my classroom to use those kinds of techniques.

As an ESOL teacher, Lisa interacted with many teachers regularly because the children she taught came from multiple grade levels and classes. She mentioned that she learned about literacy instruction from other teachers as well. She shared her experiences observing literacy centers in Hazel's classroom. Lisa noted:

I've learned about teaching children to use centers from her and I haven't succeeded very well in that yet, but I understand the concept now. And I also have seen the growth that has happened to the children in her classroom and I think that is the thing that has meant the most to me, with all these teachers, they let me have their children for a little while, but just those moments when I come to the classroom to get them, it's nice to just see the atmosphere, to say, "Oh well, this is how they can function independently here. Well, why am I holding the reins on them so tight? If I teach them properly, they can do this." Some of it is just organizational things, but some of it is how children learn.

By observing many teachers, even for short periods of time when she picked up her students for class, Lisa was able to see how other teachers taught the same children she taught. This showed her what her children were capable of if she provided them with appropriate instruction. Lisa also mentioned, "I'm feeling a lot more confident now. What I've learned from Nancy and Hazel and Beth has helped, and certainly the things that I read."

Brian learned new instructional ideas from Nancy, as well. He needed more support because he was not involved in the Literacy Collaborative training, but wanted to experiment with these methods in his third grade classroom.

Even though I'm not teaching that, it's just been incredible for me to see because [Nancy] is an excellent diagnostician in terms of finding out quickly where a student's reading level is and what to do, how to work with kids who are falling behind or who are ahead of their peers, or whatever.

Brian continued:

And she helped me come up with some ideas of how to teach reading workshop and writing workshop, which is something different than what the other teachers were doing. And so I kind of needed more support and I got a lot from her. But that wasn't really a formal leadership position, that was just something that she volunteered to do because she knew that she could help me in that area.

Rachel had similar experiences, as she was new to the Literacy Collaborative model. Several teachers helped her learn new strategies, and implement these in her classroom. She mentioned that the most powerful learning experience was being able to observe an "exceptional teacher" as she taught reading and writing in her classroom.

I think it definitely has given me, speaking specifically about the Literacy Collaborative program, it's given me a broader understanding of that. It was

helpful to see what I was being taught about, to actually go and see it in practice, into a more experienced teacher's classroom.

Rachel said that the strategies she learned have become a normal part of her teaching repertoire, and that she will be able to use them in any school setting.

I'm going to be in a different school in the fall, and that's one thing that after having been part of the Literacy Collaborative training, and using that in the classroom, that I'm completely sold on it and that no matter what's ever handed to me as far as 'this is what's mandated that you teach,' the components of the Literacy Collaborative framework will always be a part of my teaching. And I think that's because of being able to see it in action, and also to have the incredible coaching that we did—someone who was training us and guiding us and teaching us how to do that.

Many teachers mentioned that emergent teacher leaders inspired them to be better teachers, and motivated them to try new things. Many of them were inspired by teachers who "led by example." Kelly was one teacher who was very observant of others and learned by watching. She noted:

And without really even knowing it, they may have influenced you to become better in a certain area. Then you have some that really do have leadership roles and they also influence people. Like she's really organized or I really like the way she has presence when she gets in front of people and speaks, or I like how she deals with people, she's very fair.

Claire also mentioned that emergent teacher leaders were a source of motivation. For example, Claire's mentor teacher motivated her and others, just based on her personality and the activities she planned for her students. Claire said:

But my mentor teacher is one of the teachers I am speaking about. Definitely a leader. In her classroom and through informal teaching and modeling programs

and stuff. . . .She is very, well first of all, she is a very motivated person. . . . She just motivates everyone around.

Claire continued:

She has influenced me to work hard. She works extremely hard and, I would go out on a limb to say that the population we teach is a hard population, and if the kids don't do well, you know, she's, "Okay we've got to try something else, we've got to do something different. Yeah, maybe the kids didn't have supper, maybe they're homeless, but, that's just not going to work." And that kind of attitude helps when you are teaching in this type of situation. She's like, "We'll find a way for them to learn, and we'll find a way for them to understand."

Claire said that having this kind of positive attitude affected her own attitude toward working with a needy student population.

Being a young teacher, it would be easy for me to be, "Well, reading sure is hard to teach, and I know they didn't do well, but they have life situations going on." Which, obviously you have to take into account. But there are a lot of different ways you can try to teach, different ways that you can try to reach students who can't take books home and be read to, or can't take books home because they might not bring them back because they don't stay at the same place. Those types of situations, there are ways that those children can be reached and we can set up a different way for them to do outside reading.

As a new teacher, Claire learned ways to vary her instruction to reach different students. She learned to make accommodations for her students, without making excuses.

Many teachers were inspired by Heather's service learning project. Heather, a fifth grade teacher, taught a self-contained EIP class, and provided her students with an integrated curriculum based on literature, service learning, and life skills. This year-long project resulted in a complete renovation of an ordinary play area into a colorful,

developmentally-appropriate wonderland for preschool special education children. This project involved parents and the community. More importantly, it involved children in authentic learning experiences. Upon seeing the finished project, teachers were obviously inspired. Claire stated:

Well I know for me, I was like, "Wow!" Obviously first grade would have to be a little bit smaller scale, but a fifth grade class could help us do something that great. But just to think, I don't know. I just think that that was unbelievable. It's amazing what you can do. . . . I think for other teachers, it's such an opportunity to say, "Gosh, we don't have to be in the classroom all day. Look how much learning they did."

Martha was also inspired:

Well, I think the thing with Heather, just watching what she did with the service—you know I've been thinking about that for first grade. How can I do that with a first grade group? It would be a little more constraining because they are not able to do as much independently, but that was something that everyone saw and the staff was amazed at. And I think it just shows you excuses are just excuses that can just get in the way. If you really want to do something, it's going to take you to get out there and make it happen. But, it can happen.

Brian agreed with Martha on the effect of Heather's leadership:

I don't think Heather meant to influence anyone with that, but I think that is the result of that and that it's inspiring for other teachers to make connections, just to use that as a model for what they could do with their kids.

Jenny agreed with Brian and the others:

Yeah, it makes you want to do that too. It makes you want to be a good teacher like that because the kids are interested in it and it's a new avenue to get to the curriculum, and it's fun.

Teachers were impressed with the work Heather did with a challenging group of students. Her teaching inspired other teachers to think of ways they could provide their students with fun, authentic learning experiences.

Two teachers also mentioned that teacher leaders inspired them to become more involved outside their classrooms and to be aware of what was going on. Jenny, a third grade teacher who typically shied away from leadership roles, was encouraged by a teacher mentor to get more involved. She explained:

So she was always involved in a lot of things and that was very inspiring to me because—not that I try to stay out of things, I was involved in a lot of things, but I was not the head person of it, the chairperson, per se.

Claire mentioned that having many leaders involved in the school motivated her to be more aware of what was going on outside her classroom.

It just seems that the people who are the leaders, keep on leading all the time. They may be into something different, but they are always leading. And so, I just really think that they do positive things for our school, just really have made other teachers more aware, and maybe this is just the way it is [at Northville], I don't know. It wasn't like this where I student taught. But I just feel like everyone is really aware of what's going on, and maybe that just comes with the times too. All the stuff that's going on. What's going on? What's coming next? What can we do? How can we help our kids do well on this and this and this? What can we do different? Okay now the results are back—what are they lacking in? How can we hit that? I just feel like that's just real positive for us.

As a new teacher, Claire observed that teachers were involved outside their classrooms and that they were active in finding ways to work together to make school-wide improvements.

In summary, by interacting with teacher leaders, teachers believed that they were able to provide better instruction for their students. Teachers were also inspired to think of new ways to reach their challenging student population.

Outcomes-Theme 12: Student Benefits

Based on teachers' experiences presented in the previous section, it is obvious that one way students benefited from emergent teacher leadership was by receiving better instruction. Many teachers mentioned that as they interacted with teacher leaders, they focused on how they could better meet student needs. For example, Brian explained that students were the focus of his grade level team meetings, as well as the work of the shared leadership team.

But also in terms of my team, my grade level team meetings, I feel like we are really focused on the needs of the kids. And with the Student Support Team model, I feel that's a really great way for us to collaborate and for our shared leadership to influence and impact the way that instruction, and that we meet the needs of the students. And ultimately, I think that's what all of our shared leadership is for. Some of it gets a couple levels removed from the day-to-day instruction, but we wouldn't be there if it weren't for the way that it ultimately impacts the way that we teach one way or another.

Jenny also said that the inquiry process used in their shared governance model focused on student needs. She explained, "Oh, I think [the inquiry process] has helped tremendously. We really focused in on our students' needs, specific to them, what our strengths and weaknesses are at Northville, and what we need to work on." Rachel also expressed that students benefited because she learned to more effectively implement the Literacy Collaborative model.

I definitely think the experience for them was a lot more beneficial because the components of that framework are so useful and helpful in helping students

developing literacy knowledge and the basis of reading and writing. And I feel like, because I was able to better implement part of it, that my children definitely benefited from that, because I was able to use the components of the program in way that it was designed to be used for its purposes.

Brian also noted that he was able to provide his student with more appropriate instruction:

But also I think just to have an impact on instruction as far as my ability to find materials that were age-appropriate for my kids and developmentally-appropriate for their level, rather than using a basal when certain kids were well below the level of the basal.

Students also received better instruction through team teaching models, such as Lisa's experience working with Nancy during writing workshop. Lisa said, "That way, I got to learn about writing workshop and that part of Literacy Collaborative, and the children got to have support within their classroom setting." During that time, Lisa was learning with her students, and the students benefited by being able to work with two teachers in the classroom.

But, how do students benefit from improved instruction? Teachers provided many examples of other student benefits, including having new experiences, making academic gains, and experiencing a sense of community. Many teachers expressed that teacher leaders provided them with ideas or materials they normally would not have access to, so that their students benefited because they were exposed to new things. For example, Martha said that her students benefited "immensely" when they got hands-on experience in the butterfly garden.

The kids really got first-hand experience that I might not have done on my own. But she's just—"Oh, by the way here's the bird feed. Since your closest, you get to fill up the bird feeder." So the kids took ownership of that—that became their

special area. They would watch the butterflies through the year and watch the changes. And besides, just having the wealth of resources, the books to share with them, it's been wonderful. And we would write back and forth to her class about, "We saw so many butterflies," or what was happening with the developmental stage of the insects.

Martha's children may not have had this experience if Beth had not provided her with the materials, as well as the encouragement.

Claire and Jenny both mentioned that the students involved in Heather's service learning project benefited by experiencing something new. Claire said:

And the life lessons that those children learned from that. I mean, that group of kids, that will stick with them forever. And they did this special presentation when it was all done and had their parents there, and they all made speeches and told what they did, and they made their own book about how important it is to not pick on kids because they are special. They made this huge Big Book that the preschoolers are going to have—it was just really neat. So, I know that their lives are impacted positively because of this, and I know that the preschool special ed. children will be impacted positively because of this.

Jenny agreed:

It was a really good growing experience for those students, to do things that they probably wouldn't normally have done if they weren't in that classroom. She does a lot of that. She goes out into the community and does a lot with the community and tries to bring them into the classroom.

In this case, the fifth graders who were directly involved with the project benefited by gaining new perspectives, learning about special education students, and learning that they can make a difference in the lives of others. The preschool children benefited as well, as they gained a new play area designed specifically for their needs.

Several teachers also mentioned that students were able to make connections as a result of their instruction. For example, Brian noted that the children working on the preschool play area not only got to work with their parents and the community, but were able to experience authentic learning.

It was a huge collaboration with lots of people, and raised money, and helped out the pre-k special ed., and really gave her students an opportunity to make connections to the real world between the curriculum, and making it authentic learning.

Claire and Jenny provided examples of how their collaboration with emergent teacher leaders allowed them to provide students with consistency among grade levels and classes. Students could make connections as they moved from grade to grade. Claire said:

Well, yeah. A sense of community. A sense of you know, we're going to kindergarten, first, and second grade, and we're using the same icons for our literacy centers. They've been in reading groups that they feel comfortable in for three years. Yeah, I think that's been real powerful in our school. They can kind of make connections from one grade to the next. I mean, obviously it changes a little bit, the intensity of the work. But yeah.

Jenny's example of collaborating with teachers at other grade levels also resulted in students seeing connections and being better prepared for the next grade level. She regularly met with a group of teachers representing different grades, to align their reading and writing instruction. For example, they each used literature circles in their classrooms. According to Jenny, they scaffolded their instruction so that "by the time they got to Heather's class, she did literature circles, and [the students] knew exactly what they were doing." They also did this with their writing instruction so that students were ready for the state writing test in fifth grade.

Teachers also indicated that students experienced a sense of community from the work teachers and teacher leaders engaged in. For example, Heather provided her students with a school family and the students learned that their teacher cared about them.

Martha noted:

She's amazing with her kids. She had a group of kids that nobody else would want, a group of all EIP students. But she took them in as her family and said, "I'm going to take care of them." And she makes great strides with them, whether it shows up in test scores or not, I think the rapport they built by not having to go to a lot of different teachers, it was their home base.

Brian expressed that when teachers collaborate with one another, it serves as a model for student cooperation.

Just to see, first of all, it's a model of teachers collaborating with each other and I'm hoping that some of that will rub off on the kids and that they can learn to collaborate with each other in the same way that teachers collaborate with each other. Sometimes I'll use it as an example, you know, I'll just ask my kids to watch the way that teachers interact with each other and just think about it, in terms of how they respond to one another.

He purposely used his experiences interacting with teacher leaders to teach his students about community and respect.

The relationship with the kids is really the primary focus, and the reason that I would go to other teachers, or that we need leaders, is to impact instruction and the community-building. Also, one of the biggest things that I've been working on with my kids is building a sense of community, building team players out of my kids who really—I think it's really a stretch for a lot of kids to be able to get along with others, and it's not really anywhere in the curriculum as far as I know, that really talks a lot about collaboration. But I think in terms of sharing

leadership with other teachers, it's a model, or it impacts the way that I teach, that things should be shared. You know, I consider my students, I try to treat them with the same respect that I would treat other teachers and I think it goes both ways. I think the best way for me to earn the respect of my kids is to respect them, in the same way that I would respect my colleagues. And so, I think that's one positive impact with the kids, and with the way that I teach, is that sort of shared collaboration, and that spirit of collaboration.

Teachers also noted that students made academic and behavioral gains because of the better instruction they were able to provide. After working with Nancy on literacy strategies, and implementing these techniques in her instruction, Lisa observed great gains with her ESOL students. She stated:

Except for one kid, maybe all, have not re-entered ESOL. And some of those children started school that year with no English, not any. And after only one year, they exited and have continued to be fairly successful academically, knowing that social English and academic English are not the same. But it was very powerful for me to see them in that learning situation and also to see that they're continuing to do well academically. There was another child last year, my second year, who had less than zero English. He started just after the beginning of the school year. And he could read and write in Spanish, which is a plus, and now two academic years later, he has been referred for gifted. He is handling academic English pretty well.

Jenny interacted with teacher leaders in the area of special education and observed gains made by students with special needs.

When I was in pre-k, we had the pre-k special ed. program there, we still do. In pre-k, I had an autistic child, which, I didn't know anything about autism and I had to work very closely with them, and they are amazing—what they do with

those kids. They know what they are doing. And a lot of those kids have graduated into regular classrooms because of them.

Jenny indicated that the students in Heather's self-contained fifth grade class also made improvements. She was particularly impressed because she had taught those same children when they were in third grade, and knew of their challenges. Jenny said:

She had 16 kids, and a lot of it was behavior issues to deal with and very low students, so she took on a lot this year. Those kids were amazing. And she did it. They made some gains in their grades and even behavior-wise.

To summarize, when teachers interacted with emergent teacher leaders, they were able to provide students with better instruction that focused on their individual needs. Students also gained a sense of community and were able to see connections in their learning. Despite the fact that many students scored poorly on standardized tests, some teachers observed academic and behavioral improvements in students. A final student benefit was revealed by Jenny, when she declared, "I know that the kids love to be at Northville. They don't want to go anywhere else!"

Outcomes-Theme 13: "Collective Ownership"

In the previous section, teachers indicated that their collaborations with teacher leaders provided students with a sense of community. Teachers also expressed that by working with emergent teacher leaders in various ways, they felt an increased responsibility in the school as a whole. One teacher described it as a feeling of "collective ownership" in school outcomes.

One way this sense of shared responsibility manifested was when everyone in the school community worked together toward a common vision. Kelly referred to this shared vision in the following statement:

I think for the most part in this building, and I think a lot that has to do with because our mindset from day one, was Accelerated Schools—we work together

for the children, to make this place what it needs to be. I think that that seems to be pretty much everybody's philosophy, so when somebody is leading others for whatever reason, it is always in the end for what's best for the students and generally speaking, other things that could cause problems, get left out of it. And it really does become, "Let's make this best for kids. Let's do what's going to be best for our school. Let's meet the kids where they need to be met instructionally, and remember that we are here for them emotionally also." And that's been very helpful, too.

By adopting the Accelerated Schools model, teachers became committed to working together for the benefit of the students. This shared vision and commitment to collaboration guided the interactions among staff members. Ironically, it even guided the faculty as they worked together to develop a better way to govern themselves, one that would better meet their shared philosophy. This will be referred to again later.

One way their shared vision guided their interactions was that there was a collective responsibility for the children at Northville. Lisa particularly noticed this. As an ESOL teacher, she only taught students for a portion of the day. She noted that other teachers felt a sense of responsibility for helping her students learn English.

For the most part I think Northville is better than most schools of knowing that the ESOL children are going to learn English, not just from me, they're going to learn in their classrooms as well. There's still one or two, that think it's my job and they are just in their classroom to hang out, but they don't have to teach them anything. But, for the most part, the teachers are real professionals about that and I regret that I haven't done enough to support them more.

Teachers mentioned that working together also meant that the administrators worked with them as part of the "team." For example, when asked about her views of shared governance, Martha stated:

Well, I think [teachers] prefer it in that everybody that's been there, seems to me, to buy into the team effort. And the principal and the assistant principal are part of the team. But certainly it's not a top-down governance at all. It's working together, collaborating together.

Kelly provided an example of how the administrators are part of the team effort, specifically their role in the cadres.

Well, the administrators sort of move around throughout the cadres. They'll come in and sit in on one cadre meeting and, you know, if they have any points to make, they'll make their points or ask questions. A lot of times, the cadre they go to is dependent upon, maybe they have a point to make or a question to ask or a task to give in a certain area, so they'll go to the cadre that would have to do with that. When we were working on implementing our SSR room, that was the student responsibility and behavior cadre and the administration spent a couple of sessions with them working on that as well.

Administrators did not control or dictate the work teachers did in the cadres. Rather, they provided their guidance and input when it was needed.

Teachers also mentioned that teacher leaders helped set a tone for working together. When teachers worked together, it was student-focused. For example, Kelly compared the collaborative work of teachers at Northville, with her experience at another school, in which teachers were competitive and poorly-focused.

And all of the positive things that you talk about teacher leaders bringing to a school setting were not [at my other school]. When you work together you also don't have, to the degree that you have in other settings, the competition. And you know, competition is good in some ways, but it also breeds resentment in other areas. And you lose sight of the real reason you are here. And there was a lot of competition when people weren't allowed to have ownership and to express

themselves, and help out. Whereas in this situation, we're not trying to be better than anybody else. We're trying to get everybody up here [held hand up high]. We know why we're here, and it's not to be the best dressed or to have the cutest children, or the nicest decorated door. You know, those kinds of things. We have worked together to set a tone in the building that we all agree upon. And I don't think that would have happened as readily without teacher leaders.

Kelly felt like she was better able to see the benefits of a staff that works together since she had another experience. She often indicated this to her peers. She explained:

But, I've said from the first year I was here, "Y'all just don't understand. I mean maybe you sort of understand what a great place this is, but go where I was, and then you'll really see what you have here." And people can come here and say that, "You know, this place really does seem like a family. Everybody seems to be working together."

Many teachers used the word "family" to describe the community at Northville. In fact, based on the researcher's experiences, Northville had a reputation within the community as one big family. Teachers maintained that this "family feel" came from their common vision and their shared dedication to the children and families of their school community. Rachel attributed it to the influence of emergent teacher leaders.

All the [teacher leaders] that come to mind, it's been very positive. And I would guess that's probably because part of my criteria for someone who is a leader is somebody who leads positively. They provide, I think that's where the community feeling comes from. It just repeatedly seems to come up about Northville being a family and this is such a community and people feel so welcome when they come there. And I think it's hard being in the middle of it, to even understand what the people from the outside are saying. But it's definitely not the feeling that everybody's just in their own room doing their own thing, and

that's it. And I think the leaders, part of what they were able to do was to bring people together out of the classroom and whether it was for meetings and specific things that had to be done, or it was sitting around at lunch and hanging out and talking. Those people were really able to bring the different teachers together.

When teachers worked together, they experienced a sense of shared responsibility in the school. Teachers described this using terms such as "ownership," "buy-in," and "responsibility." Teachers valued their roles in the process of making shared decisions. It definitely made them feel that they had the power to determine school outcomes. Kelly said that by taking on different leadership roles, teachers felt more ownership outside their classrooms. She explained:

I think having different teachers in various leadership roles is a very helpful thing in schools. It allows people to spread their wings, so to speak, to try new things, and it also makes you feel a little bit more ownership in the building, not just your classroom. And it takes some of the stress off of the administration. They no longer have to do everything.

Claire valued having her peers facilitate faculty meetings.

I think, it works well. It works very well, especially in the faculty meetings because, well for one thing, you get a sense of, that's a peer up there running the [meeting]. . . . And I think it makes, well, it makes it nicer, obviously, for the principal because they don't have to read up on all this information, and the assistant principal. But it just makes a difference. It's your peer that has done all this work, and really knows their information so that they can present it to you. It just gives, I think, the faculty a sense of responsibility and a sense of, "We need to do this," not "Y'all need to vote on this." So, I think that makes a difference.

Based on Claire's experiences, there was a difference between teachers working together to make school decisions and administrators presenting information for teachers to vote

on. When teachers were equipped with the information and the power to make decisions, they took more responsibility.

Teachers even took responsibility to recreate their own model for shared leadership. Kelly explained:

I felt like there was a better way to organize ourselves and govern ourselves, that was much more personal to our mission and vision and our philosophy, and what we really felt in our hearts was important to accomplish as a faculty, and for our students, and for our community. And I just didn't think we were getting what we needed to get out of Accelerated Schools process.

She continued by saying, "So we got together and sort of worked in small groups to create what we thought we did need that was more beneficial and really more personalized to our school and our staff and our students." Kelly recognized that some people were uncomfortable with breaking from the Accelerated Schools structure. However, she was optimistic because she believed they would come up with something that better met their needs. She concluded, "But I think that we will be much happier with this. And this is another way that we took a lot of ownership and had a lot of say and a lot of people leading this."

Brian agreed with Kelly. He also referred to the school-wide meeting that took place at the end of the year, during which staff members worked in groups to discuss ideas for a new form of shared leadership.

That's one of the best examples I've seen recently . . . of shared leadership, where no one person or not even a small group was responsible for a decision. There was collective ownership from pretty much the whole school or at least people who attended, and everyone was invited. I know it can work.

Brian also explained the importance of shared leadership:

So I think it's important, in terms of ownership, if things affect us as teachers, I think there will be a lot more buy-in or ownership of decisions if teachers are involved in the decision making process. And I think an administrator would be foolish not to have some degree of that.

Brian recognized that he was unsure how the new leadership model would develop, however, he did think it would involve shared leadership.

I think we do make shared decisions, and I think to some degree we always will, because we have so much potential leadership, whether it's formal or informal within the building. People want it to be a group effort, collaborative decision making as much as possible. And I think [the principal] wants that too.

Lisa indicated that there was a sense of shared responsibility during meetings, in general. She said:

And I think it comes from the basic philosophy that the meeting is not just the responsibility of the person who happens to be standing in front. If we are having a meeting, it's because it's important to meet about and it's everybody's responsibility. So everybody has a role to play.

She continued, pointing out that through the cadres, people are accustomed to taking on important roles to facilitate meetings.

I think those kinds of role assignments have really helped people. And I think that is a form of leadership, because it is about taking responsibility and I guess, I haven't thought of it that way, that's what leadership is—it's being willing to be responsible. There's a concept!

Lisa pointed out that teachers were willing to take responsibility and that when they did, they worked together to get things accomplished. She explained:

Because people are willing to take responsibility to do what needs to be done. They don't wait to be told. If something is important and there's been some discussion about it, and there's often very much discussion about everything, and that is a good thing, people won't wait to be told. If there's something that needs to be done, they'll work together to do it, they'll ask questions, they will just say, "Would you like me to do this so that it can be taken care of?"

Teachers also viewed the community as important partners in the school. Another outcome of emergent teacher leadership was greater community involvement. Community involvement benefited students and the school as a whole. As coordinator of the Partners in Education (PIE) committee, Kelly recognized the importance of community involvement. She noted:

Well, the Partners In Education program does have a tie-in to the instructional part. I was the coordinator of the PIE and we had several partners who donated time for different things. They came in and did activities to teach the kids about whatever their business was. And then we had another couple donate money for our fourth grade trip to the beach. They set up contests for different things and have given prizes away for those contests. Just sort of being able to coordinate businesses that are outside with what goes on inside the building as far as instruction, and sometimes nothing more than mentoring, which can be a combination of social and educational health for children.

Claire repeated the benefits of involving the community, referring to Heather's leadership through her service learning projects.

And that kind of leadership, she was, they must have stayed after school for at least a month. And the parents were involved, so the kids were involved. That just really was neat. She had a lot of people in the community and they went on field trips and did all kinds of neat stuff, went to Wal-Mart and bought stuff.

Jenny also observed this community involvement. She said, "She does a lot of that. She goes out into the community and does a lot with the community and tries to bring them into the classroom." Involving families and the community in school efforts widened the "collective responsibility," felt by staff members.

Teachers believed that by serving as instructional and school leaders, they had a major impact on "making the school what it was." In other words, teachers felt that they had a hand in all decisions that had been made at Northville Elementary. Claire provided one example of a teacher leader who "shaped the school."

This one teacher has popped into my head that I can't believe I didn't think of earlier. She's so into reading. And she has all the kids excited about Accelerated Reader, she has all the kids all excited about getting a library card, and she's been on this whole push for everybody in the whole school to have a library card and so that kind of stuff, that gets all the kids excited. That really affects the entire school. Every Friday the kids are all excited about seeing who's on BRAG and who's gotten Accelerated Reader points, and for their Accelerated Reader points they get more books. That's just such a positive program. That's really made a big difference, that's really shaped the school.

Jenny mentioned that teacher leaders influenced her, but also influenced the school as a whole.

Well, they've influenced me throughout the years, each one of them has had some sort of an impact on me. And in turn, has done the same thing to Northville.

They've evolved it into what it is today. Northville started out with the Accelerated Schools model and they've had it, and every decision they've ever made has been because of these people. These people who are dedicated to the students of Northville, to that community, who believe in the children and the community, and the teaching strategies, and the Accelerated Schools model. And

those teachers that I've mentioned and those who I haven't mentioned, they've made Northville what it is today. It's a wonderful school that has wonderful programs. They have teachers who are dedicated to their students and what they need And that's what Northville is all about.

Jenny's passionate comments provide an accurate summary of the findings related to the sense of shared responsibility teachers felt for the students and school as a whole. By interacting with teacher leaders, teachers felt a greater "collective ownership."

Outcomes-Theme 14: Increased Leadership Capacity

Teachers acknowledged that there were many opportunities for teacher leadership at Northville. They pointed out that everyone had different strengths, interests, and areas of expertise, and that these were shared to help others improve. Teachers believed that teacher leaders helped foster a community of leaders, by serving as models and encouraging others to take leadership roles. Teachers valued the opportunities to try new roles in a supportive environment, and maintained that they learned many leadership skills from their teacher leader peers.

Northville Elementary could truly be described as a community of leaders. In the earlier section on relationships, teachers described the variety of teacher leaders they formed relationships with. The following examples provide evidence that emergent teacher leadership thrived at Northville. Kelly stated:

It's almost like there's so many different ways that people help each other and sort of lead in this building. Now there's team leaders and there's our Accelerated Schools coach who helps us to stay organized, and some of that has to do with instruction, some of it just has to do with the basic everyday running of the school. Our different cadres or committees have different facilitators for them. Then we have our Steering Committee that is comprised of the leaders and facilitators of the different committees.

Claire agreed, "I do think there are lots of different people who do so many different things." She provided a few examples:

Okay, so there were leaders as far as your cadre leader, your reporter, your secretary, on down the line, just like everything else. That called for at least 5 leaders in every cadre. There are what I would call leaders in the community as far as teachers who are in school and are doing projects that coincide with their schoolwork. There was a teacher here this year who is moving to another school this year who did a service learning project, every year.

Lisa also commented on the multiple teacher leaders:

Many of these teachers, and other teachers that I haven't named, since we use the cadre model, and have five or six different working groups going on at the same time, somebody is responsible for leading all of those groups. And Lilian has often been one of those. I would say that Northville is full of leaders, and that has its advantages and disadvantages, but mostly I think because people do know how to work together well, I think it serves us well.

Brian also valued the number of teacher leader peers at Northville:

I feel like there's a lot of strong informal leadership in this school. And like you said, people have their own specialty areas and word gets around, you know, if you need help with something, this is who has expertise in this area.

He continued by saying, "I like the fact that there are so many people who have leadership skills and that people go to. It's not always the same person." Jenny also said that, "there's just a lot of teachers at Northville who kind of stand out and do things like that." Even though she was reluctant to see herself as a teacher leader, she divulged that she also had participated in leadership-type activities.

I mean I've done a lot of things; I've done a lot of staff developments and I did a lot with technology when I was getting my Master's. As far as being a lead

teacher, I've taken the Teacher Support Specialist class, I've been a mentor teacher to new teachers, naturally, I've had student teachers and student interns, things like that. But, that's basically it.

Kelly mentioned the importance of having many leadership roles available to teachers.

I think having different teachers in various leadership roles is a very helpful thing in schools. It allows people to spread their wings, so to speak, to try new things, and it also makes you feel a little bit more ownership in the building, not just your classroom.

Teachers admired their teacher leader peers and recognized the positive contributions they made. They mentioned that there were many opportunities available for teachers to take on new leadership roles. Many also expressed that they received encouragement from administrators and other teacher leaders to try out new roles. Lisa was one teacher who pointed this out.

But, I think anybody who wants to have responsibility, there's a way for them to do that and I think that, at least some of us who have this consciousness try to encourage other people to do it, and that's something that I'm interested in.

Kelly received encouragement and support from the school principal. The principal provided her with many opportunities to try new leadership roles.

I also see the administration finds those teachers that they see have natural leadership ability and offers them opportunities to strengthen that. Well [the principal] is pushing me to do things, to get more involved in leadership areas, like team leader, or to go be on this committee to help with this, or telling me to go back to school, you know those kinds of things—which some of them affect me in the classroom and the other teachers around me, but some of them just affect me personally and me professionally.

She continued by saying:

[The principal] has been really good, well, I can only speak about myself, in allowing me to branch out and try some coordinating and leadership roles that I hadn't had a chance to before, that have been very beneficial to me. I've enjoyed that too.

Jenny was encouraged to lead by her mentor teacher.

Well, she was one of the teachers who always said, "I think you really could"—when I said, "I don't think I could do that; I can't get up and teach a staff development." She said, "I really think you can, I think you can do a lot more than you think you can." She always tried to push me a little bit more—not just in the classroom, outside of the classroom as well, get involved in more things. She took on everything.

Brian indicated that the shared governance process allowed teachers to take on new leadership roles because the process encouraged teachers to voice their opinions. He noted:

And really it was total shared decision making and everyone had a voice, whether they wanted to or not. And that was nice. So it's kind of good to strike a balance where it's not just everything is top-down and you are getting the information. People have opportunities to use their leadership or to learn new leadership skills. I really like that.

Rachel agreed, pointing out that when teachers expressed their opinions openly, it encouraged others to do so as well.

I think what happened is in these situations, is something would be said and that wasn't the only person who was thinking that and it actually did lead others into being able to share their own opinions or voice their own attitudes about things.

Teachers also indicated that they learned leadership skills as they observed their teacher leader peers, and as they experimented with new roles. Kelly learned about herself as a leader from her role as summer school coordinator.

I was PIE coordinator last year and that has not been as beneficial as [the principal] making me the coordinator of the summer school program this year. I've always known I was an organized person, but this really helped me to see I am more organized than I thought I was. And that I can lead other people. I've always said, "No, I don't want to be an administrator because I don't know how diplomatic I could be if I felt someone wasn't meeting the expectations that I felt they should be meeting." This has helped me to see that it is possible for me to find ways to communicate with someone that perhaps they aren't doing some of the things they need to do in a way so that it doesn't seem quite like that's what I'm saying. And it's given me a chance to sort of multi-task which has been very beneficial. And it's helped me to see that I do love kids, but there will come a time that I want to be able to reach more than just the 20 kids in my classroom, and the way to do that is to be in some form of administration in the building. That way you can reach more of the children.

Kelly learned many leadership skills, but also made the realization that she may want to be an administrator one day. Kelly added other skills she learned during her summer school leadership experience:

It helps me to see that, how to deal with paperwork and how to deal with transportation, and how to work with people and how to get people to work with you to help you do things. And, I have a tendency sometimes to have a fear that if I don't do it, it won't be done right. But, how to let go of some of that and learn to delegate to a certain extent. And how to learn to step up to the plate and pull together a group of teachers and say, "Okay, this is what we have to do. And we

are going to meet and discuss this and then I need you to do this and you need to come back to me with this." And not feel like I don't have the right to say that to them.

Kelly also described the specific skills she learned from working directly with emergent teacher leaders.

This is what I've learned from Nancy herself: let's say you have 15 teachers that are supposed to be participating in this particular language arts program, and their classrooms are supposed to look a certain way, and they are supposed to be doing certain things. And, as I am sure you know, you will run across a few that, for whatever reason, simply are not adhering to the guidelines of the program. Well, the way I am, I just want to go right to them and say, "I have seen that you are not doing this and you are not doing this and we need to work on this, and getting that in shape and whatever." Nancy, not by necessarily coming right out and saying, "Now Kelly, you need to do this," but just by watching her, she finds, she is a lot more laid back about it. Not that she let's it go, because she doesn't let it go. But she finds ways to deal with it that don't seem quite so much like you are being policed or reprimanded.

Kelly learned about styles of leadership from working with Nancy. She continued by saying:

And it helped me to see that sometimes you can't always go in head first, plowing forward quickly. You have to find ways to tiptoe into it. And sometimes I think some of that comes with maturity.

Kelly experienced supervising another adult by working with her teaching assistant.

Some of the ways teachers worked with their teaching assistants showed Kelly how not to lead.

Yes, a teaching assistant is supposed to assist you, but that doesn't give you the right to patronize them. And sometimes I think people forget that if you are leading someone, it doesn't automatically mean that you are above them in absolutely every way. It means you are there to help them if they need it, be a support, not an overseer.

Martha also learned about leadership from working with teacher leaders. She explained:

Well I would say, philosophically, leadership is not something you can force on anybody your ideas. When I've seen them, it's really share ideas. It's being willing to ask the tough questions of each other but not to go in and say, "Listen, I know more than you and this is the way we are going to do it." It doesn't work for anybody. I think it's helping each other come to realizations of what's best based on their students or what they do well. I mean, we all have our own gifts and the leaders in our school, I think recognize everybody's gifts and are willing to share those, instead of coming in as a power trip and trying to tell everybody, "Well I know, I have had more experience or education." It's getting them to come to that realization of somehow maybe there's a better way and we have to keep always looking for that better way.

When asked if she had learned to be a better leader from her experiences, Martha stated:

Yeah, I think so. And the reason I am saying that is because I had student teaching under one of what I would call a teacher leader here, and by watching and observing, you become a better leader and it makes you willing to take chances—to get up in front of people if it's a matter of having to do that, or to demonstrate a new way of doing something. Definitely, because there hasn't been anything professionally that has trained me to do that. Yeah, I don't know why people rise to that, I guess they are just willing to. But I'd say that it comes from the modeling and having that relationship with others is a support for them.

Lisa came to Northville with many leadership skills and experiences. She used these experiences to help her in her role as Steering facilitator.

Having some opportunities to take a class that was very practical and where we practiced those things made a difference for me. For me, having an agenda that has a time frame so people know what to expect, getting the agenda ahead of time, makes a huge difference. So that the expectations are a lot clearer. It's just like with kids. If the expectations are clear of what should happen in a meeting, how it's going to be held, makes a difference.

However, she agreed that she had learned some skills from her colleagues, as well.

I learned from Matthew a lot, in terms of learning to sit back more. I don't know that I pay much attention, I'm not much of a sit-back kind of person. I've learned that it's important to be that way, whether I do it or not. I've learned from Joyce that if you are willing to do, just stand up and say, "I'll do it," do it, and do a good job of it. Don't hold back, that's probably what I've learned from her. From Nancy, I've learned that you can do an awful lot of leading without being in front. You can certainly lead from beside.

From her experiences, Lisa also learned to be patient, to ask questions, and to go to the source when there is a conflict.

It's helped me be a little more patient. When I know I'm in that kind of role, I'm fairly patient anyway, but I'm also real opinionated so it's really helpful to have honest people around me who will tell me, they'll tell me if I'm full of it. But, I'm fairly patient. It helps me to understand, I tend to go directly to the source, if there is a conflict of any kind or a tension. And sometimes, I don't know where that is and so to be able to ask, "Who should I talk to about this?"

Brian jumped into leadership at the start of his career at Northville. It allowed him to see how shared leadership worked and who had power. He explained:

This last year, I was facilitator of our Language Arts cadre which meant that I also became a member of Steering, and so I got to see formal leadership roles, how they worked, and it opened my eyes to who had power within the school and how decisions were made and what shared leadership was like at Northville.

Another leadership experience Brian volunteered for was working with a group on a huge federal reading grant proposal. Through this experience, he learned about the power of emergent teacher leadership.

Like with this grant writing process for the Georgia Reads grant that we applied for this past year—that was an incredible example of people coming together and really showing leadership that was like, nobody assigned a task force, nobody said, "Okay, here's the list of people who are going to write this grant"—people just stepped up. Some of it was people who had more time, who weren't totally bursting at the seams with other things at that moment, but it was incredible just seeing how much leadership there was in that group. It was almost accidental that this grant just sort of came through—it's not like we set out to create this group of people that were going to do it. I was amazed at the quality of work that was done so quickly. It was almost just like it flew by, but people really came together and did the work and worked collaboratively.

Brian enjoyed this experience because it gave him the opportunity to work with teachers at different grade levels. He also got to work closely with several district-level administrators, which he believed was beneficial. He continued by saying:

I liked it, not only did we work together as a school team, but we had people like [the instructional director] and [the grant director], people coming in from the district offices, collaborating with them, as well as people from the community. That was interesting to me, because I'm new to [the area], and new to the school district. It was fun I thought. I mean it was a lot of work. I feel like any kind of

collaboration can be fun, if your goals are pretty common. I guess it gave me an opportunity to use some leadership skills that I hadn't really been using. That was nice.

Brian pointed out that this experience allowed him to use leadership skills that he hadn't had a chance to use before.

Rachel mentioned that watching other teacher leaders encouraged her to reflect on herself as a leader. She also learned leadership skills from observing the way people interacted at faculty meetings.

[I learned] that my ideas are not always the right ideas. They're right for me and just because I think they are right for me now, may not mean they'll always be right for me. It's kind of reminded me to keep an open mind and to listen. It's one of the biggest things that I saw a need for that seemed to kind of come to some resolution, but to not just always be talking and putting things out there, but to actually stop and open your ears and listen to what other people are saying.

Rachel continued by noting:

I guess the biggest way that it has affected me is giving me more tools and better ability to find myself communicating in that way. And at the same time, when I hear the negative and the grumbling, well, that's not how I want to portray myself, that's not how I want others to hear me. And so to be more aware of those who are so capable and just so gifted at communicating ideas and expressing opinions, but in doing so in such a way that it just makes you think, it doesn't make you become defensive about it. And for me, it's made me use them as an example.

Jenny and Brian both mentioned the significance of teachers being leaders. They expressed their beliefs that leadership should be a natural part of a teacher's role in the school. Jenny shared her views:

I think that teachers naturally take on leadership roles. Because that's what you do as a teacher, you are a leader. You're in the classroom and you are a leader already. And you are a role model, whether you realize it or not because those kids are looking up to you, and everything you do has an impact on them, everything you say. So teachers have no choice but to take on leadership roles, whether they realize they are doing it or not. I mean I say I try not to take on leadership roles, but I'm sure I have without even realizing it. I think it's what teaching is all about.

Brian concluded by saying:

I think all of it, really the bottom line is the kids, in that the more that we can increase our capacity as leaders, the better teachers we'll be. I don't know, I feel like leadership is really instrumental.

To sum up, teachers believed that emergent teacher leaders cultivated an environment that supported more teachers taking on leadership roles. Teachers felt encouraged by their colleagues administrators. Additionally, teachers learned leadership skills from observing their teacher leader peers and from experimenting with new leadership roles.

Outcomes-Theme 15: Stability

The idea of stability relates to the previous category of increased leadership capacity. Teachers maintained that a community of teacher leaders provided the school with stability during times of change. Teacher leaders oriented new teachers to school programs and maintained school structures as the administration changed.

For example, teacher leaders provide support for new teachers. Lisa stated:

I think it also helps people with a little less experience to feel a little more secure to know that, if I can't get to [the principal], there are all these other people

around. If the principal is not available, there are other people who know what to do, and know how to do things, and will help me.

Kelly mentioned that when things are changing, you can still rely on the teacher leaders.

You still know where to go if you need help. That person is still there. And that person also has created smaller versions of themselves in other people who have picked up some of their beliefs and philosophies. You kind of have a safety net to fall in if there is a lot of newness or change or chaos for whatever reason is going on.

Kelly pointed out that even if a key leader left, someone similar, who had learned from that leader, would step up and serve as a "safety net." Brian elaborated on this idea:

I like the fact that there are so many people who have leadership skills and that people go to. It's not always the same person. I've worked in organizations when one person had a lot of power and then they left and then there was this huge void. [Our former secretary], I think that's going to happen a little bit this year because she has so much knowledge and experience and skill level, and people really became reliant on her, probably more than they should have. And I think that is going to be difficult for people this year. I feel like it's spread out enough so that even if crucial people who are in formal leadership positions moved on or something happened, like Matthew, when his knee got messed up and he was out of school for two months—everybody panicked because he's our Accelerated Schools coach. "What are we going to do? He's the only one that knows how the Accelerated Schools process runs." But we got on without him, and I'm not trying to dismiss any of his skill or experience, but we survived. And I think that is attributable to the fact that so many people have experience and skills in leadership, whether formally or informally to help us move along.

Lisa felt strongly that teachers leaders served to continue school processes and traditions. One such leader was Matthew, who maintained the Accelerated Schools structure.

But he has always been a real stabilizing force for the school and that's because he's calm, he listens, and he has ideas. He says, "This is how we've done it before and we can continue to do that or we can look at something else." But he too has the history—he's been at this school since it started.

Lisa commented on the history of Northville and the vision of the first principal to create a community of leaders. She also brought up her belief that it was difficult for their school to maintain certain traditions through changes in administration.

Northville was a really strong school and I'm sure that it's because teachers are encouraged to lead. I'm sure it was the vision of [the first principal], and a lot of it I'm sure was her charisma, and her ideas, and I'm sure that at some point she made people think they were doing it on their own, and maybe they weren't. But I also think that the teachers made that school what it was. And I think we've had some real struggles the past year or so and I think that if the faculty had not had the leadership that it has in and of itself, I think it would have fallen apart.

Lisa recognized that it was difficult for a new principal to come in to Northville, into a community of teacher leaders accustomed to having "power."

And that was tough for somebody who had never been a principal, to come in essentially only two steps ahead of the teachers that year, and of course, in a school that was very accustomed to having power. And I don't mean power in a bad way, but actually having the power and responsibility to make a lot of decisions. And I think that if we had not been accustomed to doing that, if we waited for her to do it, a lot of things, it just wouldn't have happened. Things would have been very disjointed, unorganized, and I think it's been real

interesting to watch this process since I've been in the Educational Leadership program, studying to be a principal and to watch [the principal] as she's come in as a new principal. I have a lot of empathy.

Lisa concluded by saying, "I think the influence the faculty has is, for the past year or so, to keep the school sort of on an even keel."

Brian also recognized that teacher leaders carried on school traditions. He was concerned about this as a teacher new to Northville, as his interest in shared governance was what drew him to accepting a position at Northville Elementary. When asked about stability he said:

Yeah, that's exactly true. Because I came in the same time as we had a new principal, and I was hired by the old principal, and I was very concerned a week later when she announced that she was leaving. She reassured me, she said, "Look, we have a big interview committee, they hired me, and the school governance is going to be in place regardless of who is in the principal's chair." And I found that to be true since I've been here. We're very capable of doing things ourselves. We don't want that to be in disharmony with the style of the administration. I've seen things really work well in committees and cadres, task forces. People are very willing to take that on if given the responsibility, and they pretty much have been given the responsibility.

In summary, teachers believed that having a community of leaders provided the school with a "stabilizing force," or a "safety net" during times of change. Teacher leaders had the ability and felt responsible for carrying on school programs and structures.

Outcomes-Theme 16: Improved Morale

Teachers revealed many positive feelings about emergent teacher leadership in general. Working with teacher leaders made teachers feel supported and improved

working relationships. Having leadership opportunities available led to teachers feeling trusted, valued, and validated. Many teachers believed that emergent teacher leaders fostered a positive school climate and helped improved staff morale.

Teachers felt supported when they formed relationships and interacted with emergent teacher leaders. It was "comforting" for them to know they could depend on a teacher leader peer when they needed help with something, needed a question answered, or just needed a boost. As a new teacher, Claire found the support of teacher leaders to be "invaluable."

Being able to have ideas, feel support—that's just been real invaluable to me. If I am like, "This kid can't—what am I going to do?" Then I can go—"Have you tried this yet?" "No, not yet." Sometimes it's like, I feel like I've tried everything. So it's really invaluable to be able to go to someone and say, "Help me please." And always feel like you are going to be able to get help.

She continued:

There is more than one strong teacher in K, first, and second that I feel like I could go to. So, that's a comforting feeling. There's a lot of leaders with experience and expertise who are very willing to help a new person like me.

Sharon felt supported as well. She relied on her teacher leader peers often, especially to help keep a positive attitude when challenges arose. Sharon expressed that there were several teacher leaders she knew she could "count on."

I know that no matter what there is I need, if I need just to go to have a kind word said, or if I'm upset about something that's happened with one of the children, or something that somebody has said walking down the hall or something—I can go to her and she will help me just, become positive.

She also tried to reach out and support others.

To me that's what we're there for—to help each other, not to be isolated from each other. And I think also when you are around kids all day, you need that, your teachers too, where you can go by and just say, "You won't believe what so and so did today."

Kelly felt supported when she changed grade levels and had to learn a new curriculum and adjust to new learners. A teacher leader peer and the principal provided her with extra planning time at the beginning of the year so she could plan, as well as "regroup."

And I also think, partially just for my sanity, because I was really struggling with some things right at the beginning of the year, having that release time, where some of it I planned, and some of it [the principal] told me, "I don't want you to do anything, just go and regroup." It gave me the chance to come back in fresh and all whole, which can't do anything but make things better for the students, doing it that way. And it was just nice to know that there was the support there if I needed it, to help me with plans and subject matter, but also to be a person that could teach them and give me the chance to plan or regroup, or whatever I needed.

Kelly continued:

When you have someone who is in a new environment, a new grade, dealing with a lot of new things thrown at them all at one time, it is nice to know that you have an administrator that recognizes those things and you have the teacher leaders that can go in and offer you the time to get yourself to where you need to be. Because if you are not where you need to be in that light, none of those things will happen.

Jenny felt supported by her mentor teacher, someone she remained close to over the several years she taught at Northville.

But, she's always there when I needed some advice or even when I didn't ask.

She would just throw in her two cents. She was just very supportive, even when I left at the end of this school year, she gave me a book and she wrote inside, "It's been great watching you grow as a teacher."

This mentor teacher encouraged her to get more involved in the school and boosted her self-confidence.

And she's always been very encouraging to work with—a role model in a sense. And everybody at Northville is really like that. You can go to any teacher there and ask for guidance or help and they are very willing to help out, and I think that's why Northville is such a great place to be.

Lisa also provided an example of a teacher leader who listened to her and served as a support.

So, Beth has provided a sounding board and general support for me. So, it's made it easier for me to feel comfortable and to know that if I'm distraught or have a particular question, I can go there and she is happy always to spend time with me.

Lisa pointed out that when teachers formed relationships with one another, they cared about each other and reached out when they noticed that something was wrong. She noted:

Yeah, there are people in the school who can bring people together when things are challenging or morale is low, and I think some of that is because the relationships that have been established. I think because of that there's at least some level of caring. It's pretty obvious when some teachers who are usually a certain way or usually have been very effective and very positive about their teaching, when those people start to be really negative, then people who they have relationships with are going to step in and say, "What's going on? Can I help?" It's not exactly intervention, but you know, we can support each other.

Teachers also explained that interacting with emergent teacher leaders allowed new relationships to form and strengthened previous relationships. Positive relationships improved the working environment. Lisa noted that collaboration helped improve morale.

What I've noticed is that when morale is not good, people tend to withdraw and close their doors and just put their heads down and make it the best way they can. And I don't think that's effective. I think in a place where teachers have those collaborative or any other kind of relationships where they work with each other, I think that it keeps morale from being lower than it might be. When things get tough, we can either work together to make things better, or you can just try to do it all yourself, or try to limit yourself so much and say, well, I'm only going to deal with what I can deal with and the rest of it is just going to go out the window. And I think that the opportunity to collaborate with other people helps keep somebody from feeling that way, feeling that they have to just do it all by themselves.

Kelly also pointed out that collaboration helps improve relationships between the teachers working together. She said:

And that causes an improvement in the relationship between those two people and some of that rubs off on the person that noticed it and makes them want to become more like that. And I think that makes a real positive difference in the building also.

She also indicated that when teachers recognized each other's strengths and areas of expertise it created positive feelings and mutual respect among colleagues. She explained:

And I think that also allows us to really see the positive in each other—to really be able to look at everyone and say, "You know what? I can get this from this

person because they're really strong in this, and I can get this from this person"—and they all say the same thing about everybody else too, which I think is good. Brian said that working on the reading grant proposal "developed new relationships and created some bonds between people who really hadn't had a chance to work together." Even though the work was hard, working "numerous hours" with colleagues he normally did not interact with motivated him and excited him.

Rachel mentioned that not only did teacher leaders foster a positive working environment, they also were able to dispel negative attitudes.

I would like to think that they [teacher leaders] were able to dispel some of the hostility. I don't know if that word is too strong, but some of the negative attitudes. And I think back to that meeting with the small groups, and I remember one teacher in particular, which ironically enough she's someone in some ways who I consider a leader as far as I can go to her and seek out ideas, but in this particular situation she was not very positive at all about this meeting. . . . And by the end of that meeting, the way that it went with the groups and everything, she was fine. There was no grumbling, there was no more negativity. That had, through the process of that meeting, been dispelled. So, I'd like to think some of the negative attitudes and the grumbling can be quenched a little bit.

Other teachers expressed that emergent teacher leadership opportunities provided validation. When they were able to use their leadership skills or voice their opinions, they felt important and respected. Kelly stated:

Well, in some buildings, not this one, I've heard of some and I've worked in one, where it just seemed like you have the principal and every decision that was made, everything came from her. And there was nobody else really that was offered the opportunity to step up to the plate and show their leadership skills, or their coordinating abilities, or their organizing abilities, or anything like that. And

I think it brings morale down because people feel like they don't have a say.

They feel like it's "her school" not "our school." And I think, in any business, if you don't offer people the opportunity to be a part of the decision making and the teaching, or at least the guiding of others in certain things, then you are going to have problems.

According to Kelly, morale was improved when teachers had a voice in school decision making processes and when they were given a chance to use their leadership abilities or other strengths.

Lisa pointed out that opportunities for teacher leadership are important, especially in an elementary school, because there is not a career ladder for teachers who wish to stay in an elementary school setting. Having leadership responsibilities allows teacher to feel valued. She noted:

I think the structure, whether it's used well or poorly, I think it does provide a structure for leadership to come from within. And I always feel that that is a good thing. It's important—I think it's really good to have those things, and important may not be the right word, because as a rule for teachers in an elementary school, there's not much of a career ladder. Like even at a university, you are an instructor, assistant, associate, and all that kind of stuff—that just doesn't happen at the elementary school. And so, when there are other opportunities to be a leader and learn leadership skills, then it's a way to feel good about who you are and what you do. One of the best ways to show a person that you value them, is to give them responsibility. So, I think when people have opportunities to be leaders, then they feel valued. And you feel better about yourself and the climate and morale improves.

Teachers also mentioned that they felt valued when they were able to voice their opinions during faculty meetings and when they felt like their voices were heard. Jenny

felt valued when the faculty insisted that she vote on end-of-year school issues, even though she was moving to a new town and would not return to Northville Elementary.

She explained:

That's what they were voting on at the end of the school year, which I sat in on the meetings and I gave my opinions because I have been there for so long, but I didn't feel like I should be voting on what they should be doing in the future since I wasn't going to be there. But they said, no, that they valued my opinion.

Jenny continued by saying:

You really do have a leadership role there because you are able to voice your opinion whether you disagree or agree. And they expect you to because everybody's voice is heard at Northville. . . . That's the great thing about Northville.

Rachel also noticed that people felt "validated" when their voices were heard at faculty meetings.

Because what I've seen at other faculty meetings, if something was brought up that may or may not be specifically for discussion, but people had attitudes or opinions about, that's the time that people would walk out grumbling about something they weren't happy with. And that's one thing, after we did this small group discussion of what's okay and what needs changing at Northville, nobody walked out of there doing that. Like everyone was validated in some way and their opinions were heard.

Finally, teachers had positive feelings about themselves and their work when they were involved in leadership activities. Kelly explained that when the principal began giving her opportunities to lead in new ways, she felt trusted.

And then with [the principal], a lot of it has been more of just knowing that she has enough confidence in me to give me something as big as coordinating an

entire summer school program But for her to, through words and through actions, to say, "I trust you, I know you'll do this well, because you and I think alike"—that meant an awful lot to me. Probably the first thing it did that helped is to boost my self-confidence. . . . And [the principal] told me and she told the people who were at that meeting, that she is grooming me for administration. She's really pushing me to do that. So that makes me feel good, too. Because I think that she is a really good administrator and I think that she does a lot of things really well as a principal and for her to feel that I would do well at it, and not just feel it and say it, but put me in the position to get the experience at the risk of her school, says a lot too. Those are probably a lot of the things that I learned.

She continued:

It's like I told [the principal] the other week, that it really has been, even though it's been a little chaotic at times, very enjoyable and exciting and I like the way it makes me feel about myself. And she's been after me for about a year now to go ahead and start working on my degree in that area. So, we'll see if I do. It's helped me out all the way around.

Knowing that her administrator trusted and respected her boosted Kelly's self-confidence. When Brian was involved in writing the grant, he felt energized.

It was great—the people from the Department of Education in Washington were kind of attacking our Literacy Collaborative model saying that it didn't show the quantitative results, as much as some of the other models they had seen. And we had people like [the district instructional director] who was new to the district, really defending our model. It was just nice—it was really good. I won't go on. But that's what excites me.

In fact, leadership opportunities attracted Brian to Northville Elementary as a unique place to teach.

People have opportunities to use their leadership or to learn new leadership skills.

I really like that. That's kind of why I decided to work here when I came.

Finding out about the Literacy Collaborative model and the shared decision making, was really interesting to me.

To summarize, emergent teacher leaders fostered a positive working environment. Close relationships among staff members helped teachers feel supported. When teachers were able to voice their opinions and use their leadership skills, they felt trusted, valued, and validated. As further evidence of the effect shared leadership had on staff morale, the researcher found it significant that when she returned to the school during the following school year, staff morale was noticeably poorer. Teachers indicated that opportunities for shared leadership had been decreased as a result of federal, state, and district mandates. Teachers felt like they had less power, as the district was in the process of mandating a new school improvement team in every school. Brian shared his feelings about this:

I mean, part of it seems like it is federal with "No Child Left Behind," part of it is coming from the district. It seems like we are getting away from [shared governance]. I mean, that's causing some tension with me in terms of my autonomy as a teacher and my level of responsibility.

Outcomes-Theme 17: Challenges

There were some challenges associated with teacher leadership; however, it was the only sub-category that all teachers did not fully agree was a significant part of their experiences with emergent teacher leadership. Even so, these issues will be revealed because they were identified by some of the teachers who participated in the study.

Challenges included reluctance to speak out, reluctance to lead, and difficulties being new.

One issue that emerged stemmed from the voting process used at Northville Elementary. Teachers expected one another to speak out and share their opinions. They also valued discussion and problem solving. Even with this supportive environment, some teachers were reluctant to voice their opinions. Kelly brought up many concerns with the voting process, especially the process of "fist to five," in which people who did not agree with something were held accountable for sharing their thoughts on the issue. She said that some people do not want to "ruffle feathers." Kelly explained:

And a lot of times, people feel uncomfortable voting for things that aren't going to affect them or that they don't really know anything about, you know, and it's been a point of contention since I've been here. And another thing that concerns me is the way we vote is fist to five and the reason we do that is to hold each other accountable; well there are people who, if they really don't like something, they might not really feel comfortable letting everyone know that they don't like something. So, they'll vote higher, just so they don't have to—if you put your fist up for something, you have to speak. There are some people who will put a one or a two up so they won't have to speak. And sometimes I think that sort of sways the vote also, but then others say we have to know how each other feels about this and we need to be able to hold each other accountable. So I can see both sides of it but if people are going to vote 'three' so they don't have to talk when they really feel 'fist', then we are going to end up with something we really didn't want because so many people didn't want to speak about how they felt.

When Sharon first came to Northville, she was encouraged not to vote low when an issue came up at a faculty meeting.

They told us, when I was at In-tech, they were talking about the fist to five one day, and they were saying, "Don't ever put one finger up or hold up your fist because they will make you talk." Automatically that makes you, if you are truly disagreeing with somebody, you were just going to be quiet about it. So, I'm sort of glad we are going away from it.

Sharon further explained, "Some people don't want to hear other things or don't want people to question why things are done."

Lisa brought up that speaking out in faculty meetings can be intimidating, especially when there are so many strong teacher leaders.

But it can be intimidating, and it may seem bossy to some people until they're ready to find their own voice, and it might keep some people from speaking up. Some people are, as I am, strongly opinionated, and sometimes we're not probably as cautious as we should be, not cautious, but delicate. I try not to say things too strongly when it's only my opinion and we're trying to get everybody's opinion. So, I guess an intimidation factor and it might keep some people from stepping forward, but I don't really think it does, because most of those people also have lots and lots going on and many, including myself sometimes, are ready for other people to step in and do some of the leading.

Lisa pointed out, however, that if meetings are run correctly, people should feel safe voicing their opinions.

I think if the meeting is conducted in such a way that your opinion has to be expressed to the whole group—absolutely [it can be intimidating]. Many people are intimidated by that, even people who are leaders. We sometimes have meetings where there are small groups and there are parts of that process that require each person to talk, and not in a bad way. But you go around the circle and it's real matter-of-fact. And you go around the circle however many times,

until all the ideas are on the table. So, when it's done properly, I don't think it's intimidating. That's the whole purpose to have the opportunity for everybody to have a voice. It's just like we try to do in the classrooms—is create structures so that everybody does have a voice and can have a voice in a way that is not intimidating. Some people are going to be intimidated anyway, and we take care of them the best way we can.

Some teachers were reluctant to lead or see themselves as leaders. Claire felt like she did not have enough knowledge or experience to be a teacher leader.

I don't feel like as a young teacher I have the knowledge to be a school leader. I've just kind of taken to the leaders and listened to them. I haven't really felt like I can't speak up. I mean I rarely do, but I have to be real mad. And I was real mad about something last week and I talked then. It was just the situation. I don't normally speak up in faculty meetings.

Jenny noted that she did not like to take leadership roles, however throughout her interviews, she gave many examples of her involvement in a variety of leadership activities. It seemed Jenny was reluctant to see herself as a leader.

But, for my experiences, I shun away from the lead roles. I don't feel like I'm very good at that position. I'm more the supportive, behind-the-scenes, type person and that's probably more of an insecurity thing, and lots of people tell me, "No, I think you'd be great at it, I think you'd be great at it", and I just haven't taken that step, and maybe I will in a new place.

Jenny pointed out that taking on extra leadership responsibilities can be challenging and time-consuming. She shared her experience as a team leader:

Team leader, was not difficult, but it's hard to—I don't know how any of these teachers do it—it's hard to do your regular teaching and take on other things. I

think a lot of the reason I tend to shy away from the leadership roles is because I am trying to figure out how to get everything done within the classroom.

Finally, some teachers mentioned that when they first came to Northville, it was difficult to understand the Accelerated Schools process. Jenny shared her experiences by saying, "The first year there, it's kind of difficult because you're trying to figure it out—What is this Accelerated Schools? What are these cadres? What are these task forces? What does this entail?" Rachel agreed:

And we met regularly that first year, and I kind of saw work being done, but I don't know, it just didn't seem like there was that much going on. That was my interpretation of it. So I still found myself throughout that first year going, "But what is this Accelerated Schools model? I don't get it." And they're like, "Well, this is it." And they're showing me, but I'm thinking, this is not what I'm seeing.

Brian maintained that it might be difficult to learn the process as a newcomer, but in his experience it did not prevent people from contributing to the decision making process.

You know, there's some problems with communication and there's some problems with people who come in as newcomers and don't really understand the way things work, and I feel like we could probably do better at training people in what our model is, or getting everybody on the same page. But I don't feel like that is a huge impediment to the way decisions are made or the way leadership flows throughout the school.

Lisa also agreed that it was hard to be new and that the Steering Committee had discussed ways to orient new teachers to the process. She also suggested that it was challenging to orient a new principal to a process that had been in place, a process that was highly valued by the staff.

I think it is hard. I know that at the end of the past two years, the Steering Committee talked about, we need to do a better job of orienting new teachers in

particular. I guess we probably should have, when [the principal] came in as the new principal, she's not new anymore, that should have been a concern of ours—to orient her to it. At the same time, she had an opportunity to go and study at an Accelerated Schools training session, so I think maybe we counted too much on that. And it's also kind of difficult to say, "Oh, we need to train our principal." And probably we could have, but we really didn't feel we should go about it that way. Yes, that's an issue. It's something the group could address, and was trying to. We had a number of conversations about, you know this year we need to make sure that when we get new people, we need to bring them up to speed. And we tried something last year that may or may not have helped during the last year. There weren't as many new people as there are now.

Lisa continued, pointing out that it is just difficult to be new to any organization.

But it is hard, and it's just hard to be new. It's hard to be a new person in any new job. You don't know anybody. It's just like a kid coming new into the third grade. Who can you be friends with? Who are the kids I want to be friends with? And, maybe you don't make good choices at first, or maybe there's nobody close to you in your hallway that you really mesh with. And maybe you teach fourth grade, so you are not part of the Literacy Collaborative, so where are you going to get that kind of support?

Rachel also suggested that it was difficult for a new principal to come in to a situation that was already established, especially since the principal seemed to have a different way of thinking. However, she was hopeful that the staff would be able to work together with the administrators to create a new form of governance that would better match their needs. Rachel stated:

So, I think what I really sensed from just bits and pieces of hearing, it's kind of like, this isn't how it was before. Or we've never done it like this. Or we've

always done it like this and this is how it's going to be. But the principal wasn't even in that same boat. She had other ideas. Or was open to ideas and wasn't set in one thing. I think it's definitely a developmental process that's going on and that's one of the reasons it was really, really hard to leave Northville this year.

In summary, some teachers indicated that there were challenges associated with teacher leadership, particularly with the process of shared decision making. Some teachers were reluctant to voice their opinions and others were reluctant to take on leadership roles or see themselves as leaders.

To conclude, this chapter presented the findings of teachers' perceptions of emergent teacher leadership in an elementary school. Individual participants were introduced and common themes were discussed in rich detail. Three common themes emerged from the data: relationships, interactions, and outcomes. Within these categories, 17 common sub-categories were presented, supported by the words of the participants. The following chapter will include a summary of the research, a thorough discussion of the findings, and the implications.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of this study was to describe teachers' perspectives of emergent teacher leadership in an elementary school. This chapter begins with a summary of the research study, followed by a thorough discussion of the most significant research findings, as well as implications for future research, practitioners, higher education, and policy makers.

Summary of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine teachers' perspectives of emergent teacher leadership in an elementary school and propose a theory, grounded in the data, explaining their perspectives. The initial research questions used to guide this study were: (a) What are teachers' experiences with emergent teacher leaders? and (b) What do these experiences mean to teachers? The study was conducted in an elementary school where emergent teacher leadership was thriving. Theoretical sampling was utilized to select participants for this study.

A grounded theory research design was used to guide the entire research process, from data collection to final writing. Constant comparative methods were used to collect, code, and analyze data. In-depth face-to-face interviews and follow-up interviews were conducted with eight teachers during the summer of 2002. Documents were also collected to provide context for the study. As the researcher simultaneously collected and analyzed data, categories emerged. Continued analysis resulted in the identification of connections among categories, concluding with theoretical considerations.

In chapter 4, the research findings were presented. Based on the experiences of the individual participants, three main categories, and 17 sub-categories emerged as

significant to explaining teachers' perspectives of emergent teacher leadership. The main categories presented were: relationships, interactions, and outcomes.

This study determined that teachers form relationships with emergent teacher leaders based on shared experiences, teacher leader expertise, and availability. Teachers and teacher leaders take initiative in forming these relationships. This study also revealed that teachers interact with emergent teacher leaders in a variety of ways at the classroom-level and the school-level. Classroom-based interactions include curriculum support, instructional support, collaboration, and observation. School-based interactions include inquiry and shared decision making. Finally, this study established that teachers' relationships and interactions with emergent teacher leaders result in several outcomes. These shared outcomes include: teacher improvements, student benefits, "collective ownership," increased leadership capacity, stability, and improved morale. Teachers also identified a few challenges to emergent teacher leadership.

Discussion

Findings from this study were presented in chapter 4 and reviewed in the previous section. The purpose of this section is to present a thorough discussion of the major findings from this study, specifically how these findings are significant in relation to the existing literature in teacher leadership. This section will begin by establishing connections among the three main categories: relationships, interactions, and outcomes. Next, it will present a discussion of the core category—teacher empowerment. Finally, it will present theoretical ideas supported by the data. Each theoretical idea will include a theoretical discussion, relating it to existing research.

Connecting Relationships, Interactions, and Outcomes

This study established that, in an environment in which emergent teacher leadership thrives, teachers form relationships and interact with emergent teacher leaders. Forming close relationships is an important foundation for interactions to take place.

When teachers form relationships with other teachers based on shared experiences, expertise, and availability, teachers are able to trust teacher leaders and feel comfortable going to them for advice, guidance, and support. Also, when teachers leaders offer their support, teachers welcome this support, rather than becoming defensive. Teacher leaders are credible sources of influence because they have experience and expertise, make themselves available, and demonstrate their own desire to learn. This results in mutual respect between teachers and teacher leaders.

These findings are consistent with the teacher leadership literature that emphasizes the importance of relationships and teacher influence. Katzenmeyer and Moller (1996) state: "If the context in which teacher leadership takes place is important, then the relationships within that context are pivotal" (p. 60). They point out that as a teacher leader, balancing relationships with one's peers can be a difficult task. Teaching norms such as equality and privacy discourage teachers from stepping out to take on leadership roles and from collaborating with one another. However, Katzenmeyer and Moller propose that teacher leaders are able to overcome these norms because of their passion for new ideas and commitment to working with colleagues who share in their desire to make a difference for students.

This study demonstrated that teachers are active in initiating relationships with their colleagues. They seek opportunities for collaboration and leadership and emphasize their commitment to student achievement. For example, Brian, the third grade teacher, noted that the "bottom line is the kids," and the reason he collaborated with teacher leaders was to "impact instruction and the community-building." He also acknowledged that "the more that we can increase our capacity as leaders, the better teachers we'll be." Brian and his colleagues recognized the importance of relationships, teacher leadership, and instructional improvement.

Katzenmeyer and Moller (1996) also stress the importance of teacher influence. According to their definition of a teacher leader, teachers must be able to "influence others toward improved educational practice" (p. 7). They state, "Motivating colleagues toward improved practice relies on the personal influence of a competent teacher who has positive relationships with other adults in the school" (p. 7). Besides forming positive relationships, teacher leaders must also demonstrate expertise, initiative, a desire to learn, and a willingness to share new ideas. These traits make teacher leaders credible to their peers.

Consistent with these ideas, this study found that teachers specifically seek out teacher leaders who have expertise and experience. These leaders also experiment with innovative ideas which they are willing to share. They initiate interactions with teachers, make themselves available, and open up their classrooms. These characteristics allow emergent teacher leaders to influence their colleagues in positive ways.

This study also found that when teachers form relationships with teacher leaders who they respect, they are able to interact in meaningful ways. Meaningful interactions primarily denotes focusing on instructional improvement. Teachers seek ways they can improve their instruction and implement programs more effectively. They turn to their teacher leader peers for organizational strategies, teaching techniques, lesson ideas, and materials to support instruction. Teachers and teacher leaders engage in activities such as: sharing, questioning, observing, shadowing, coaching, discussing, reflecting, modeling, and giving feedback. Other meaningful interactions relate to school improvement, particularly, inquiry, problem solving, and shared decision making.

These findings of teachers' interactions are similar to those found in Professional Development Schools by Darling-Hammond et al. (1995). They found that teacher leaders emerge to initiate and fulfill a variety of roles. Teacher leaders are involved in leadership activities, including: mentoring, developing curriculum, using innovative

instructional strategies, identifying and solving school problems, making shared decisions, and conducting action research.

According to the findings of this current study, teachers experience many positive outcomes when they form relationships and interact with emergent teachers leaders. For teachers, these meanings relate to instructional improvements, student benefits, collective ownership, increased leadership capacity, stability, and improved morale. Few studies have examined the outcomes of emergent teacher leadership for teachers, however, the finding of improved morale has been identified in research by Stone et al. (1997). They found that teacher leadership results in increased collaboration, personal and professional growth for teacher leaders, and improvements in relationships between teachers leaders and colleagues, as well as with principals.

To conclude, this study found that relationships and interactions are each necessary, but not sufficient on their own, to result in meaningful experiences for teachers. In forming relationships, teachers also build trust and mutual respect, which facilitates interactions to take place. Forming relationships and interacting with emergent teacher leaders does not happen by accident. According to teachers in this study, it takes work and initiative to form close relationships with one another and to engage in meaningful interactions. Teachers revealed that they choose whom to form relationships with and interact with, as well as how these interactions will occur so that they will be meaningful. By having the autonomy to make these decisions, teachers are empowered to direct their own learning.

Teacher Empowerment: The Core Category

Teacher empowerment was identified as the underlying theme to teachers' perspectives of emergent teacher leadership. Teachers were empowered to direct their own learning, to make shared decisions, and to take on informal leadership roles. Teacher empowerment will be discussed as it relates to this study.

The idea of teacher empowerment is typically associated with teacher voice and participation in shared decision making processes. While this idea fits with the findings of this study, teachers at Northville Elementary were empowered in broader ways.

Melenyzer (1990), offers the following definition of empowerment:

The opportunity and confidence to act upon one's ideas and to influence the way one performs in one's profession. True empowerment leads to increased professionalism as teachers assume responsibility for and involvement in the decision making processes. (p. 16).

This definition combines the "more liberal" view of teacher empowerment which "emphasizes the capacity of empowered teachers to improve conditions in their classrooms," (Blase & Blase, 1994, pp. 4-5), with more typical views of teacher empowerment in shared decision making processes. This definition supports the ways teachers were empowered in this study.

According to this study, teachers feel empowered to direct their own professional development. Teachers acknowledge areas for their own improvement and seek out teacher leaders with knowledge and expertise in those areas. For example, Brian, the third grade teacher who wanted to experiment with innovative reading and writing methods in his classroom, sought out Nancy, an expert in the Literacy Collaborative model. When he recognized that he was not implementing the Accelerated Reader program effectively, he turned to Beth, the "Accelerated Reader guru." Likewise, teacher leaders recognize needs in other teachers and offer their support. According to Lisa, the veteran teacher who was new to teaching ESOL, Nancy recognized that she needed support in improving her reading and writing instruction, and invited Lisa to work in her classroom during writing workshop time.

This study found that teachers feel empowered to make shared decisions. The Accelerated Schools model which was in place at Northville Elementary, provided

support for teacher empowerment. Teachers revealed that they have many opportunities to participate in shared decision making. Teachers work in different cadres specifically focused on problems that teachers have identified. Through inquiry, teachers study school problems and make recommendations to their peers for solving these problems. All teachers are involved in School-As-a-Whole meetings to discuss recommendations and vote on final decisions.

Finally, this study found that teachers feel empowered to take on informal leadership roles. Northville Elementary is a true community of leaders. Many opportunities are available for teachers to lead informally, and teachers find ways they can contribute to the school as leaders. For example, Brian acknowledged that he had leadership skills he wanted to contribute, so he volunteered to work with a group of teachers on writing a grant proposal. Kelly, another emerging teacher leader, coordinated the summer school program, mentored beginning teachers, and became interested in working on her leadership degree.

Theoretical Ideas

Based on the findings, five theoretical ideas will be discussed. These ideas will be presented with evidence from the data and will be related to the research in the areas of teacher leadership, shared decision making, and teacher empowerment.

When teachers are empowered to direct their own learning, they seek out emergent teacher leader peers to improve their instruction. This study found that teachers are proactive in improving their instructional practices. Teachers recognize areas for improvement and take initiative to form relationships and interact with teachers who have experience and expertise in these areas. Teachers seek out their teacher peers for instructional leadership.

According to most studies of formal teacher leadership, teachers are not involved in making decisions related to the ways teacher leaders will function. In Wasley's (1991)

multiple-case study of three teacher leaders, she found that when teachers are not involved in the creation or selection of teacher leader positions, the work of teacher leaders is negatively impacted. Teachers feel coerced into working with "appointed and anointed" teacher leaders. She concluded, "most teachers are unresponsive to top-down efforts to improve their instruction through administratively-created teacher leadership positions" (p. 160). She proposed that teachers have the ultimate power in determining if and how teacher leadership will function.

Unlike Wasley's (1991) findings, this study found that teachers determine with whom they will interact and how these interactions will take place. There are no pre-determined goals or outcomes created by administrators or the teacher leaders themselves. Teachers do not feel coerced to work with teacher leaders, rather, they desire to work with expert teachers who can support their needs. Teacher leaders emerge naturally based on teachers' needs.

The environment at Northville Elementary resembles that of a learning community. Research in the area of staff development emphasizes that when teachers work in collegial groups, instruction and student learning are positively impacted (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 1996). Advocates of learning communities recognize that teachers who work directly in the classroom are most knowledgeable about school problems. According to Katzenmeyer and Moller, school reform will depend on teachers working together in learning communities to "share practices, mutually solve problems, and reflect on and learn from their experiences" (p. 29).

In working with innovative principals, Katzenmeyer and Moller (1996) found that these principals think of staff development in terms of using every available resource within the building to provide leading and learning opportunities for all teachers. They value having teachers become the experts who train and coach other teachers.

Katzenmeyer and Moller state:

Building a learning community cannot depend on the principal alone. In a desire to improve education, teach leaders emerge to take on leadership responsibilities. These teachers, who exhibit competence in their classrooms, are willing to take risks to work with and influence their colleagues (p. 31).

They also point out that learning communities will arise only when teachers form collegial relationships and work collaboratively. At Northville, teachers initiate relationships with one another based on expertise, experience, availability, and needs. By focusing their interactions on instructional and school improvement, teachers and teacher leaders work together as a learning community.

When teachers interact with emergent teacher leaders, they focus on instructional improvement and school improvement. This study demonstrated that teachers interact with emergent teacher leaders at the classroom-level and the school-level. Classroom-based interactions focus on improving classroom instruction. Teachers desire to improve their instruction in reading, writing, math, science, social studies, and technology. They work with teachers who are experts in these areas. They also want to better implement programs such as the Literacy Collaborative model and Accelerated Reader. Finally, teachers seek new ways of reaching students who are struggling with traditional methods of instruction.

School-based interactions focus on school improvement. Teachers and administrators work together to collect and analyze data, identify areas for improvement, study possible ways to improve, make recommendations, and implement strategies. The inquiry and decision making process they use is guided by their shared vision of working together for student achievement.

The findings from this study suggest that many of the obstacles associated with formal teacher leadership positions do not hinder the success of teachers working with emergent teacher leaders. One major theme in the formal teacher leadership literature is

that the intentions of teacher leadership do not match the realities. Teacher leaders expect to work with teachers at the classroom level, however, they rarely do. For example, Smylie and Denny (1990) found that formal teacher leaders spend the majority of their time attending meetings at the district and building level, and doing administrative tasks related to their leadership positions. Whitaker (1997) found formal teacher leaders, even those working in teams, spend most of their time on administrative tasks associated with discipline, grant writing, and community outreach.

According to the teacher leadership literature, researchers rarely have been able to link the work of teacher leaders to benefits in the classroom (Smylie & Denny, 1990; Trachtman, 1991; Wasley, 1991). Most studies of formal teacher leaders emphasize the benefits teacher leaders gain in their positions. In this study, however, teachers cited many outcomes at the classroom level including improvements in their instruction and benefits for students.

When teachers are empowered to collaborate with emergent teacher leaders, they experience a sense of collective ownership. When teachers work with emergent teacher leaders, both at the classroom-level and school-level, they experience a sense of shared responsibility for school outcomes. Teachers explained that they worked together for the children. Kelly stated, "And it really does become, 'Let's make this best for the kids. Let's do what's going to be best for our school. Let's meet the kids where they need to be met instructionally . . .'" Kelly went on to say that whenever someone is leading, "it is always in the end for what's best for the students." This shared philosophy guides teachers' interactions and decision making.

This finding is consistent with research in the areas of shared governance and teacher empowerment. For example, in a study of successful shared governance principals, Blase and Blase (1994) found that when teachers are empowered to participate in decision making, they experience an increased sense of ownership. Blase and Blase

define ownership as "teacher's positive identification with and greater responsibility for shared governance structures and processes (e.g., decisions, agreements, policies, and programs)" (p. 47). Based on the findings of this current study, ownership can be broadened to include shared responsibility for instruction and student achievement. Teachers collaborating at the classroom level share in their desire to help one another improve instruction for the benefit of their students.

When teachers interact with emergent teacher leaders, leadership capacity increases. Teachers provided much evidence that emergent teacher leadership is supported and thriving at Northville Elementary. Based on the data from these teachers, emergent teacher leadership has the power to increase leadership capacity for several reasons. First, teachers mentioned that they learn leadership skills by directly working with teacher leaders and by observing them in different settings. Second, they recognize and value that leadership opportunities are abundant and available to any teacher who has experience, expertise, or interests they are willing to share. Finally, teachers look for ways they can lead using their talents. Some teachers are interested in developing new talents or building on their strengths so that they can contribute to improvement efforts.

This discovery, not found in extant teacher leadership research literature, is significant. Increased leadership capacity has the potential to significantly contribute to instructional and school improvement. The idea of leadership capacity fits within constructivist teacher leadership theory (Lambert et al., 1995). In this model, leadership is an essential part of the school culture and emerges depending on opportunity and need. As participants in the school community work together for the growth of children, adults, and communities, anyone can engage in leadership actions.

When teachers are empowered to lead, they feel trusted, valued, and validated. In this study, teachers associate positive feelings with taking on informal leadership roles. When teachers are encouraged to lead by their colleagues and administrators, they feel

trusted and valued. Teachers also emphasize that when they participate in shared decision making, they feel their opinions are valued. They also feel validated when they believe their voices are heard.

Studies of formal and informal teacher leaders also emphasize the numerous benefits for teacher leaders. For example, Wasley (1991) found that teacher leaders believe their own instructional methods improve as they are able to observe other teachers and work with different educational experts. They also indicated that working in leadership roles increases their professionalism and their commitment to education. Teacher leaders in Barker's (1998) study reported the following benefits for themselves: increased commitment to their school and students, enhanced sense of empowerment, increased confidence in their leadership abilities, and improved relationships with other teacher leaders. Trachtman (1991) found that teacher leaders gain new leadership skills, while Whitaker (1997) found that teacher leaders have enhanced self-esteem.

One concern in the formal teacher leadership literature is that, while these positive outcomes for teacher leaders are worthy, they are only valid for the few teachers in formal leadership positions. In this study, it is significant that these same positive outcomes were found for the many teachers who emerged as leaders. One implication is that when teacher leadership is inclusive and open to everyone based on expertise, experiences, and interests, many teachers can experience these positive outcomes.

Research in shared governance also indicates that teachers experience positive outcomes when they are empowered to make decisions. In their study of empowered teachers, Blase and Blase (1994) found that teachers attain an increased sense of professionalism when working with shared governance principals. "[Professionalism for teachers] referred to seeing oneself as a 'trusted' and 'respected' individual with the authority and the ability to make independent decisions and to participate responsibly in

schoolwide governance processes" (p. 49). Teachers at Northville revealed that they also feel trusted and valued when given opportunities to lead and make decisions.

Implications

In this section, the implications of the findings will be presented. The first section will provide implications for further research. The remaining sections will include implications for principals, teachers, colleges and universities, and policy makers.

Implications for Further Research

The teacher leadership research literature has demonstrated that formal teacher leaders face many obstacles in their work that hinder their effectiveness as instructional and school leaders (Pellicer & Anderson, 1995; Smylie, 1992a; Smylie, 1992b; Smylie & Brownlee-Conyers, 1992; Smylie & Denny, 1990; Wasley, 1991.) To review, these obstacles include: (a) traditional authority and teacher-principal relationships; (b) norms influencing teachers' working relationships; (c) the nature of teachers' work, including physical isolation and lack of time; (d) ambiguities in the definition of teacher leader roles; and (e) lack of training.

Findings from this study, however, suggest that emergent teacher leaders do not face such obstacles. For example, teachers value teacher leaders who have experience and expertise in certain areas. They desire to collaborate with their peers and they find ways within their busy school schedules to do so. Also, teachers take initiative in defining how they will interact with teacher leaders so that their interactions are meaningful. Finally, teachers learn leadership skills by directly working with their teacher leader peers and by observing them in different settings. These findings, as well as the findings related to the many positive outcomes of emergent teacher leadership, suggest that researchers should focus their work on emergent forms of teacher leadership.

As noted, there is little research in the area of emergent or informal teacher leadership (i.e., Corallo, 1995; Darling-Hammond, et al., 1995; Heller & Firestone, 1995;

Miller, 1992; Stone et al., 1997). Past studies have focused on the teacher leaders and have identified influences on emergent teacher leaders, as well as strategies they use. This study is significant in that it applied grounded theory methodology to study emergent teacher leadership from the teachers' perspectives. This exploratory study allowed teachers' perspectives to emerge and resulted in several theoretical ideas supported by data. The findings significantly contribute to the research by broadening our understanding of teachers' experiences with emergent teacher leadership and the meanings those experiences hold for them.

The limitations of this study present areas for future research. For example, this study was conducted at one school at the elementary school level. Researchers may want to investigate emergent teacher leadership in other elementary schools, as well as in middle and high schools. Northville Elementary used the Accelerated Schools process for inquiry, problem solving, and shared decision making. Katzenmeyer and Moller (1996) identified teacher participation and autonomy as being important factors in supporting emergent teacher leadership. Future research might examine: What does emergent teacher leadership look like in schools with different forms of shared governance? Does teacher leadership thrive in schools without shared governance and if so, what does it look like?

Additionally, this study focused on teachers who had experiences with emergent teacher leaders. Several participants suggested that they were active in their teaching and proactive in finding ways to improve their instruction. This leads to questions concerning teachers who do not interact with emergent teacher leaders. What factors prevent teachers from initiating relationships and interacting with emergent teacher leaders? What are these teachers' perspectives of emergent teacher leaders? Do these teachers find other ways to learn and grow?

Findings from this study also suggest many additional avenues for future research in the field of teacher leadership. For example, teachers indicated that when they collaborated with emergent teacher leaders at the classroom level, their work centered on curriculum and instruction and resulted in improvements in instruction. This leads to many questions regarding teachers' interactions and evidence of instructional improvement. Are emergent teacher leaders purposeful in applying strategies when working with other teachers? Do they differentiate strategies based on teachers' developmental levels and needs? What are specific ways teachers' instruction improves? To investigate these questions, researchers may want to consider using observational methods to examine teacher leaders' interactions with other teachers. It would also be worthwhile to observe teachers' instruction at different times during their work with emergent teacher leaders.

This study also found that when teachers interact with teacher leaders, leadership capacity increases. This has implications for principals who find themselves in new working relationships with teacher leaders. Administrators were rarely mentioned by teachers in this study. This leads to several questions focusing on principals. What are principals' perspectives of emergent teacher leadership? How does their role change as leadership capacity increases? What are principals' experiences as new principals coming in to a school where teachers are leaders? Examining these questions would be valuable, as principals are crucial in establishing an environment that supports emergent teacher leadership.

Teachers in this study also indicated several ways students benefited from emergent teacher leadership. Despite the fact that students performed poorly on standardized academic measures, teachers perceived that students made many gains. For example, teachers mentioned that students received better instruction and pointed out some academic gains, such as exiting ESOL and making better grades. They also noted

that their collaboration with other teachers served as a model for student cooperation. Researchers may want to suggest investigating the following questions: Do students make academic gains when teachers collaborate with emergent teacher leaders? Do students cooperate more or experience an increased sense of community when teachers work in collaborative relationships?

The area of emergent teacher leadership is wide open for future research. By examining teacher leadership from multiple perspectives using a variety of methods, researchers can contribute to a field that is just beginning to show promise for teachers as professionals and schools as communities of learning.

Implications for Principals

The findings of this study have implications for principals. Because of the multiple positive outcomes found with the teachers in this study, principals should consider creating an environment which cultivates and supports emergent teacher leadership. Many experts agree on the structural conditions that are needed to empower and support teachers as leaders. Lambert et al. (1995) note that three structures need to be in place to support collaboration: groups (leadership teams, action research groups), places (faculty rooms, professional libraries), and events (workshops, group dialogue sessions). Blase and Blase (1999) suggest that instructional leaders can enhance professional school communities by granting autonomy and by providing staff development, time, and recognition. Research by Katzenmeyer and Moller (1996) indicates that certain characteristics exist in schools where teacher leadership has become the norm. These include: developmental focus, recognition, collegiality, autonomy, participation, open communication, and positive environment. Detailed descriptions and examples of each of these dimensions can be found in Appendix A. Several of these dimensions will be discussed more thoroughly, as they directly relate to the findings.

First, to empower teachers as leaders, principals need to give teachers autonomy to make important decisions about their work. Principals can do this by involving teachers in shared decision making groups and trusting teachers to take responsibility for their own learning (Blase & Blase, 1994). There are a variety of models for shared governance, and principals should involve staff members in establishing structures that best meet their needs. Central components of shared governance models often include: representation from all educational stakeholders, focus on curriculum and instruction, regular meetings, open dialogue, and shared decisions.

Teachers in this study indicated that they are motivated to be responsible for their own professional development and that they are interested in learning from their peers. This has implications for both staff development and teacher supervision. Principals should consider offering teachers a variety of staff development options such as peer coaching, reflection groups, individual study, collaborative planning, and action research groups. These forms of "job-embedded learning" invite teachers to use the immediate and real-life problems they face as opportunities to learn and grow (Sparks & Hirsh, 1997). Principals may also want to explore alternate forms of supervision for some teachers including "autosupervision," in which teachers supervise their own instructional practices by engaging in "self-analysis, reflectivity, monitoring their own progress toward goals, and implementing changes based on reflection" (Blase & Blase, 1999, p. 370).

Second, principals can promote collegiality and collaboration by establishing open communication networks. Teachers need to have opportunities to form relationships with one another to build trust and respect. Principals can provide teachers with comfortable meeting places such as faculty rooms and libraries, as well as common time for planning and sharing ideas. Additionally, principals can model and support effective communication techniques that allow for open, honest, and professional dialogue.

Third, principals need to consider the importance of staff development. Staff development is an important prerequisite for emergent teacher leadership, as teachers need skills to function as leaders. Based on this study, emergent teacher leaders have expertise in certain areas and are described as "natural leaders," meaning that they have specific skills associated with effective leadership. Staff development should not be limited to isolated workshops in specific areas, nor should it be imposed artificially. For example, training in certain leadership skills such as communication, collaboration, and conflict resolution can be integrated within the development of shared governance structures. At Northville Elementary, the entire staff participated in considerable training when they adopted the Accelerated Schools model. Much of this training focused on the skills needed to effectively work in groups and make shared decisions. These skills helped people when they served as leaders in other areas.

The teachers interviewed also indicated that they learn many of their leadership skills by working with and observing other teacher leaders. Having teachers learn from one another should be considered an effective way to teach leadership skills. Principals may want to encourage teachers to be more aware of their colleagues' skills by opening up dialogue and offering teachers the opportunity to reflect on their own leadership abilities. Principals should also model effective leadership skills. Finally, principals should refer to the model for teacher leadership development presented in the next section, and find ways to support teachers through that process.

A final structure that principals should consider is a process for recognition. According to the teachers in this study, teacher leaders "go above and beyond" what is normally expected of classroom teachers. While leadership needs to be considered a normal part of a teacher's role, teacher leaders deserve recognition for their efforts. Schools should celebrate when teachers collaborate for self-improvement, student improvement, and school improvement.

Implications for Teachers

The teachers interviewed in this study present powerful views of the potential of emergent teacher leadership. These teachers are active in identifying their needs, seeking support from colleagues, and emerging as leaders themselves. While principals can provide an environment that supports teacher leadership, teachers can take responsibility for developing themselves as leaders.

The findings from this study support the model for teacher leadership development proposed by Katzenmeyer and Moller (1996). This model includes four components, each of which is guided by a central question. The first component, personal assessment, requires teachers to answer the question, "Who am I?" Teachers at Northville demonstrated that they are reflective thinkers. They assess their own strengths and weaknesses, and seek opportunities to work with their peers to further develop as professionals. Katzenmeyer and Moller also maintain that teachers need to reflect on their own strengths and possible areas for development. They need to understand their professional values, behavior, philosophies, and concerns so that they can recognize and accept differences in their colleagues. This will assist teachers as they work collaboratively with one another.

In the second component, changing schools, teachers need to answer the question, "Where am I?" They need to understand multiple perspectives within the context of the classroom, grade level, and the school as a whole. This will help them think about needs at the school level and how they can personally act on those needs. In this study, teachers indicated that they learn to see multiple perspectives when they work with emergent teacher leaders in other grades and subject areas. Teachers hear these different perspectives when they interact with teacher leaders in group settings such as in faculty meetings and committee meetings.

The third component, influencing strategies, proposes that teachers develop ways to influence others. Teachers answer the question, "How do I lead?" According to teachers at Northville, the teacher leaders who influence them have expertise and are available. They also take initiative in forming relationships with other teachers. Katzenmeyer and Moller (1996) agree that teachers need expertise to have influence. They also recommend that emergent teacher leaders exhibit confidence in their leadership abilities and in their viewpoints, acknowledge diversity, and acquire group skills. Teachers need to practice newly acquired leadership skills and should get feedback from others.

In the fourth and last component of the model, planning for action, teachers answer the question, "What can I do?" At Northville Elementary, teachers seek out ways they can contribute to school improvement efforts. Some teachers, such as Jenny, develop expertise in certain areas so they can assist other teachers and serve as models. Other teachers, such as Brian, seek out opportunities to contribute underutilized leadership skills. Katzenmeyer and Moller (1996) emphasize that teachers need to think about the school vision and focus on what their specific "niche" will be. According to Katzenmeyer and Moller, "this niche is discovered by analyzing the discrepancy between where the teachers are and where they want to be" (p. 86). Based on this information, teachers can create plans for assuming leadership roles within the school that will contribute to the overall vision. Teachers can create a "community of leaders," by taking an active role in developing themselves as leaders and encouraging their colleagues to do so as well.

Implications for Colleges and Universities

Colleges and universities have an important role in preparing teachers as future teacher leaders. Starting at the undergraduate level, teacher education programs can instill the belief that leadership is a normal part of the teacher's role. Programs can

introduce the various ways teachers lead and require that pre-service teachers participate in school- or district-level activities to broaden their student teaching experiences. For example, pre-service teachers can observe or take part in school leadership team meetings, various staff development activities, or school level committee meetings. Teacher education programs can also emphasize the importance of teacher collaboration by making peer coaching and study groups an integral part of a pre-service teacher's experience.

At the graduate level, teacher education programs can offer programs in teacher leadership designed specifically for teachers who desire to lead at the classroom and school levels. A few colleges and universities have begun to create teacher leadership programs that offer teachers courses in: instructional leadership, curriculum design, assessment, collegial relationships, action research, specific leadership skills, adult development and learning, and school effectiveness (Clemson-Ingram & Fessler, 1997; Forster, 1997; Smyser, 1995; Zimpher, 1988).

Educational administration and leadership programs can prepare administrators for supporting and working with emergent teacher leaders. Administrators will need to consider how they can cultivate and maintain an environment that empowers teachers as leaders. Administration programs can help administrators reassess their own roles within the school and their working relationships with teachers.

Implications for Policy Makers

Educational policy makers have influence over the many structures and initiatives that are in place in schools. Perceptions of teacher effectiveness, in the eyes of policy makers, often lead to new reform efforts. For example, efforts to reform schools in the early 1980s demonstrated that policy makers considered teachers to be part of the problem of low-performing schools. Reform efforts focused on improving the quality of teaching through top-down mandates. During the later 1980s, policy makers believed

teachers were part of the solution to school improvement and recommended that teachers be included in shared decision making processes. Policies such as these ultimately affect the degree of autonomy teachers have in making important decisions about their work.

A new era of reform is beginning and it does not look promising for teacher leadership. The federal "No Child Left Behind" Act of 2001 and Georgia's "A Plus Education Reform" Act of 2000 (HB 1187) have mandated school improvement and accountability, yet have decreased control at the school level. Reform efforts such as mandated standards, high stakes testing, and consequences for "failing schools" diminish teacher autonomy and create school environments characterized by distrust, negativity, and poor morale. These kinds of environments do not support emergent teacher leadership.

Policy makers should consider viewing teachers as professional educators who are willing and able to take responsibility for instructional and school improvement. Teachers have the expertise to know what their students need to make achievement gains. Teachers in this study demonstrated that when they are empowered to lead, they work together and utilize one another's strengths to improve their own instruction and to bring about school change.

REFERENCES

- Barker, S. L. (1998). Teachers' perspectives from within a school leadership team: A phenomenological study (Doctoral dissertation, University of San Diego, 1998). *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 59 (04), 1123A.
- Bennis, W., & Nanus, B. (1985). *Leaders: The strategies for taking charge*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Blase, J., & Blase, J. (1999). Principals' instructional leadership and teacher development: Teachers' perspectives. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 35, 349-378.
- Blase, J., & Blase, J. R. (1994). *Empowering teachers: What successful principals do*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.
- Blase J. R., & Blase, J. (1997). *The fire is back! Principals sharing school governance*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.
- Blumer, H. (1969). *Symbolic interactionism: Perspective and method*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Bogdan, R., & Biklen, S. (1992). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theory and methods*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Brookover, W., & Lezotte, L. (1979). *Changes in school characteristics coincident with changes in student achievement*. East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University, College of Urban Development.
- Burlingame, M. (1987). Images of leadership in effective schools literature. In H. Greenfield (Ed.), *Instructional leadership: Concepts, issues, and controversies* (pp. 3-16). Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Burns, J. M. (1978). *Leadership*. New York: Harper and Row.

Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. (1986). *A nation prepared: Teachers for the 21st century*. Report of the Task Force on Teaching as a Profession. New York: The Foundation.

Charmaz, K. (1994). The grounded theory method: An explication and interpretation. In B. G. Glaser (Ed.), *More grounded theory methodology: A reader* (pp.95-115). Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.

Charon, J. M. (1995). *Symbolic interactionism: An introduction, an interpretation, and integration* (5th edition). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Clemson-Ingram, R., & Fessler, R. (1997). Innovative programs for teacher leadership, *Action in Teacher Education*, 19, 95-106.

Coleman, J. S. (1966). *Equality of educational opportunity*. Washington, D.C.: Office of Education, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

Cooper, B. S., & Conley, S. C. (1991). From blame to empowerment: Critical issues in the teacher work environment. In S. C. Conley & B. S. Cooper (Eds.), *The school as a work environment: Implications for reform* (pp. 2-10). Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Corallo, C. (1995). Influences on the development of informal teacher leaders (Doctoral dissertation, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, 1995). *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 56 (12), 4618A.

Creswell, J. W. (1998). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Darling-Hammond, L., Bullmaster, M. L., & Cobb, V. L. (1995). Rethinking teacher leadership through professional development schools. *The Elementary School Journal*, 96, 87-106.

Devaney, K. (1987). *The lead teacher: Ways to begin*. Paper prepared for the Task Force on Teaching as a Profession, Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy. Berkeley, CA: Author.

Drury, D. W. (1999). *Reinventing school-based management: A school board guide to school-based improvement*. Alexandria, VA: National School Boards Association.

Edmonds, R. (1979). Effective schools for the urban poor. *Educational Leadership*, 37, 15-24.

Fiedler, F. E. (1967). *A theory of leadership effectiveness*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Forster, E. M. (1997). Teacher leadership: Professional right and responsibility. *Action in Teacher Education*, 19, 82-94.

Foster, W. (1986). *Paradigms and promises: New approaches to Educational administration*. New York, NY: Prometheus Books.

Gardner, J. W. (1990). *On leadership*. New York: The Free Press.

Glaser, B. G. (1994). The constant comparative method of qualitative analysis. In B. G. Glaser (Ed.), *More grounded theory methodology: A reader* (pp.182-196). Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.

Glaser, B. (1978). *Theoretical sensitivity*. Mill Valley, CA: The Sociology Press.

Glaser, B., & Strauss, A. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. Chicago: Aldine.

Glickman, C. D. (1985). *Supervision of instruction: A developmental approach*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Glickman, C. D., & Allen, L. (1991). *Lessons from the League: Improving schools through shared governance and action research, v. 1*. Athens, GA: University of Georgia.

Goldsberry, L. F. (1998). Teacher involvement in supervision. In G. R. Firth & E. F. Pajak (Eds.), *Handbook of research on school supervision* (pp. 428-462). New York, NY: Simon & Schuster Macmillan.

Gordon, S. P., & Nicely, R. F. Jr. (1998). Supervision and staff development. In G. R. Firth & E. F. Pajak (Eds.), *Handbook of research on school supervision* (pp. 801-841). New York, NY: Simon & Schuster Macmillan.

Hallinger, P., & Richardson, D. (1988). Models of shared leadership: Evolving structures and relationships. *The Urban Review*, 20, 229-245.

Halpin, A. W., & Winer, B. J. (1957). A factorial study of the leader behavior descriptions. In R. M. Stogdill & A. E. Coons (Eds.), *Leader behavior in description and management*. Columbus, OH: The Ohio State University.

Hart, A. W. (1995). Reconceiving school leadership: Emergent views. *The Elementary School Journal*, 96, 10-28.

Heller, M. F., & Firestone, W. A. (1995) Who's in charge here? Sources of leadership for change in eight schools. *The Elementary School Journal*, 96, 65-85.

Hersey, P., & Blanchard, K. H. (1982). Leadership style: Attitudes and behaviors. *Training and Development*, 36, 50-52.

Holmes Group. (1986). *Tomorrow's teachers: A report of the Holmes Group*. East Lansing, MI: The Holmes Group.

Hopfenberg, W. S., Levin, H. M., Chase, C., Christensen, S. G., Moore, M., Soler, P., Brunner, I., Keller, B., & Rodriguez, G. (1993). *The Accelerated Schools resource guide*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

House, R. J. (1971). A path-goal theory of leader effectiveness. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 16, 321-339.

Howey, K. R. (1988). Why teacher leadership? *Journal of Teacher Education*, 39, 28-31.

Katzenmeyer, M., & Moller, G. (1996). *Awakening the sleeping giant: Leadership development for teachers*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Lambert, L., Walker, D., Zimmerman, D. P., Cooper, J. E., Lambert, M. D., Gardner, M. E., & Slack, P. F. (1995). *The constructivist leader*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Leithwood, K. A. (1990). The principal's role in teacher development. In B. R. Joyce(Ed.), *Changing school culture through staff development* (pp. 71-90). Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Lieberman, A. (1992). Teacher leadership: What are we learning? In C. Livingston (Ed.), *Teachers as leaders: Evolving roles* (pp. 159-165). Washington, D. C.: National Education Association.

Likert, R. (1961). *New patterns of management*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Lincoln, Y., & Guba, E. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Livingston, C. (Ed.). (1992). *Teachers as leaders: Evolving roles*. Washington, D. C.: National Education Association.

Mead, G. H. (1934). *Mind, self, and society*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Melenyzer, B. J. (1990, November). *Teacher empowerment: The discourse, meanings, and social actions of teachers*. Paper presented at the annual conference of the National Council of States on Inservice Education, Orlando, FL.

Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Mertens, S., & Yarger, S. J. (1988). Teaching as a profession: Leadership, empowerment, and involvement. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 39, 32-37.

Miller, L. (1992). Teacher leadership in a renewing school. In C. Livingston (Ed.), *Teachers as leaders: Evolving roles*. Washington, D. C.: National Education Association.

National Commission on Excellence in Education. (1983). *A nation at risk: The imperative for educational reform*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

National Governors' Association. (1986). *Time for results*. Washington, D.C.: Author.

Odell, S. J. (1997). Preparing teachers for teacher leadership. *Action in Teacher Education, 19*, 120-124.

Pajak, E. (1989). *Identification of supervisory proficiencies project* (Final report, University of Georgia). Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Pellicer, L. O., & Anderson, L. W. (1995). *A handbook for teacher leaders*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, Inc.

Razik, T. A., & Swanson, A. D. (1995). *Fundamental concepts of educational leadership and management*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Seidman, I. (1998). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and the social sciences*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Sergiovanni, T. J. (1987). The theoretical basis for cultural leadership. In L. T. Sheive & M. B. Schoenheit (Eds.), *Leadership: Examining the elusive* (pp. 116-130). Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Sirotnik, K. A., & Ericson, D. P. (1996). Educating for leadership: Issues on merging teacher and administrator preparation and professional development. *Journal of School Leadership, 6*, 116-119.

Smylie, M. A. (1992a). Teacher participation in school decision making: Assessing willingness to participate. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 14*, 53-67.

Smylie, M. A. (1992b). Teachers' reports of their interactions with teacher leaders concerning classroom instruction. *The Elementary School Journal, 93*, 85-98.

Smylie, M. A. (1995). New perspectives on teacher leadership. *The Elementary School Journal, 96*, 3-7.

Smylie, M. A. (1997). Research on teacher leadership: Assessing the state of the art. In B. J. Biddle, T. L. Good, & I. F. Goodson (Eds.), *International handbook of teachers and teaching* (pp. 521-592). Dordrecht, Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Smylie, M. A., & Brownlee-Conyers, J. (1992). Teacher leaders and their principals: Exploring the development of new working relationships. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 28*, 150-184.

Smylie, M. A., & Denny, J. W. (1990). Teacher leadership: Tensions and ambiguities in organizational perspective. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 26*, 235-259.

Smyser, S. O. (1995). Developing the teacher leader. *Teacher Educator, 31*, 130-137.

Sparks, D., & Hirsh, S. (1997). *A new vision for staff development*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Stern, P. N. (1994). The grounded theory method: Its uses and processes. In B. G. Glaser (Ed.), *More grounded theory methodology: A reader* (pp.116-126). Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.

Stone, M., Horejs, J., & Lomas, A. (1997). Commonalities and differences in teacher leadership at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. *Action in Teacher Education, 19*, 49-64.

Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1990). *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1994). Grounded theory methodology: An overview. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Sweetland, S. R., & Hoy, W. K. (2000). School characteristics and educational outcomes: Toward an organizational model of student achievement in middle schools. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 36*, 703-729.

Teitel, L. (1997). Professional development schools and the transformation of teacher leadership. *Teacher Education Quarterly, 24*, 9-22.

Trachtman, R. (1991). Voices of empowerment: Teachers talk about leadership. In S.C. Conley & B. S. Cooper (Eds.), *The school as a work environment: Implications for reform*. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Urbanski, A., & Nickolaou, M. B. (1997). Reflections on teachers as leaders. *Educational Policy, 11*, 243-254.

Wasley, P. A. (1991). *Teachers who lead: The rhetoric of reform and the realities of practice*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Weber, J. R. (1989). Leading the instructional program. In E. C. Smith & P. K. Piele (Eds.), *School leadership: Handbook for excellence* (2nd ed.) (pp. 191-224). Eugene, OR: ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management, University of Oregon.

Whitaker, K. S. (1997). Developing teacher leadership and the management team concept: A case study. *Teacher Educator*, 33, 1-16.

Zimpher, N. L. (1988). A design for the professional development of teacher leaders. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 39, 53-60.

Zinn, L. F. (1997). Supports and barriers to teacher leadership: Reports of teacher leaders (Doctoral dissertation, University of Northern Colorado, 1997). *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 58 (04), 1175A.

APPENDIX A

SITE SELECTION SURVEY FOR TEACHERS AND ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS DIMENSIONS OF TEACHER LEADERSHIP

General Directions: The following dimensions and descriptors characterize schools where emergent teacher leadership is supported and thriving. Read the seven dimensions and the descriptors which provide specific examples.

Directions for Teachers and School-Level Administrators: After reading each dimension, determine if each dimension characterizes your school. Write a brief comment to provide a rationale for your decision.

Please complete the following information before you begin the survey:

School Name: _____

Your Position: _____

Number of Years at Your School: _____

Please note: Your participation in this survey is entirely voluntary and your responses will remain confidential. This survey will not be released in any individually identifiable form without your prior consent. This study has been approved by ----- and the ----- . If you have any questions about this survey or research study, please contact the researcher, Ellen Sabatini, at ----

DIMENSIONS OF TEACHER LEADERSHIP

1. Developmental Focus--Teachers are assisted in learning new knowledge and skills and are encouraged to help the learning of others. Descriptors:

- Teachers mentor new and transferring teachers.
- Teachers coach one another.
- Teachers are involved in professional development activities, including study groups.

Does this dimension characterize your school? Yes No Don't Know

Comments: _____

2. Recognition--Teachers are recognized for the professional roles they take and contributions they make. Descriptors:

- There is mutual respect among teachers.
- There are processes for formal recognition.
- Teachers recognize one another.

Does this dimension characterize your school? Yes No Don't Know

Comments: _____

3. Collegiality--Teachers collaborate on instructional and student-related matters.

Descriptors:

- Teachers discuss teaching strategies.
- Teachers share materials.
- Teachers observe in each other's classrooms.

Does this dimension characterize your school? Yes No Don't Know

Comments: _____

4. Autonomy--Teachers are encouraged to take the initiative to make improvements and to be innovative. Descriptors:

- Time and resources are provided to teachers who want to improve teaching and learning.

Does this dimension characterize your school? Yes No Don't Know

Comments: _____

5. Participation--Teachers are involved actively in making decisions and have input on important matters. Descriptors:

- Team leaders are chosen by all teachers.
- Teachers are involved in hiring processes.
- A consensus process involving faculty, parents, and other stakeholders is used to guide the work of teacher and administrators.

Does this dimension characterize your school? Yes No Don't Know

Comments: _____

6. Open communication--Teachers both send and receive communication in open, honest ways and feel informed about happenings in their school. Descriptors:

- Teachers share opinions and feelings freely.
- Teachers are willing to problem solve, rather than blame others.

Does this dimension characterize your school? Yes No Don't Know

Comments: _____

7. Positive Environment--Teachers experience a positive climate and effective administrative leadership. Descriptors:

- Teachers feel satisfied with the work environment.
- Teachers feel respected by one another, parents, students, and administrators.
- The faculty works together as a team.
- People feel positive about what they are doing to meet student needs.

Does this dimension characterize your school? Yes No Don't Know

Comments: _____

Thank you for participating in this survey. Your input is most appreciated.

Contact Information:

Ellen M. Sabatini

APPENDIX B

SITE SELECTION SURVEY FOR DISTRICT-LEVEL ADMINISTRATORS DIMENSIONS OF TEACHER LEADERSHIP

General Directions: The following dimensions and descriptors characterize schools where emergent teacher leadership is supported and thriving. Read the seven dimensions and the descriptors which provide specific examples.

Directions for District-Level Administrators: After reading the dimensions, nominate 2 or 3 elementary schools within the school district that best exemplify the dimensions and descriptors given.

Please complete the following information before you begin the survey:

Your Position: _____

Number of Years in ----- School District: _____

Please note: Your participation in this survey is entirely voluntary and your responses will remain confidential. This survey will not be released in any individually identifiable form without your prior consent. This study has been approved by ----- and ----- . If you have any questions about this survey or research study, please contact the researcher, Ellen Sabatini, at ----

DIMENSIONS OF TEACHER LEADERSHIP

1. Developmental Focus--Teachers are assisted in learning new knowledge and skills and are encouraged to help the learning of others. Descriptors:

- Teachers mentor new and transferring teachers.
- Teachers coach one another.
- Teachers are involved in professional development activities, including study groups.

2. Recognition--Teachers are recognized for the professional roles they take and contributions they make. Descriptors:

- There is mutual respect among teachers.
- There are processes for formal recognition.
- Teachers recognize one another.

3. Collegiality--Teachers collaborate on instructional and student-related matters.

Descriptors:

- Teachers discuss teaching strategies.
- Teachers share materials.
- Teachers observe in each other's classrooms.

4. Autonomy--Teachers are encouraged to take the initiative to make improvements and to be innovative. Descriptors:

- Time and resources are provided to teachers who want to improve teaching and learning.

5. Participation--Teachers are involved actively in making decisions and have input on important matters. Descriptors:

- Team leaders are chosen by all teachers.
- Teachers are involved in hiring processes.

- A consensus process involving faculty, parents, and other stakeholders is used to guide the work of teacher and administrators.
- Teachers are involved in developing a shared vision for the school.

6. Open communication--Teachers both send and receive communication in open, honest ways and feel informed about happenings in their school. Descriptors:

- Teachers share opinions and feelings freely.
- Teachers are willing to problem solve, rather than blame others.

7. Positive Environment--Teachers experience a positive climate and effective administrative leadership. Descriptors:

- Teachers feel satisfied with the work environment.
- Teachers feel respected by one another, parents, students, and administrators.
- The faculty works together as a team.
- People feel positive about what they are doing to meet student needs.

Administrators: List 2 or 3 elementary schools within the ---- School District that best exemplify the above dimensions of teacher leadership.

Thank you for participating in this survey. Your input is most appreciated.

Contact Information:

Ellen M. Sabatini

APPENDIX C
INITIAL SAMPLE SELECTION CRITERIA
STAGES OF ADULT DEVELOPMENT
(Leithwood, 1990)

Stage 1: Self-Protective

- Teacher has difficulty communicating openly and honestly.
- Teacher blames others.
- Teacher has difficulty problem solving.

Stage 2: Conformist

- Teacher honors the status quo and finds it difficult to embrace change.
- Teacher has difficulty making group decisions.
- Teacher has difficulty accepting individual differences.
- Teacher tends to go along with the group.

Stage 3: Conscientious

- Teacher values consensus.
- Teacher recognizes there are exceptions to rules.
- Teacher is future-oriented.
- Teacher would be effective as a group facilitator.

Stage 4: Autonomous

- Teacher is fully independent.
- Teacher accepts others as they are.
- Teacher sees value in others' viewpoints.
- Teacher would appreciate schoolwide leadership responsibilities.

APPENDIX D

RESEARCH STUDY CONSENT FORM

I agree to participate in the research titled, Teachers' Perspectives of Emergent Teacher Leadership in an Elementary School, which is being conducted by Ellen M. Sabatini, Educational Leadership Department, University of Georgia, under the direction of Dr. Jo Blase, Educational Leadership Department. I understand that this participation is entirely voluntary; I can withdraw my consent at any time without penalty and have the results of the participation, to the extent that it can be identified as mine, returned to me, removed from the research records, or destroyed.

The following points have been explained to me:

1. The reason for the research is to describe teachers' everyday experiences with emergent teacher leaders in an elementary school. It is hoped that the information gathered from this study will help future teacher leaders in their work toward instructional improvement. The benefits that I may expect from participating in this study are: an opportunity to reflect on my experiences with teacher leader colleagues and knowledge that the information gained from this study will help future educators.
2. The procedures are as follows:
 - a. The researcher will meet with the school staff as a whole group for about 15 minutes to discuss the purpose of the study and the interview procedures.
 - b. The researcher will interview participants, individually, at a place of convenience to the participants for approximately 1 hour. Interview questions will be semi-structured and will focus on the participants' experiences with emergent teacher leaders in their school. Interviews will be audiotaped with the participants' permission.
 - c. The researcher may conduct follow-up interviews in person, or over the phone, to ask for clarification or additional input. Follow-up interviews will last approximately 15 to 45 minutes.
3. No discomforts or stresses are foreseen.
4. No risks are foreseen.
5. The results of my participation will be confidential, and will not be released in any individually identifiable form without my prior consent, unless otherwise required by law. Audiotapes of any interviews will be confidential, labeled with pseudonyms, and erased following the study, by December 31, 2002.
6. The researcher will answer any further questions about the research, now or during the course of the project, and can be reached by telephone at --- or by email: ----
7. I understand the procedures described above. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

Signature of Researcher

Date

Signature of Participant

Date

For questions or problems about your rights please call or write: Chris A. Joseph, Ph.D., Human Subjects Office, University of Georgia, 606A Boyd Graduate Studies Research Center, Athens, Georgia 30602-7411; Telephone (706) 542-6514; E-Mail Address IRB@uga.edu.