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Narratives of Elementary and Secondary Teacher Leaders as Agents of Transformational Change

Cassandra Mason
Walden University

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Cassandra Mason

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2016

Abstract

Narratives of Elementary and Secondary Teacher Leaders as
Agents of Transformational Change

by

Cassandra Conyers Mason

MA, National Louis University, 1996

BS, Chicago State University, 1988

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Education

Walden University

June 2016

Abstract

Historically, being self-reflective has not been evidenced as critical to the career advancement of teachers aspiring to leadership roles. Five teacher leaders in a southwestern school district participated in a district Teacher Leadership Certificate Program (TLCP), which included self-reflective practices to broaden their understanding of the tools necessary to be an effective leader in 21st century schools. Theories of change suggest that teachers must acquire new knowledge and apply this new knowledge in practice. The theoretical framework for this project study was Mezirow's transformative learning theory. A narrative design was employed to identify the change process experienced by the 5 teacher leaders using elements of transformational theory. A questionnaire, observation protocol, and multiple interview instruments were used to examine 1 elementary and 4 secondary school teacher leaders, concluding with an essay. Interviews focused on the perceptions of the participants through inquiry that described their transformation to leaders as agents of change. Emergent themes were identified from the data through open coding and thematic analysis. Themes included teachers using self-reflection to enhance leadership goals and career development. The subsequent project was a 3 day professional development for all teachers at the study site on developing teacher leadership. The implications for promoting positive social change include providing research results to the local site on the use of self-reflection practices of teacher leaders and supporting professional development to improve teacher leadership educational practices.

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Dedication

I dedicate this degree to my family legacy, my parents, Willie and Juanita Conyers. It was their love and inspiration that guided my earliest beginnings to believe that I could be who and all that I am today. I am indeed thankful for their remarkable parental tutelage, inspirational encouragement to aspire my educational pursuits, and influencing our homestead with a strong spiritually rooted foundation. Your dreams and hopes for me have actualized and I am forever grateful for the prayers of faith you breathed for dreams of success and joys throughout my life. On your behalf and all that God has blessed me I have prospered in my living. I thank you with all my heart. To God Be the Glory!

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To my cherished children, Brandon and Kristin, I thank you both as you have always believed in me and supported me introspectively to reflect and become a 21st century educator. To my pride and joy Braxton, my grandson, ” you must do the thing you think you cannot do.” To my baby sister Pat, Attorney Derrick, and beloved Dani, your steadfast love and faith was bestowed on me from the onset, I am grateful for you in my life. To my many revered, devoted, and beloved treasured friends of life and church family, you are far too numerous to name, but please know that I am divinely grateful for your loving belief and support of me and my ambitions over these years. You have blessed me in ways you will never know or understand and I am grateful. For this and all I am obligated as a blessed servant leader of education and humanity to serve all in my path.

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Section 1: The Problem

Introduction

What teachers believe about their own capacity to learn and change will determine their actions and their response to success and failure (Killion, 2014). The theories of change imply that teachers must acquire new knowledge and put that new knowledge into practice to promote learning in their classrooms and impact school culture (Barth, 2007). It has been my experience from observations that teachers resist change when the decision to transform comes from someone other than themselves. According to Barth (2007), various perspectives on teacher change are related to issues of power and status; the view of the teacher as reluctant to change is promulgated by those who think they know what teachers should be doing in the classroom and are in a position to tell them what to do. Barriers to teacher change include lack of support, time, funds, and materials, demands of high-stakes exams, and present beliefs about teaching and learning (Rhodes & Brundrett, 2009).

Since the late 1990s, there has been a major growth of interest in teacher leadership, but there is limited research on the extent of the transformational experiences of teachers who advance in their careers to leadership positions. The use of narrative learning in adult education holds a respectable place. The premise is that telling stories serves a function, namely, to make meaning of our experiences through personal narratives; this is also how we craft our sense of self, our true identity. Transformative learning is a process of *restoring*, constructing meaning from the maze of events and

relationships that make up our lives (Kenyon & Randall, 2001). When a story of the self no longer coheres, nor helps us make sense of our experience, then we must change the story. Miller (2009) described *restoring* as an idea related to the recurring practice of stories changing as they are passed down through the generations, or to the way a story is preserved through narrative (Harley & Lachman, 2014).

Greene (2001) suggested that learning to teach is an identity development process, making personal choices about the teacher you will become. According to Wenger (1998), learning is an identity process in which identities are constructed and negotiated in order to attain membership in particular communities such as a teacher. Such learning defines being a teacher as a continuous process of reconstruction, reformation or erosion, addition or expansion, in which members need constant support (Danielewicz, 2001). Thus, teacher change results in teachers taking on new identities. They learn new behaviors and practice them regularly as they commit to achieving membership in this new group and being recognized by their peers (Wenger, 1998).

Definition of the Problem

The local problem in my school district centers around the major paradigm shifts in teaching praxis witnessed over the last decade as the national education system is under duress to increase academic achievement and close a significant achievement gap for its students (Duncan, 2014). Traditional approaches to professional development had been criticized for their lack of personal engagement with content and strategies, and for their lack of involvement within a professional community. In contrast, a new paradigm

of professional development was generated by district staff developer coordinators and administrators where participants were encouraged to be inquirers who bring their issues to the table where program content can be thoughtfully considered and applied. The design transformed thinking to offering learning opportunities in a reflective, learning practice process. Aubusson, Ewing, and Hoban (2009) characterized this type of professional development as one “that helps develop meaning from experience” (p. 5). Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009) proposed that practitioners must be central to the “goal of student transforming teaching, learning, leading, and schooling” (p. 119). Thus, educators must view teachers as change agents rather than passive entities requiring transformation by other professionals. My school district’s attempts to respond to this concern were shared in an in-depth meeting with the founder of the Teacher Leadership Certificate Program, of which my sample participants are graduates. This teacher leadership program is a district initiative and according to E. C. Elles (personal communication, January 7, 2014) the idea of exploring such a program was born out of the district’s vision that its teachers required more than the traditional “sit and get” in their professional learning experiences to meet the needs of 21st century academic standards for students. Having consulted with Learning Forward leaders (2008) about the influence of sound professional learning and understanding the consulting leaders’ ideals, the district sought to significantly change the way teachers engaged in new learning. Learning Forward leaders profess that, in order for teachers to solve complex problems in schools, their learning must be based on interactive, data-based, collaborative dialogue,

as well as on acknowledgment of how students learn best. Hence, the origins of the TLCP then become an important impetus for reframing teacher leader professional development learning. Anderson and Herr (2011) wrote that today's teachers are under unprecedented pressure to change classroom practices and improve student learning and achievement. These pressure points originate from the mandates—and even threats—to standardize classroom practices: all must be evidence based.

As stated in the aforementioned interview with the TLCP director, it was important that these PLC structures have strong leadership to facilitate and guide the work. The director further stressed that standardized testing data and assessment accountability all supported the need for principals to understand the shared value of building administrative support teams that included teacher leaders. With more demand on principals' leadership, principals are keenly aware of the restraints on their time and they see the substantial possibilities of teachers supporting each other as potential leaders. According to The Aspen Institute (2014), if schools are to be successful in preparing all students for the 21st century, they must distribute and develop leadership roles and skills for teachers, thereby making it easier for all students and systems to succeed. The task is too great for administrators to carry alone.

A significant purpose for this teacher leadership program is its toolkit, which allows teachers to explore academic meaning, to dialogue and reflect, and to ask integral problem solving questions. One example would be a professional development teacher

providing strategic coaching skills for teachers, so that a teacher, instructional coach could navigate the numerous situations they encounter daily in their leadership. The director shared the program provides teachers the sacred space to build relationships and communicate with district staff on all subject matter as highly critical; noting especially the association of grade-level collaboration of elementary and secondary teachers of particular importance to vertical alignment of district goals. Finally, the coordinator revealed the important dialogue and understanding of state standards and the applicability to The Common Core and classroom assessment data that were applied in these weekly sessions. The collaborative, collegial sessions brought a sense of community absent from the isolation that teachers can feel in their buildings. Research has indicated that learning activities of an individual and isolated nature have little sustained impact (Gallucci, 2008; Margolis & Doring, 2012).

Evidence of the evolving need to support teachers with effective leadership skills has been established through the evolution and popularity of the TLCP, which is currently in its sixth cohort group. This program continues to grow in participation as well as in the expansion of classes offered each year. In discussion with the director of this program, E. C. Elles (personal communication, January 7, 2015), the program was initiated to meet the evolving needs for professional development leaders in the schools, such as school improvement consultants, coaches, team coordinators, mentors, lead teachers, department coordinators, and professional developers. The program that began with one course module has now grown into three modules: (a) Teacher Leadership:

Theory to Reality; (b) Teacher Leadership: Essential Knowledge; and (c) Teacher Leadership: Vital Skills. Twenty-first century education encourages resilient instructional leaders and deems necessary that such leaders are essential for the overall performance improvement and rigorous academic achievement outcomes so students can create and support a dynamic school culture of success. This cohort program provides a strong teaching model of accountability and collaboration; it provides a safe environment where teachers can take risks as learners.

For the purpose of this narrative research, the alumni of this program were central in providing evidence in support of the research question: “What was the change process using the transformational theory elements of critical reflection and options for new roles, and building competence and self-confidence in new relationships and actions for five teacher leaders in a program?”

Rebora (2012) stated an emerging number of teacher-leadership degree programs designed to support the increasing number of teachers who are looking to advance in their careers and expand their instructional knowledge but who also want to remain in the classroom. Teacher-leadership programs generally differ from traditional education administration programs or leadership master’s programs because they concentrate more on instructional practice and on a reduced amount of organizational supervision.

The course offerings in teacher-leadership programs tend to emphasize inquiry-based instruction, coaching and mentoring, cultural responsiveness, professional development design, curriculum development, and technological understanding. But they

can vary from school to school. The guidelines for most programs require degree candidates to complete (a) an internship or capstone project involving collaborative work with school leaders or (b) a practice-based research project. According to Klocko (2012), teacher-leadership degree programs fill an important need in K-12 education today; they give teachers the ability to expand their roles and exert greater influence. Klocko further stated that the goal is to enrich the understanding of teaching and learning for teachers and “help them to lead from where they stand” (p. 15).

MacDonald (2013) proposed leading colleagues in learning is hardly a minuscule task for any teacher (team) leader to approach without preparation. MacDonald further stated that the skillful leader’s approach centers on a strong commitment to five foundational values: collaboration, shared leadership, goal setting and attainment, rigorous discourse, and continuous improvement.

I have worked in three school districts in my career as a classroom teacher, advancing through the ranks to teacher leadership roles and note that few districts support emerging or evolving team and teacher leaders into these responsible positions. It is evident from recent literature that policy makers and elected officials have begun to recognize the value of supporting teacher leadership (Ford & Haley, 2014). There was no such thing as a protocol to follow or systematic scaffolding by which to advance in my career. I leaned on my value system and intellect to navigate the channels of teacher leadership through mentors who I deemed leaders and exemplars. Darling-Hammond (2012) reported that in several of the surveys they reviewed, if teachers were asked what

made you stay and commit in a school? or What caused you to leave?, respondents would cite administrative leadership and support as one of the most critical elements because everything the teacher does is framed by the way the leadership operates. It is important for teachers to understand from the beginning of their careers—and throughout their careers—how to be good collaborators and community members, how to collaborate with others in sharing ideas and thoughts. There is a sense of servant-leadership within the teacher candidates who choose to move into the arena of leadership and say to the principal: “Can I help with this? Is there a way that I can facilitate some of this work getting done or enable you to facilitate it?”

The reliance on teachers as culture leaders plays a critical role in school success. Teacher leaders who participate in shared ownership with their principals help to shape and drive strong culture in school leadership (The Aspen Institute, 2014). Thus, the importance of principals in developing and supporting teacher leaders cannot be overstated. Barth (1999) stressed the importance of shared leadership to improve schools from within, though he states that something deep and powerful within school cultures seems to work against teacher leadership. Denver Public Schools (2014) developed a theory of action for its teacher leadership initiatives that emphasized academics. The organization foresees the potential for shared leadership structures in schools where school leaders work with empowered teacher leaders. The organization could build better opportunities for feedback and growth, retaining effective teachers, and increasing

student achievement. Lieberman and Friedrich (2010) remarked that transformational change happens as teacher leaders see themselves in a unique position as change agents.

According to Carver, Margolis, and Williams (2013), new teacher mentors are trusted with bringing novices up to speed on building-wide instructional programs, curricular resources, and behavior management systems. School improvement chairs are planning professional development experiences and leading professional learning community (PLC) meetings. Instructional coaches are being hired to support teams of teachers making strides to improve student achievement and learning opportunities. These examples illustrate that teachers are central to the instructional change process. Hence, teacher leaders have developed as an integral part of many school-reform initiatives.

Arguably, greater visibility, unfortunately, has not resulted in clearer understanding about how these roles facilitate improvement. Moreover, there is evidence that significant challenges can diminish their effectiveness. Wells, Maxfield, Klocko, and Feun (2010) recognized that not all administrative leaders demonstrate support for teacher leadership. Political pressures in the local context can impede the work of teacher leaders, leading to frustration and making it hard to gain traction amidst shifting initiatives and priorities. In comparison, rigid bureaucratic structures and processes can play havoc with the professional work inferred by such new roles.

As teachers assume specialized roles to influence change in a variety of contexts, they need skills in managing relationships, organizing group process, and acting with

political savvy. These skills are rarely if ever addressed in traditional preservice or professional development programs. Administrators who will assume responsibility for understanding how a teacher navigates to a teacher leadership role would be wise to review the issues routinely faced by teacher leaders and provide insights in their development. Barth (2007) concurred about the deliberate nature of teacher leadership, stating that “a principal’s disposition to share leadership with teachers appears related to personal security. The more strongly secure a principal is the more likely to share leadership. It’s as if teachers and principals must learn a new dance together” (p. 109). For both roles, a convergence of understanding in the professional relationship must take place for a constructive shared leadership experience to develop.

A teacher reflection story published by the Wallace Foundation (2013) described adverse principal leadership experiences in several beginning career principals, describing them as the books-ordered, supplies-filled kind of administrative manager. As the author of this reflection looks back over the 20 years in her career, one principal is remembered as particularly demoralizing:

Spreadsheets were kept on who missed, or who attended every meeting, but ... he couldn’t tell you what you were teaching or how you were teaching. He could tell you what time you arrived at school every morning. Students complained that the first time they ever saw him was when he handed them their diplomas at graduation. Hence the turnover rate at this school for teachers was very high. (p. 9)

Leadership can be defined as the shared work and commitments that shape the direction of a school or district and its learning improvement agendas. The agendas thus engage effort and energy in pursuit of those agendas. Learning-focused leadership pertains to the reinventing of leadership practice within schools and the central office (The Wallace Foundation, 2013). Very little has been written about early career teachers and their thoughts about leadership or their development as leaders. A leadership frame of reference should be communicated during preservice preparation for beginning teachers (Bond, 2011).

Rationale

Evidence of the Problem at the Local Level

This problem resonated from my own experience over the last 17 years of navigating the system from classroom teacher to my current leadership role in my school district as a veteran of 27 years. In mentoring teachers I discovered that many sought a professional development experience that would provide positive ways for internal dialogue to take place before, during, and after new learning experiences. The influences, perceptual filters, interpretive paradigms and the meanings that are abstracted from conversations and events prove to be recognized as fundamental in reflective processing. In my career life as a teacher, I have found little scholarly research on self-reflection relative to teacher identity in the personal and professional lives of educators. As I often reflected and examined my personal and professional trajectory over the decades as a classroom teacher and now as a teacher leader find this practice imperative. Palmer

(2007) suggested that a teacher's inner life and selfhood become a legitimate topic in public dialogues on educational reform.

The TLCP grew out of the district's vision to support 21st century academic standards. The essential role of teacher leadership was a largely overlooked feature that is critical to a performance-oriented culture that supports two district-wide student achievement initiatives. College preparedness and career advancement are two critical initiatives of the school district where the impact of teacher leader coordinators and grade-level leads can often predict the effects that initiatives will have on students and teachers.

Noted in the program design of the TLCP was the desire to improve overall student achievement by increasing the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of teachers through professional development praxis (Killion, 2014). An outcome of this program would be that teachers who participate in its coursework will be given the opportunity to broaden their understanding of the tools necessary to be an effective leader in 21st century schools. The emphasis of the teacher leadership curriculum was established in 3 course modules on 3 distinct areas; the Certificate Curriculum includes the following: Module 1- Teacher Leadership: *Theory to Reality*; Module 2-Teacher Leadership: *Essential Knowledge*; and finally, Module 3-Teacher Leadership: *Vital Skills*, which was designed and customized to address the unique needs district teacher leaders were encountering. The three modules shared above are designed to address the evolving needs of professional development leaders in all district schools. Ten credit hours from this

coursework can be linked to an administrator Type-D certificate or Master's degree. In addition, this certificate coursework will support teacher leaders as they aspire to future career goals.

Evidence of the Problem from the Professional Literature

According to The theoretical base of adult education a teacher learns to make her or his own interpretations rather than act on the beliefs, judgments, purposes, and feelings of others. The premier goal of adult education is the facilitation of such understanding. Transformative learning theory, known as Mezirow's theory, underlines the rational and analytical part of the learning process as well as the spiritual or emotional part of the process. Mezirow's theory (Mezirow, 1990, 1991, 2001) emphasizes a learning process of "becoming critically aware of one's own tacit assumptions and expectations and those of others and assessing their relevance for making an interpretation" (Mezirow, 2001, p. 4). The study of transformative learning has three phases: critical reflection, reflective discourse, and action (Mezirow, 1981). Mezirow posits that all learning is change, but not all change is transformation. The transformative learning theory proposes thinking that is autonomous, or self-directed (Mezirow, 1981). According to Mezirow (1991), the essence of transformative learning involves transforming frames of reference through critical reflection of assumptions, and taking one's reflective insights and critically assessing them. Hence, this significant understanding of the nature of adult learning provides the educator with a foundation for selecting appropriate educational practices and defying actively those social and cultural forces that disrupt and restrict adult

learning. Building on teacher education research that addressed teacher change as transformational learning in educational psychology is the earliest seminal writer Mezirow, who considered critical reflection to be the distinguishing characteristic of adult learning (Mezirow, 1981, 1994, 1997).

Transformative learning theory framed the research presented in this study as adults were viewed as approaching new learning through the lens of experience as teacher leaders. With this in mind, the influence of teachers' identities and biographies on their beliefs and practices prompted a more integrative or different view of teaching, resulting in the findings reported in this study. Ten phases of transformative learning make up the framework of Mezirow's theory—the analytical tool for this research. Though the publication of this research is well over 30 years old, it provides the framework for identifying that growth (or lack of growth) in learning (Mezirow, 1991).

The ten phases are:

1. A disorienting dilemma;
2. Self-examination with feelings of fear, anger, guilt, or shame;
3. A critical assessment of assumptions'
4. Recognition that one's discontent and the process of transformation are shared;
5. Exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions;
6. Planning a course of action;
7. Acquiring knowledge and skills for implementing one's plans
8. Provisional trying of new roles;

9. Building competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships;
10. A reintegration into one's life on the basis of conditions dictated by one's new perspective (Mezirow, 2001, p. 22).

Seminal work reported by Bell and Gilberts (1996) posited that teachers must, first, critically reflect on their current practice to realize that improvement is needed. Second, they need to become at ease with practicing innovative strategies and collaborating with other teachers. Finally, they must come to terms with both the benefits and constraints of changing practice, such as differing beliefs from colleagues. A process of this scope works best if supported by a collaborative and reflective group. Chapman and Heater (2010) discovered the process of change is rooted in the tensions of classroom experience and practice. They devised the phrase, "architect of change," to describe how teachers took ownership in their own transformation. Such change required ways of knowing in which they:

Examine their own experience of work on themselves while addressing the question of how to support students in learning; attend to experience so as to develop sensitivities to others and to be awake to possibilities; focus on problems and experiment with situations; and engage in introspective and observations. (p. 456)

Chapman and Heater (2010) imply teachers construct change for themselves and that prescribed interventions or professional development cannot guarantee opportunities for teachers to evolve if they are not invested. Chapman and Heater (2010) and Kegan

(1994) further recognized teacher change requires foundational change or a shift in how teachers typically position themselves as teachers. For this paper I used the phrase “transformational change agent” as synonymous with “architect of transformation” to highlight elements of practitioner agency and to identify shifts that occur when teachers [*truly see? better see?*] see themselves, their students, and the world around them.

Identities are dynamic and continually shaped by numerous interactions situated within social, cultural, and historical worlds. Positionality, or the situation in which a particular set of circumstances exists, is one way in which people enact their identities and thus becomes central to identity work (Harre & Moghaddam, 2003). Research on positioning theory by Harre and Moghaddam (2003) suggested that educators can position themselves (reflective positioning) as leaders in their school by acting as staff developers leading presentations or developing curriculum. Educators can also be positioned interactively as a leader by their colleagues, if, for instance, they were asked to present on a subject during a faculty meeting.

According to Harre, Moghaddam, Cairnie, Rothbart, and Sabat (2009), these positions occur conversationally and along storylines that are elicited through largely personal experiences and in-depth cultural narratives. Holland and Leander (2007) stated these positionings are complex and take practice over time. For example, a classroom teacher leader who must negotiate his or her time between teaching students and leading teachers or negotiating test scores and how they maintain balance and leverage in those roles is critical.

Clandinin and Murphy (2009) recommended more opportunities for teachers to tell and retell their stories within collaborative groups to foster the construction of professional identities and the negotiation of administrative expectations. FitzPatrick and Spiller (2010) suggested teacher change is an identity process more research needs to examine that identity process by studying how teachers position themselves and are positioned by others over time.

As Merriam (2009) stated, qualitative research depicts organizational functioning and cultural phenomena through human lives, lived experiences, emotions, behaviors, and feelings as well as social movements. Merriam contended that qualitative researchers are relentless in drawing on their experiences as they perform data analysis knowing the personal experiences will build the platform for the results they draw from their data.

Thus, this narrative study looked at the inner landscape of each participant, including their (a) cultural and racial backgrounds, (b) life experiences, and (c) professional experiences in correlation to those understandings aligned to diversity and multicultural education.

Definitions

Adult learner: Knowles (1970) introduced the concept of “andragogy” or the art and science of helping adults learn. There are five assumptions about adult learners:

1. The adult learner has an independent self-concept and can direct his or her own learning.

2. The adult learner has accumulated a reservoir of life experiences that are a rich resource for learning.
3. An Adult learner has learning needs closely related to changing social roles.
4. The adult learner is problem-centered and interested in immediate application of knowledge.
5. The adult learner is motivated to learn by internal rather than external factors.

(Educational Testing Service, 2012)

Change agent: Chapman and Heater (2010) used the term “architect of change” to describe how teachers took ownership for their own transformation. Kegan (1994) recognized that teacher change requires foundational change or a shift in how teachers typically position themselves as leaders.

Critical reflection: Involves a critique of the presuppositions on which our beliefs have been built (Mezirow, 2001). It is the process whereby a person intentionally construes new meanings through critically examining his or her own beliefs or a set of beliefs.

Narrative learning: Narratives are a unique way to make meaning of the human experience. Narrative learning is an ideal approach to use in this study as the researcher seeks to understand the identity of the participant and the unfolding story that speaks to changes over the course of their career life narratively (Rossiter & Clark, 2007).

Narrative is how we craft our sense of self, our identity. Narrative learning is

constructivist in character, and how the experience is communicated determines what meaning it has for the person (Corbin & Strauss, 2014).

Teacher leader: According to DeWitt and Slade (2014) teachers who take charge, mentor those new to the profession, and develop climates for continuous learning and improvement defines teacher leaders. Defining teacher leaders for the purpose of this study involves teachers who have participated and completed a yearlong Teacher Leadership Certificate program that provides coursework that will afford the opportunity to broaden their understanding of the tools necessary to be an effective leader in 21st century schools. This study included five diverse teachers who currently hold leadership roles within my school district.

Teacher leadership: Arne Duncan remarks at the National Board on Professional Teaching Standards' Teaching and Learning Conference (March 2014) that "Teacher Leadership means having a voice in the policies and decisions that affect your students, your daily work, and the shape of your profession."

Team leader: Those formal and informal leaders who facilitate professional learning in teams, they provide guidance and direction to a group to achieve key results (i.e., study groups, grade level, school-based instructional leadership; MacDonald, 2013, p. 10). My selected sample participants serve as team leaders in one or more of these capacities and were chosen based on their positions as we are colleagues of the same district.

Transformation: The element of change for participants in their personal and professional career journeys as they made their transitions from classroom teaching into teacher leader roles in their career advancement. A transformation refers to a non-reversible shift in a person's meaning perspective towards greater inclusiveness, flexibility, reflexiveness, and autonomy. Beginning with personal transformation, teachers move on to challenge the policies and practices of the schools in which they work; they begin reflecting on what helped them change and how their practice changed as a result (Nieto, 2013, p. 26).

Transformative learning theory: Transformative Learning Theory framed the research presented in this study where adults will be interviewed to explore and understand the "perspective transformation" (change process) through two of Mezirow's ten phases of transformative learning (Mezirow, 1991, p. 167). An update by Taylor (2010) posited in transformative learning theory adults learn differently than children and adolescents and as they mature they accumulate experiences which combine to validate progressively complex frames of reference. This involves learning "how to negotiate and act upon our own purposes, values, feelings, and meanings rather than those we have uncritically assimilated from others" (Mezirow, 2001, p. 8).

Significance

Over the last 5 years in my district, a teacher leadership program has been developed. The program supports and encourages teachers who seek leadership by means of comprehensive training modules on important aspects of teacher leader principles.

Candidates for this program are classroom teachers, school team leaders, professional developers, district coaches, mentors, and coordinators who seek to increase their knowledge, skills, and dispositions. This program included a portion of teachers as active participants over the last 5 years. By choice, some remained in their desired status as classroom teachers with other duties in the building; others moved into areas of expertise within their building as teacher leaders. Several moved into the administrative arena to seek advancement as assistant principals and even further to the principalship. For my research purposes, I focused my qualitative data collection on Course Module 3 (Teacher Leadership: Vital Skills), which includes the following areas: instructional specialist, professional developer, and culturally responsive pedagogy and intentional instruction for diverse learners. The program's director, Elles, discussed how this initiative brought an element of integrity and consistency to existent professional development, and that the program ran with rigor and high expectations (personal communication, January 7, 2015). She explained there is an expectation for performance that is well framed. Teachers collect student work for formative and summative assessment and receive reflective commentary from her as feedback. A requirement is to develop and present an action research project which culminates the program as a final, graded project activity. The action research process involves a teacher or group of teachers who share an interest in a common problem using a seven step process to stimulate transformation within school culture (Sagor, 2000). The director, Elles, reviews and grades the projects based on a rubric she designed for the process (personal communication, January 7, 2015).

The teacher leadership certificate was originally designed as somewhat of a solution-based initiative developed within the office of professional development in this district. As district leaders analyzed the persistent needs around teachers collaborating, the importance for an intellectual culture of inquiry, and the overwhelming principal's role as administrator, instructional leader, teacher evaluator, community liaison and more. Numerous requests made by administrative and leadership staff, as well as a flurry of teacher interest in such a cohort design highly encouraged the initial discourse and meetings that followed to formulate this program's early development. Thus, the teacher leadership certificate is a program designed to overall improve student achievement by increasing the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of teachers. It is also an innovation that aligns to the urgent immediacy of reform measures involving standards and testing as well as the persistent challenges with equity and excellence in achievement for all students and that principals cannot lead alone. Participation of teachers in this coursework would be provided with the opportunity to broaden their understanding of the tools necessary to be an effective leader in 21st century schools.

The three modules of this certification curriculum are designed to address the evolving needs of professional development leaders in all district schools. Clear objectives are cited for participants to be able to organize and lead PLT meetings to maximize efficiency and focus; design, implement, and assess curriculum methodology to address students' needs; analyze, interpret, and use district student achievement data to

guide teachers as they make instructional planning decisions; complete complex performance tasks to ensure that learning experiences are applied in school settings; develop collaboration and facilitation skills and be able to apply this knowledge in a variety of settings; direct professional development work in schools that is purposeful and related to equity and excellence goals; and develop culturally responsive practices to address the needs of all students.

Knowles (2012) stated that adults learn differently than children or adolescents. A thorough understanding of how adults learn is beneficial to the successful education of adults. It is by understanding the unique options in which adults learn that educational leaders can create strong environments from where adults learn and thrive.

Guiding Research Question

Bache (2008) depicted transformational learning as a viable and delicate quality that is inclusive of the teacher's personal vivacity and the exuberance created within the energy field among the participants. Mezirow (1997) implied that a transformational learning environment was open and inviting to access. Mezirow's theory posits that adults develop frames of reference that are incessantly used to make sense of the world through the accumulation of life experiences. Mezirow (1978) stated when new learning does not fit into the frames of reference, opportunities for transformation emerge. Old paradigms or ideas transform to a new more integrative thinking (Mezirow, 1991, p. 167) It was anticipated through the results of the interviews and analysis of data within my study that I did observe the transformational development of the nuances and day-to-day

reflections from my selected teacher sample, thereby gaining a broader sense of understanding authentic transformative learning theory. Teacher leaders, who subscribed to the notion of transformative self-reflection practices as part of their career goals, make intentional efforts to find pedagogical reflective space to inspire their motives. In reviewing the current literature on transformative theory, knowledge about transformative learning has been constructed by a community of scholars working to explain how adults experience a deep shift in perspective that leads them to better justified and more open frames of reference (Kucukaydin & Cranton, 2012).

What was the change process using the two transformational theory elements of critical reflection and options for new roles, and building competence and self-confidence in new relationships and actions for five teacher leaders as they participated in a program?

The following subquestions were also considered:

1. How do teachers define leadership within their own professional contexts?
2. What transformational differences and similarities emerge in the teacher leader narratives?
3. In what ways do teachers perceive themselves as leaders? What kinds of activities do teachers consider to be leadership?
4. Do teacher leaders find career advancement opportunities as a result of their participation in the district teacher leadership certification program?

5. What are the backgrounds, experiences, and training of the teacher leader in their individual cultural identities?

Review of the Literature

There are seven major themes framing the literature on teacher leadership career development: transformational teacher leadership, development of teacher leaders, teacher leaders as change agents, teacher leadership and professional development, teacher leadership programs, teacher and principal leadership as a team, and teacher leadership and multiculturalism. A saturation of literature was achieved and exhaustive on this research topic. The following Walden databases were used in the literature search: ERIC, Education Research Complete, ProQuest Dissertation, Google Scholar, and Education from SAGE and Thoreau.

Transformational Teacher Leadership

Learning by reflecting critically on one's own experiences, assumptions, beliefs, feelings, and mental perspectives in order to construe new or revised interpretations is often associated with adult learning. Transformative learning theory revealed that adults learn differently than children. Mezirow's theory suggested that adults accumulate frames of experience and mature which combine to validate extensively deeper and more complex frames of reference. Mezirow stated these frames of reference are used to make sense of the world in which we live. The accumulation of experiences and grounding of reliable frames of reference creates adult thoughtfulness towards new learning and can evoke some states of caution. Snyder (2012) suggested more often than not whereby

sustentative information does exist that transformation occurs. Lastly, Mezirow's transformative learning theory has matured significantly since its origins of the 1970s. Validation of conceptual debate and empirical studies prove transformative learning theory as a credible lens through which to analyze adult learning. Herlo (2010) recognized that transformative learning can be a risky and intimidating experience into the unknown, as learners must let go of traditional conceptualizations of the world and of self. The author challenged educators to structure their teaching for fostering personal development of instead of developing specific competencies. The teacher served as a gatekeeper as well as a guide for learners on the journey (Herlo, 2010).

Transformational leadership consists of three basic functions. First, transformational school leaders sincerely empower, serve the needs of others, and inspire followers to successful achievement. Second, they instill trust, confidence and pride and set a vision. Finally, they offered intellectual stimulation to their followers in their leadership (Castanheira & Costa, 2011). The school becomes empowered as a collective unit instead of specially selected individuals. Arif and Sohail (2009) asked how can teachers be kept satisfied and motivated in their roles without status achievement? Thus, the authors ask, Does traditional transformational theory support the transactions (the character, motivation, and one's relationships) of school leaders with teachers?

Dewey (1931) proposed and suggested that effective leaders engage themselves in people centered leadership by constantly creating and renewing the achievement and learning culture for staff and students. The focus on transformation is appropriate, given

the importance of well-prepared leaders in raising educational standards (Rhodes & Bisschoff, 2012). Allowing participants to experience who they might become as a result of underlying thinking with respect to identity change, self-concept, learning and transformation appears to constitute an essential element in their personal and professional development.

An important part of transformative adult learning is for individuals to critically reflect on their assumptions and beliefs and consciously make and implement plans that change their frames of reference and bring new ways of defining their worlds. It is acknowledged by critics that this theory is essentially rational and analytical. Though transformative learning is rational, it also can be described as a spiritual or emotional transformation as well. Mezirow posits that all learning is change but not all change is transformation (2000). A major study showed that critical reflection was at the top in educational objectives, especially integrating reflection content in distance education curricular designs which strongly support developing critical reflection among the learners in a teacher leader program (Buzdar & Akhtar, 2013).

According to Jackson, Burrus, Bassett, and Roberts (2010), teacher leadership has been defined with introspection. Vernon-Dotson and Floyd (2012) defined teacher leadership as a phenomenon sparked by school reform movements and legislative mandates such as the No Child Left Behind Act (2002), surfacing over the past couple of decades. The authors created a complex description of teacher leadership and defined it specifically as the ability of school professionals to forge a sense of community and share

a commitment with the overarching goals of building a capacity for change by increasing student achievement and engaging all faculty and staff and enhancing school climate.

Data collected by Aspen Institute Education and Society Program (2014) observed by system leaders that teachers identify with and contribute to a community of teacher learners and leaders, as they lead within and beyond the classroom. Teacher leaders contribute and influence others towards improved educational practice when they are viewed as the essential component for making important and enduring change regarding student successes in schools. Feeney (2009) stated that leadership definitions tend to be romanticized in school culture where a hero is perceived as one endowed with qualities that others lack. Feeney expresses department leaders in high schools are a natural place to begin examining how teacher leaders' effect and impact change and leadership capacity in a school.

Research studies have indicated that teachers must be motivated to take on opportunities for leadership. Pink (2009) articulated a new theory of motivation around the themes of mastery, purpose, and autonomy in providing a useful framework for motivating teachers to maintain their drive for the long term.

Teacher leaders viewed leadership as being something above and beyond their day-to-day work as educators. Many associated being a leader with acting in a position of authority or exerting influence by serving as a department chair, officer in a professional organization, and other positions. Their perception of leadership could impact their choice of pathways to accomplish their leadership goals (York-Barr & Duke, 2004).

The expansion of teacher leaders has become urgent for education systems concerned with reform (Ross et al., 2011; Taylor, Goeke, Klein, Onore, & Geist, 2011). There is a national trend in professional learning approaches designed to build teachers' leadership capacity. Globally, the perception of value around developing teacher leaders is most tangible about prospects that recognized results in school improvement, better student learning outcomes, enhanced teacher learning and increased staff retention. A recent study suggested the connections between teacher leadership and professional learning instinctively are directed more to what comprises teacher leadership and less on the means by which these are learned by leaders (Poeckert, 2012). According to MacDonald (2013), there must be a strong commitment to five foundational values: collaboration, shared leadership, goal setting and attainment, rigorous discourse, and continuous improvements will benefit those vested in professional learning communities.

Wu (2013) revealed the making of a teacher leader begins within the walls of a classroom and must be recognized by an observant principal. The author described a teacher leader whose talents were observed as a respected, trusted, and an empowerment to the people she led--including students, colleagues, and parents. The teacher leader listened well, used her capacity to delve deeply into people and to build community by uniting people around a desire to seek knowledge and do better. Possessing a sense of humor and steady optimism infused into school settings brought forth calm and boundless possibility for positive collaborative efforts. An intentional focus on the teacher leader's

“honing his or her leadership skills” in the expanded leadership context along with strong skill of inquiry in search of stronger pedagogy.

The National Board of Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) embeds leadership ideas throughout its Proposition 5: Teachers are Members of Learning Communities. The International Reading Association’s 2010 standards for the Pre-K and Elementary Classroom Teacher recognize the importance of demonstrating and facilitating professional learning and leadership as a career-long effort and responsibility.

Little concern and attention has been paid to the preparation of pre-service classroom teacher regarding leadership roles. Bond (2011) cited that articles on pre-service teacher leadership since 2004 are more conceptual than empirical. Sherrill (2011) argued that to facilitate leadership development, the teacher leader/cooperating teacher can serve as a role model and should be recognized as a teacher leader at the school. An ongoing “cycle” of praxis . . . reflection and action, meaning-making and practicing leadership” is necessary to creating teacher leaders (Taylor et al., 2011).

Teacher Leadership and Professional Development

Cherkowski (2011) supported the human capacities of joy, love, and compassion as essential elements of educational leadership that sustain and inspire teacher commitment in learning communities. A sustainable learning community denotes rather than a routine implementation of collaborative meetings that are better known as “PLC’s” more of an organic ecological system that characterizes school culture by its continuous learning, deep collaboration, and respect. Cherkowski further suggest the shift of focus in

educational leadership to include emotions and human capacities and creates a new space for positive transformation at a personal, professional, and organizational level. Wheatley (2009) reflected on what is missing from discussions of leadership for sustainable learning “communities” are the telling of stories that may evoke in school leaders a desire for deeper connection. She states the stories that help teacher leaders learn to be and to learn to live well are necessary to be fully humanistic in how stakeholders live and work well together in schools.

Teacher Leaders as Change Agents

Teacher job satisfaction is at its lowest point in the last 25 years according to a survey by MetLife (2013). They report only 39% of teachers identify themselves as very satisfied which, is a decline of 23% points in the last 5 years. Accomplished teachers nationally are seeking opportunities to take hold and charge of what they can do.

Kiranh (2013) conducted a study to explore expectations and perceptions related to teacher’s leadership. He argued that though school administrators are required to provide environments and conditions necessary for colleagues to transform, another definition reveals the three dimensions of teacher leadership. These three dimensions are: the act of leading teachers and students, which entails mentoring and leadership in study groups and teaching; leadership in tasks focusing on school achievement; and leadership in collaboration, decision making processes in serving on development teams and committees, as well as participation in community partnerships and parent-teacher organizations. While Cummings (2011) suggested that teacher leaders must begin to

recognize their focus and move from their own individual classrooms to a whole school perspective. He endorses self-directed learning and quotes a perspective put forth in 1975 by Malcolm Knowles, characterizing adult learners doing for themselves what they do for their students: “climate setting, engaging in learning activities, and evaluating learning outcomes” (p. 34).

In 2009, a teacher and her colleagues opened a teacher-led school in Denver, Colorado serving students in K-5; 95% who qualify for free or reduced-price lunch and 70% are English language learners. The academic program focuses on mathematics and science instruction. Nazareno (2013) revealed the school was not designed because they felt principal-led schools are ineffective, but to attract the most highly skilled teachers to serve high-needs students, they wanted to offer these new talented recruits the authority and autonomy to make authentic decisions on behalf of students.

Vetter (2012) found little research examining teachers’ change process to better understand what professional arenas support teachers in constructing their own transformation. Three central theorists, Dewey (1931), Schon (1983), and Kegan and Lahey (2010), focused on critical reflection and professional experience on teacher change. These theories of change imply that practitioners must apply their new learned knowledge and put it into practice to promote greater learning in their classrooms. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009) expounded that teachers are architects of transformation in their proposal that practitioners must be pinnacle to the “goal of transforming teaching, learning, schooling, and leading” (p. 119).

In a June 2012 hearing, a California judge ruled that the way the Los Angeles Unified School District evaluates its teachers violates state law as student achievement is not factored in. Educators 4 Excellence, a group unaffiliated with the local teachers union, formed a bargaining session for teachers to discuss the issue directly with Los Angeles superintendent John Deasy. Deasy described the bargaining session as “one of the most thoughtful models that has been worked out” (Colvin, 2013, p. 30). Boston and Roxbury, Massachusetts both have evidenced a small but rapidly growing national movement to give classroom teachers opportunities to make a mark on their profession and on public education. Their observations of this local teachers union unabashedly acknowledged that some teachers are more effective than others and that even the best teachers want to keep improving their practice. These teachers see themselves as leaders and problem solvers. Results indicate many district, state, and national education policymakers view teachers as more authentic classroom voice than union activists.

The use of storytelling proved leadership legacy and sustains leadership within the organization according to Godt (2010). She goes on to advise that the role of a teacher leader is to be able to pass along important information to often newer teachers. Teacher leaders need to pass along information to their students and other teachers in memorable formats that engage their imaginations and lay foundations with memories making the information easy to remember. Religious leaders passed along their greatest ideas and ideals in the forms of stories and parables. Godt stated the sayings of Confucius (551-479 BC) as passed onto others as wisdom and moral guidance from the past relating those

thoughts to persons alive today. An example teachers often use attributed to Confucius is “I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand” (Confucius, 2009, p. 57). She likens other teachers of stories to those of Jesus, Mohammad, Aesop, and Buddha. Teaching needs to present information and teacher leaders need to present stories to other teachers in the most profound ways for transference into their long-term memory to revert when it is needed.

Teacher Leadership Programs

The Central Michigan University teacher preparation taskforce of 2023 charges the ever changing economic, social, political, and technological landscapes have opened and altered the possibilities for future teaching and learning in educator programs. They purport to prepare teachers who are 21st century educators with knowledge and skills to perform the following: leverage current technologies to enhance collaboration among teacher candidates; incorporate inquiry-based learning experiences to connect theory and practice of teaching 21st century knowledge and skills; and finally to assess candidates’ proficiency in 21st century skills and knowledge.

Supporting the development of teacher leaders is imperative as effective leadership provides a catalyst for change, and is essential to implanting and sustaining curriculum reform efforts (Larkin, Seyforth, & Lasky, 2009). To ensure reforms are successful, leaders provide the necessary expertise in achieving their intended effect in promotion of student learning. National Science Foundation’s Math and Science Partnerships (MSP) program recognizes the importance of teacher leadership to reform

effort success (NSF, 2010). The assumption that teacher leadership should be embedded in a teacher's practice is guided by the leadership component of the program.

Teacher leadership programs vary from school to school, focusing on inquiry based instruction, coaching and mentoring, cultural responsiveness, professional-development design, curriculum development, and technological understanding. According to Rebora (2012), more educators strive to deepen their practice and extend their influence on other teachers. Teacher leadership degree programs differ from traditional education administration or leadership master's programs by focusing more on instructional practice and less on organizational supervision. The article states, school of education professors and administrators involved in teacher-leadership degree programs say such offerings fill an important need in K-12 education today, giving teachers the capacity to expand and exert greater influence in schools (Rebora, 2012). A gap in educational research exists with regards to teacher involvement in the process of career pathway implementation at the secondary level. Teacher leadership contribution in the developmental phases of a new academic, school-wide program is critical to its overall success. Graue and Johnson (2011) reported the alignment and design process is crucial for teacher participation and involvement for professional buy-in and made it feasible for a new program to sustain at the secondary level.

An early distance learning success story of a teacher leader program called the Teacher Leader Program (Ovington, Diamantes, & Roby, 2002) holds implications for the planning, development and delivery of graduate education programs as it describes

this program that was one of only six in the nation (Atlanta Journal and Constitution, 1998) at that time and then had successfully operated for 24 years. This study will be used as an exemplar of seminal work for the purposes of my project study.

Teacher and Principal Leadership as a Team

Hoerr (2016) stated that to create a shared leadership school, the principal must become a staff developer and create opportunities to collaborate with others and hear different opinions. In a PLC all adults continually learn together so that every student achieves at the highest levels.

Leadership can be defined as the shared work and commitments that shape the direction of a school or district and their learning improvement agendas, and that engage effort and energy in pursuit of those plans. Learning-focused Leadership and Leadership Support: Meaning and Practice in Urban Systems, Wallace Foundation (2010) purports learning-focused leadership means reinventing leadership practice within schools and the central office. Teacher leaders and supervisory administrators used the following opportunities to enhance their instructional leadership work: teacher leaders and supervisory administrators used classroom walk-throughs to grasp what was happening in classroom instruction with goals for improvement; one-on-one debriefing sessions with central office staff provided principals with opportunities for feedback and modeling of quality instructional leadership practice with teacher leaders; and assessment forum created to examine and reflect on their own work as a district based leadership team and consider ways to improve overall.

The responsibility to find qualified leaders who will be the next generation of principals to replace those retiring nationwide will fall on local school districts, even though fewer educators express an interest in the position according to Walker and Kwan (2009). The passage of NCLB formally has reshaped the education system nationwide. Selecting leadership training involves time, money, and resources, thus a focus on the selection, training, and the pipeline to the principal-ship is especially important in our nation's most challenged districts and schools (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005). Johnston, Walker, and Levine (2010) found that principal and teacher effectiveness accounts for nearly 60% of a school's impact on student achievement. Researchers contend that the transition from school leader to principal leader requires a shift in thinking, planning, evaluating, and even socializing with stakeholders.

Organizational culture is a complex process that includes a multitude of variables, such as socialization, language, authority, rituals, economy, technology, and influence. It can be used by school administrators as a tool to influence and guide other people or to establish management among employees. Research by Hoy and Miskel (2010) similarly expressed that organizational culture holds its units together and shares values, norms, philosophies, perspectives, attitudes, myths and trends that promote a characteristic identity. Turan and Bektas (2013) proposed the leadership role of school administrator is essential to ensure that employees associate with school culture. Culture shared by all school stakeholders makes the actualization of objectives both short- and long-term easier.

In an examination of relationships between instructional leadership of school principals and self-efficacy of teachers Calik, Sezgin, Kavgaci, and Kilinc (2012) revealed that instructional leadership affected the collective efficacy indirectly through teachers' self-efficacy. In other words, when the school principals demonstrated instructional leadership behaviors, teachers' perceptions grew stronger about their own self-efficacy. Scurry (2010) highlighted that positive feedback and leadership behaviors that strengthen teacher self and collective efficacy increases depending on the instructional leadership they perceive.

Teacher Leadership and Multiculturalism

Multicultural education and all good teaching, is about transformation according to Nieto (2013). She defines multicultural education as embedded in a sociopolitical context and as antiracist and basic education for all students that permeates all areas of schooling, and that is characterized by a commitment to social justice and critical approaches to learning (Nieto, 2009). Teacher leaders must develop a multicultural perspective in working collaboratively with colleagues and mutually supportive ways, as well as challenge school policies and practices so that they are more equitable and just for all students.

Leadership inclusive of multicultural education is a progressive approach for transforming education that corrects and critiques policies in education. In viewing each racial-cultural group as if they are monocultures is not only offensive but perpetuates stereotypes (Ford, 2014).

Accordingly, the Banks (2014) multicultural model, which is described more fully in Ford (2014), lists transformation and social action approaches as promoting critical thinking and even empathy by providing more than one viewpoint, while social action requires educator leaders to make visionary plans and take steps for positive changes. In teacher leader reflections it is critical that voices of all groups be heard and validated. Roy (2013) advocates the courage and the risk of addressing cross-racial dialogue as minority recruitment and retention concerns are essential to a mutual understanding. The author states forgiveness ahead of time is necessary to trying to communicate cross-culturally for all stakeholders. The catalyst to do so will depend on creativity and determination, tolerance, and empathy.

McCray, Beachum, and Yawn (2012) addressed the potential practice of critical spirituality being an effective means to address social and political issues that surround teachers and educational leaders working in urban settings. The authors believed that critical self-reflection is a worthy process enabling prospective educational leaders to better understand themselves. This introspective process supports the educational leader in the engagement of self-interrogation. Critical self-reflection and deconstructive interpretation push educational leaders to ask deeper questions about themselves, their beliefs, and to evaluate their spiritual reserves. The authors share specific details about the urban conditions of communities in which many schools are affected by high dropout rates, low academic achievement, poverty, high crime rates, teacher apathy, and ineffective administration (Morris, 2009). It is conditions like this of which many

teachers of color and diverse backgrounds experience the urgency of issues facing education, thereby encouraged towards a career focus to become future educators to assist and support their own communities. Morris explained further for teachers of color and diverse backgrounds such a leadership orientation does not support the transformational efforts mentioned throughout this study to support those in subordinate positions. He contended this will not promote the self-reflection, deconstructive interpretation, performativity, creativity, and transformative action that encourage teachers of diverse backgrounds to seek advanced opportunities as teacher leaders.

Skerrett (2011) suggested in examination of the literature on educational leadership that transformational, inclusive, distributed, sustainable, and social justice forms of leadership are productive advances in leading diverse people in complex monoculture organizations. She goes on to say that the different forms of human diversity must be considered by educational leaders and the faculty and students that they lead.

Nieto (2013) further agrees beginning with their personal transformation, teachers can move on to create more productive ways of working with each other and from there to challenge the policies and practices of the schools in which they work. Horenstein (2010) contended that educational leadership programs must ensure prospective school leaders have culturally responsive learning in their capacity to lead diverse school staffs. The author makes a point that the mere understanding of cultural differences is not enough. Environments that allow the appreciation, respect, tolerance, and exploration of differences within the diverse groups provide transformational spaces of well-being and a

sense of belonging for stakeholders. She goes further to say that the mentality of us and them, and superiority and inferiority is diminished and can become absent when transformational leaders activate their beliefs in hiring practices, school recruitment, promotion practices and craft award systems that are fair and just for advancement. Guerra and Nelson (2011) gave an example of promotion practices in citing teacher leaders observed with culturally responsive awareness. The authors stated such teacher leaders should have further skill development in facilitation, conflict mediation, and instructional coaching. Teacher leaders can deliver individual and small-group diversity training to faculty, facilitate book and article study groups, provide instructional coaching and transform inequitable school policies, procedures, and practices.

Zalaquett and Baez (2012) suggested that career counseling for Latinos has not been the focus of career theories or research (Wells, Delgado-Romero, & Shelton, 2010). This issue is addressed by their research and shares conversations about this cultural group are frequently based on stereotyped representations and myths about Hispanics/Latinos, instead of on data. Relevant demographics are shared and reveal their career paths to be non-linear or non-traditional without awareness of using career counseling services.

Participants in a study by Stenhouse (2012) reported that Black/African American participants emphasized the affirming aspects of a homogeneous community. Being affirmed as a person is one facet of developing a critical stance towards matters of diversity (Nieto & Bode, 2011). According to Banks (2009), in order to transform school

cultures into places that foster equity for all school stakeholders, it requires intensive examination of the “hidden and manifest culture.” Asian-American teachers in Goodwin et al.’s (2006) study reported having their abilities challenged by their European-American colleagues, and they felt “invisible” (p. 105) in the understanding that their presence and knowledge did not matter.

Leadership inclusive of multicultural education is a progressive approach for transforming education that corrects and critiques policies in education. Viewing each racial-cultural group as if they are monocultures is not only offensive but perpetuates stereotypes (Ford, 2014).

Implications

This study has several important implications for the construct of future studies on transformative learning theory and teacher change. There are many lessons to be learned from teachers themselves about where they began in their careers, what helped them change, and how their practice changed as a result. The dedicated exercise of journaling reflections is a worthy practice that can have a profound impact on educational theory and practice (Nieto, 2013).

Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009) suggested that professional development should be a constructive and supportive space that supports teachers’ ambitions to improve learning and instruction. Current research advocates for these spaces to be reflective, critical, and supportive. However, the literature is sparse in examining teachers’ change process within supportive space that fosters teachers’ capacities as they create as

architects their own transformation. It is of great significance to 21st century school leaders in understanding that the confluences of a multitude of organizational, cultural, interpersonal and personal characteristics promote the development of teachers as leaders. The three-day professional development project forum that culminates this study attempts to support teacher leaders and those aspiring to leadership roles in exploring identity work where teachers facilitate their learning rather than be facilitated.

Each teacher narrative illustrates that teacher leadership formation took place through the three phases of transformative learning theory examined in the data analysis to discover if critical reflection and change of self were key to the process of change in each teacher's career profile. It is how these changes come to fruition within the inner self that actualizes for the teacher leader and brings reform and change to the school culture that ultimately impacts students and their achievement. This study will provide school leaders with deeper insights into some the understandings as to why teachers are eager to lead in the profession.

A study by MetLife (2013) indicated that only 16 percent are interested in becoming a principal. The process of transformation is a personal and collective journey that teachers must travel (Nieto, 2013). One must come to terms with understanding their own identity before they can go through the process of personal and professional transformation. This process takes one into a deeper transformation on a number of levels as an individually and collectively, as each fosters student learning. Therefore, such actions taken by these change agents then transform the culture of learning with high

expectations that benefits all children and learning outcomes. It is anticipated that the results found in the culmination of this study will incite future intentional studies of a teacher's personal and professional career narrative. The transformative trajectory of a teacher's advancement to leadership roles is important, and can be evidenced as a vital component in the career span of an educator's life story.

Summary

The contributions of this study recognize that transformation is about a shift in both theory and practice and indicates discursive practices within collaborative groups, such as a teacher leadership program, can promote interactive and reflective positioning that directs transformation in beliefs and practices of teachers as leaders. The project study was developed to present to school leaders and teacher leaders throughout the school district. Hence, it is expected that results obtained from this project study will hold impact on future district participants aspiring to teacher leadership roles.

Section 2 explains and discusses the methodology design of the project study. Several recommendations were gleaned from the review of literature on this topic and on the use of Mezirow's transformative learning theory. In Section 3, I present a description of the professional development project design, the goals of the project and the rationale for selecting the project. In Section 4, I present a summation of the reflections and conclusions as well as the project's impact implications for social change.

Section 2: The Methodology

Introduction

This qualitative project study was designed as a narrative analysis to illuminate critical life biographies and career development journeys of teacher leaders (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Mezirow (1996) defined learning as a meaning-making activity and wrote: “Learning is understood as the process of using a previous elucidation to construe a new or revised elucidation of the meaning of a personal experience in order to guide future action” (p. 162). According to Mezirow, adults seek to fit new learning into pre-existing frames of reference. When new learning does not fit, opportunities for perspective transformation emerge (Mezirow, 1978). For the purpose of my study, I selected the term *life story* (Patton, 2015). As a researcher, my interest in the transformational life stories of teacher leaders was in their insights about their narratives. I wanted to provide the personal and professional perceptions and understanding of the teacher leader career journey. As a teacher–researcher, I am interested in sharing the stories of teacher transformation through career advancement. These transformations are valuable because they can help understand (a) the process of change and (b) how a select environment, such as a teacher leader program, could provide a supportive environment for observing the identity process. The study therefore targeted adult teacher leaders’ transformations from a teacher education program into advanced positions as teacher leaders. The purpose was to determine what teachers identify as relevant to career advancement so that it can be used to inform administrators and stakeholders.

There are three phases to transformative learning theory: (a) critical reflection on one's assumptions; (b) discourse to validate the critically reflective insight; and (c) action, exploring options for forming new roles, relationships, leading to the formulation of a plan of action. That plan includes acquiring new skills and knowledge, trying out new roles, building relationships and building confidence and competence. Finally, the learner reintegrates again into his/her life with a transformed viewpoint (Mezirow, 1996).

Using interview protocols in a narrative analysis study, I investigated the stories and perceptions of five teachers. The participants were members of a teacher leadership certificate program cohort. I explored their stories through a 10-phase transformational framework tool that focused solely on the aspects of critical self-reflection developed by Mezirow, (1991). The focus of the study was the adult participant's transformations from a teacher leader program into their career development as teacher leaders. The data analysis resulted in outcomes about what diverse teacher leaders considered relevant to career development. The data can be used to improve the effectiveness of teacher education in this district.

These teachers' participation in the district Teacher Leadership Program was observed through a series of interviews, observations, photos, and a reflective essay, in order to determine the impact of its objectives and to better understand the construct of their own transformation as they pursue advancement in their current roles to higher district administrative positions.

The goal of the study was to identify the critical self-reflection elements that live within a teacher education program that facilitates career-changing teachers' successful transformation to leadership positions. According to Creswell (2012), this study was a "good" qualitative study as it proposed several qualities of accepted qualitative design: single focus, rigorous data collection procedures, and recognized philosophical assumptions, and key characteristics of qualitative research. Two important key characteristics are: (a) naturalistic inquiry-studying real world situations as they naturally unfold, and (b) purposeful sampling-where cases for study of people and organizations are selected because they offer great depth of information to the researcher.

Research Design

I selected a narrative analysis study design for my research because narrative analysis can be classified as hermeneutic which is providing a theoretical framework for interpretive understanding, or meaning, with special attention to context and original source (Merriam, 2009). Thick description is often invoked as a form of representation and an articulation of how we see and understand. The hermeneutic philosophy supports the illustrative data collected to support my guiding research question and subquestions. The narrative analysis extends the ideas of text to include in-depth interview transcripts and life career history narratives. This study of teacher leaders and their transformation through change in career roles speaks uniquely to the stories of the human condition that help to understand experience. The narrative analysis research will help to make sense of the teacher career paths of five teacher leaders. The stories or narratives were shared in

first-person accounts via interview questions found in Appendices C, D, E, F, and G, as well as journal writings found in their TLCP portfolios, and professional development observations analyzed for meaning by me. My goal was to capture each individual teacher leader's constructed understandings of teacher leadership and the potential element of change that results from advancement in one's career. Four distinct rounds of interviews using the semi-structured interview format took place for each teacher leader. Other types of qualitative research such as case study, phenomenology, grounded theory, and ethnography studies were ruled out as options for this specific topic, as the objectives of these studies would not align well to the design ideas of the guiding research question, Can transformative learning theory effectively support and sustain self-reflection practices, relationships, actions, and skills of teachers as leaders? The focus for this study is the adult participant's transformations from partaking in a teacher leadership certification program into career advancement roles as teacher leaders.

The study further expanded the body of knowledge regarding the change process of teacher leaders using the transformational theory component of critical reflection by using a modified transformative learning theory instrument (Mezirow, 1991). Several recommendations were garnered from the literature review of this study and on the use of Mezirow's transformative learning theory in research. The challenge of designing a study which would reveal evidence (or lack of) of Mezirow's transformative phases of learning without the addition of daunting data collection methods was of significance. There are three phases to transformative learning: (a) critical reflection on one's assumptions; (b)

exploration of options for new roles, relationships and action; and (c) building competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships. That plan of action includes acquiring new skills and knowledge, trying out new roles, building relationships and building confidence and competence.

Secondly, the study required a time frame of 4–6 weeks so as not to exhaust the participants. Third, multiple methods described were needed in order to hear and obtain the distinct voices of the selected participants. Last, the setting became a crucial aspect of the study as I needed to have timely access and ability to remain in contact with the participants over the semester and maintain a level of interaction with the participants that would allow for open conversation. Thereby, a narrative analysis design was chosen along with the immediate setting of my school district in which I myself am a teacher leader coordinator.

Participants

The participants were comprised of five teacher leaders who embodied vast experiences in diverse cultural and academic backgrounds. They all are educators in my school district and are all alumni of the district TLCP. All participants have worked in this school district at least 5 years or more. Each teacher has worked in a teacher leader role in conjunction to being a classroom teacher, with the exception of two teacher leaders who have taken on new roles as elementary and middle school coordinators for the district and at an assigned school. The remaining 3 teacher leaders continue in their classroom roles and have taken on special roles as committee chairs, staff developers, and

curriculum designers. Purposeful sampling (Patton, 2015) was used to select the diverse group of teacher leaders in hope of gleaning rich in-depth descriptions that are essential to learning and understanding.

In my purpose and intent of using my allotted time wisely, I selected the sample participants that I thought would provide the most substantial data for this project study. I anticipated the minimum of 5 participants should justify with reasonable coverage of the phenomenon given the purpose of this study. Though 10 teachers were considered for my sample group in the case of unpredictable inconsistencies with participants, a total of 5 teachers actually comprised the sample group. These participants represented all grade levels in elementary, middle, and high school and work in various locations around this large school district. The diversity in the membership is inclusive of the teachers' gender, racial and cultural identities, and job position titles and stages in career.

To orient the participants at the onset of the data collection, I held individual conferences to explain the purpose of the project study. I received permission from the Data and Assessment Department of my school district prior to my research being conducted. Walden's Institutional Review Board approved my application prior to collection of any data. Walden University's approval number for this study was 06-18-15-0324537. Participants were each given specific intent and purpose of the study prior to their official consent. There were no contemplated risks and discomfort anticipated with the use of the instruments as I intentionally reviewed the questions well in advance for relevance and practicality. I work in this school district with these participants but I am

not their direct supervisor and hold no evaluative supervision for them in their district positions.

Data Collection

This qualitative narrative inquiry approach of the journeys of 5 teachers through the TLCP program was conducted in three primary steps: four face-to-face interviews, an observation in the participant's classroom setting, and an analysis of archived data gleaned from reviewing the TLCP portfolio. The plan for the implementation of the data collection first included weekly interview visits for four weeks with each participant in their classroom setting. Secondly, observation recordings to observe professional development facilitation using the Observation Protocol (Appendix J) for professional development facilitation were interspersed within the time frame of the interviews as those events occurred. Finally, on the last of the four interview dates, the essay "The Teacher Leader I Have Become" (Appendix I) was completed. Throughout the span of interview visits an ongoing examination of the teacher program portfolio archives and materials were reviewed frequently. According to Mezirow (1991), adults engaged in transformative learning move down a predictable pathway involving a prompt, intake of new knowledge, and reintegration. The transformation under study recognized the shift these participants underwent as they transitioned from thinking about themselves as classroom teachers to seeing themselves as building and district teacher leaders. Mezirow (1997) established one transforms our frames of reference through critical reflection on

the assumptions upon which our habits of mind or interpretations are based. Thus self-reflection significantly leads to personal transformations.

In Step 1, one-on-one, face to face, interviews consisted of participants using a semistructured interview protocol with open-ended questions (Appendices B, C, D, E, and F). The four interview sessions were arranged with each individual teacher on a week to week basis until completion, contingent on their schedule. According to Merriam (2009), the interview is necessary when we cannot observe behavior, feelings, or how people interpret the world around them. The array of interview structure protocols for the purpose of this study was semistructured and unstructured to evoke persistent meaning and develop deeper understandings for my goals. One instrument source (Appendix B) consists of teachers' self-reported prior leadership experiences. A series of personal initial interviews employed the use of four individual forms (Appendices C, D, E, and F) with talking prompts to support a narrative audio taped interview that took place with each participant. The download application, Quick Voice, was used to audio record the interviews on an iPad. It was anticipated that the interviews would motivate probing and open-ended questions in an effort to elicit descriptive and candid accounts from each participant.

Permission was granted to the researcher by each participant to audio-tape the responses. To make sure the researcher had made use of all interview information (see Appendix H), an interview criteria checklist was used to clarify notes and to confirm interpretations (Merriam, 2009).

Patton (2002) suggested various types of interview questions to illicit more depth from my interviewees to elicit stories and more descriptive data in their interviewing sessions. The seven types chosen are as follows: experience and behavior questions, opinion and values questions, feeling questions, knowledge questions, sensory questions, racial-cultural identity questions, and demographic questions. Transformative learning (Mezirow, 1991, 1995, 1996; Cranston, 1994, 1996) is the process of effecting change in a frame of reference. The frames of reference of transformative learning theory define the body of experience through associations, concepts, values, feelings, and conditioned responses, thus frames of reference, are the structures of assumptions through which we understand our experiences and define their life world. The patterns evolved from the instrument questions generated such data which allowed me to identify five key themes that related to (a) the processes that steered to emergence of teacher leaders; (b) the ways in which teacher leaders developed their understanding of leadership; (c) the professional interest and natural occurrence in becoming teacher leaders; (d) the organizational procedures and the TLCPP development that facilitates the emergence of teacher leaders; and (e) diversity and cultural identity as a teacher leader.

In Step 2, to further substantiate findings in this study, I conducted one observation in the natural setting of which I observed the activities and interactions of the participant as a staff developer. This observation allowed me to listen to conversations, take in nonverbal communication, and lastly include my own behavior as the researcher, including the reflective notes within my field notes. According to Merriam (2009) there

are multiple roles that researchers can select to take while conducting observations as being important; I took on the role of “observer as participant.” In this role the researcher’s intention of observing a group is clear to those being observed and secondary to acting as an observer by participating in the activities of the setting. My objective for this particular role centered on the ability to form relationships with my sample group in order to establish my identity as an insider and gain deeper perspective that would not be shared with those considered outsiders of the group. The settings selected to observe these teachers would be their classrooms, professional development sessions, or possibly meetings they facilitate and lead. The use of field notes was also utilized in these observations to capture the essence of the experiences observed. A sketch notebook was used as a means to record a continuous collection of narrative descriptions taken from the field observation. An audio recorder was used in a post observation for personal analysis to record any explicit details of an observation field experience occurring that would support the inquiry of my collected data. Merriam (2009) alludes to the importance of the reflective component of field notes including the feelings of the researcher in the following respective critical elements: (a) reactions, (b) hunches, (c) initial interpretation, (d) speculations, and (e) working hypothesis.

In Step 3, analysis of archived data consists of selected items gathered from participants and analyzed as additional evidence of transformative learning. These items are the consent application, the teacher program portfolio archive from the program, recorded journals or diaries, record of the observation by the researcher, and an essay,

“The Teacher Leader I Have Become” (Appendix I). An examination of viewing teacher photos at various career stages also was a comfortable way to open conversations and supported analysis findings of the collection. The focus on these items involved intensive delving into each teacher’s portfolio seeking transformational evidence of his or her trajectory while in the leadership cohort. Each teacher completed the year-long study and culminated the coursework with an action research project that he or she self-selected. From my analysis, each teacher leader’s project focused on a situational student achievement goal in conjunction with an adult facilitated professional development project that he or she presented in a formal presentation to district stakeholders. Mezirow (1997) states adult learner growth can be observed through the critical reflection, awareness of frames of reference (habits of mind and a point of view), participation in discourse significance in defining learning needs, and in the design of materials and methods by evaluating learner growth using non-traditional methods such as portfolios and projects.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was ongoing over a period of approximately one month and took place once the data collection sessions ended. Five themes resulted from the collected data. Teacher interview questions, observations, field notes, and archival documents served as documented evidence to substantiate strong triangulation to support my findings (Merriam, 2009). For the purposes of analysis, I refer to my sample participants as teacher leader narrative portraits. The analysis process began with the reading of the

first interview transcripts, reviewing five sets of dense field notes from the interviews, examining three teacher observation protocol instruments, and reviewing a triangulated analysis of the portfolio documents collected as archives from the TLCP as well as the “Teacher Leader I’ve Become” narrative essay (Appendix I) for generating the narrative portraits. Transcriptions were reviewed by me and later by subjects, as peer members, to triangulate the data and check for accuracy.

I began the process of open coding, making notations and highlighting items potentially relevant to answering my guiding research question and subquestions. From this beginning analysis, I then began to assign codes to those pieces of data to construct *axial coding* (Corbin & Strauss, 2007) or *analytical coding*. This process then resulted in the grouping and merging of comments, terms, and comparative notes fused into one master list of concepts that reflect significant patterns in my study. It was observed throughout the interview sessions that the participants’ life stories revealed change over time. The participant voices ranged from initial attempts and revelations as teacher leaders to confident, self-assured leaders aspiring to new territory as change agents. These patterns then became my categories or themes of which subsequent items were then sorted. Data gathered at each interview scaffolds on the previous sessions until all information was gathered, then sorted into patterns and finally themes. Data were transcribed and recorded within 3–4 weeks of the final interview date.

The patterns evolved from the instrument questions generated data, which allowed me to identify five key themes that related to: (a) the processes that led to

emergence of teacher leaders; (b) the ways in which teacher leaders developed their understanding of leadership; (c) the professional interest and natural occurrence in becoming teacher leaders; (d) the organizational procedures and (The Teacher Leadership Cohort Program) development that facilitates the emergence of teacher leaders; and (e) Diversity and cultural identity as a teacher leader.

The themes emerged from the coding that was completed through the triangulation process. As themes emerged in individual participant's work, evidence supporting or refuting the themes was examined among the other portraits. The five themes explicated below illuminated strong characteristics in the portrait narratives throughout the study.

From this process, I then developed a tentative scheme of these findings and sorted all of the evidence into these categories pertinent to the study. The step by step intensive analysis then took place drawing from the constant comparative method of data analysis (Merriam, 2009) as I moved from inductive to deductive modes in exploring the pieces of original data and then analyzing subsequent data. This intense analysis continued until I reached a sense of saturation and reached the deductive mode. The saturation point was evidenced when I could no longer find new themes in my sorting. I exhausted all sets of data relevant to my research question and sub questions. I then developed by hand, an organized file system of which I could access, retrieve, and print by category, sets of data desired.

Thick description of the experiences of these narrative portraits provided detailed episodes of each subject's change process while participating in the TLCP and those thereafter. These descriptions are shared in what I developed to illustrate each teacher leader's narrative portrait transformation.

Findings

The following is a summative description of the five teacher leader narrative portrait journeys towards becoming elementary, middle school, and high school teacher leaders. Each participant has worked as a teacher ranging from 10 to 20 years. All have considerable significant learning experiences that brought them to participating in the TLCP over the last several years. All five participants hold advanced degrees in their various content areas, are parents, and have been married multiple years. They collectively possess professional and personal experience and expertise in a wide range of domains, and continuously seek and aspire to greater heights in the field of education. It was discovered primarily in the interview sessions that these participants did witness transformation in their career trajectory to new positional roles and assignments as teacher leaders, thus, providing the unique profile I sought for my sample selections.

This section will begin with a brief profile of the researcher to be followed by a brief profile of each participant to provide for the reader an informative glimpse into the lives of each. The names of all of the participants and the name of the school district were fictitious to ensure confidentiality and I used a pseudonym as well for the participants, referred as Teacher 1, Teacher 2, and so on. The only requirements for the participants to

have participated in this study were to show a genuine interest in the study and to consent to partake fully in the interview process of which they did accomplish all. Ethics in a qualitative study give participants the right to exit the process at any time (Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtler, 2010). Five participants supported the project management and gleaned a robust and generous scale of information as intended for this study. According to Merriam (2009), the sample size is subject to the researcher's decision and thereby the five narrative portraits proved a sufficient sum for my objectives.

The participant summations below come from all five portraits and were selected to support the readers' understanding and clarity through the lens of Mezirow's transformative learning theory (1991). As this study's research focus is only on three areas of Mezirow's Ten Phases of transformative learning, I have selected to highlight phase two (self-examination with feelings of guilt or shame), phase five (exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and action), and phase nine (building of competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships). These phases were selected duly as they aligned implicitly to the research question and because the highpoints represented by these phases provide those who are unfamiliar with Mezirow's theory a distinct view of the transformative progression. The transformation under study was the evolving shift from career advancement for these teacher leaders as they transitioned from thinking of themselves as classroom teachers to teacher leaders. In relevance to their skills and background, the transformation for each teacher in their individual experience proved to be challenging, and pivotal in terms of milestones throughout their career advancement.

According to Mezirow (2000), these steps could follow in sequence or may occur in different sequences but could follow this layout.

Narrative Portraits

In this section, findings are presented as narrative portraits aligned to the research question as follows: What was the change process using the transformational theory elements of critical reflection and options for new roles, relationships and actions for five teacher leaders as they participated in a year-long district teacher leadership certification program?

Subquestions to consider in this study:

1. How do teachers define leadership within their own professional contexts?
2. What transformational differences and similarities emerge in the teacher leader narratives?
3. In what ways do teachers perceive themselves as leaders? What kinds of activities do teachers consider to be leadership?
4. Do teacher leaders find career advancement opportunities as a result of their participation in the district teacher leadership certification program?
5. What are the backgrounds, experiences, and training of the teacher leader in their individual cultural identities?

The following teacher summaries are inclusive of those key elements described in Mezirow's Transformative Learning Phase 2, Phase 5, and Phase 9 as follows:

Phase 2: Critical Reflection-Self Examination with feelings of fear, anger, guilt or shame. The implication of the new worldview generates feelings that stem from an uneasy, and at times frightening, consideration of previously ways of looking at the world that felt very certain (Mezirow, 2000). Narrative Portrait Teacher (NPT) is used for brevity in the responses.

NPT1 shared critical reflection was something she resisted in her early career stages as a novice teacher. “I did journal for personal purposes and reflected often with mentors and life coaches in my early teaching life for I found their feedback and support helpful.” She infrequently journaled in a special notebook for personal purposes but not until the TLCP that she began to see greater purposes in self-reflection. Also she shared that “my spouse served significantly as a support to me in in my early teaching life as he does currently.” She implied that “he hears me” and really understands where she is in her problem- solving tactics. This teacher spoke with great regard on the number of multiple key supports she has in her immediate circles, and named an assortment of various district role models she depends on as well as her former grade school teacher of whom she has still communicates with regularly. “I am fortunate to have such awesome opportunities in my career” she shared.

In relation to Subquestions 1 and 2, NPT2 imparted critical reflection has been a diligent practice for her since childhood when she began using a personal diary in her middle school years. She said:

I continuously through the years embraced the practice of self-reflection as a professional routine as I see its purpose served well in education as best practices. I observed those inspirational leaders out there in the field and noted the impact often of self-reflection after being in their midst from a meeting or presentation. My takeaways were always a baseline for me to go deeper in my thoughts. I'd go back in to the classroom with something new and try it and then reflect on what I learned or where I made mistakes.

She named several key colleagues throughout the years and at present who remain as strong mentors and advisors for her self-reflection needs.

In relation to Subquestions 1 and 2 NPT3 responded that self-reflection practices for him could be described as "head talk" that goes on incessantly for hours and sometimes days especially after presenting professional development for teachers. He said:

I self-reflect mentally more than by just journaling. "What am I doing?" streams in my thoughts particularly at the end of day as well as those pivotal times at the end of a unit or semester. I especially reflect on what I am doing wrong and how can I improve my level of performance for students and teachers. I also still email my former college professors of whom I ask for advice and have loyal support from a team of collegial and professional mentors for support currently within the school district.

He also shared the four interviews were highly valuable to his future goal plans as he focuses on his future career endeavors.

In relation to Subquestions 1 and 2 NPT4 found self-reflection as an invaluable tool in identifying her strengths and areas with room for growth. She said:

I believe in self-reflection practices especially in my professional development work as it answers those big questions for me. I see significance in critical reflection in response to ‘how we are engaging kids’ and beliefs around grading practices and policies. I feel supported in this position with an array of professional colleagues and mentors who support me from the TLCP.

This teacher is a facilitator in the TLCP cadre of staff developers. Her sharing revealed her understanding around self-reflection as a practice that supports your success and validation in the work she so passionately expressed.

In relation to Subquestions 1 and 2, NPT5 said:

My self-reflection practice began as a high school freshman with a personal diary where I informally reflected on my daily life as a teen. I really didn’t think anything of it at that time as most teenage girls did so.

She said:

I wasn’t sure how this practice moved into my young adult life stage upon entering college, but self-reflection has become a lifetime practice of which I full participate today. In fact, I self-reflect with intentionality in regard to student work as well as to my professional development work with teachers constantly. I am thankful for my circle of support, naming district colleague mentors, administrators, and several

others, who have been her exemplars and support system when needing to be heard or run ideas by for their opinions and advisement.

Phase Five: Exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions (Rational discourse is used to work through possible alternate ways to move forward in life with close friends, peers, teachers or colleagues.)

In relation to Subquestions 3 and 4 and 5: NPT 1 when asked “who asked you to assume the role as a teacher leader in your school?” She said:

The story began with my school administrator who first recognized my talents and encouraged me to take on various roles within the school building. Many of these roles challenged me to go beyond the norm as a classroom teacher.

She implied one day she would like to teach at the college level as she enjoys the sphere of professional development. Though she finds it challenging to keep adult learners engaged and motivated, she said, “I find great benefit in making connections and I feel good that I can help others through their own model and use my own personal experience in special education in supporting theirs.” She said, “I especially find my work around equity and cultural competence with my experiences with student leadership to be profound in my new position as a coach.”

In relation to Subquestions 3, 4, and 5, NPT2 said:

I was recognized as a work horse teacher and was encouraged by my principal to move towards leadership as she saw me as industrious. I have always been a teacher who understood the cultural community, as being a product of that community in my

youth taught me invaluable lessons that I was able to extend to my students in whatever district I taught over the years.

In regard to the question “In what ways have you worked with others in your building to utilize student learning data?” She expressed, “My involvement in grade level content meetings and being a part of numerous committees, as well as district offerings of professional development continue to push my thinking and goal setting.” She believes her philosophical beliefs motivate her actions and sees herself surrounded with people of the same mindset who want to also improve their craft

In relation to Subquestions 3, 4, and 5, NPT3, when asked in what ways have you worked with colleagues to advocate for the rights and needs of students, or represented the profession in contexts outside the classroom (task forces, committees, professional actions)? She said:

I have taken my knowledge on students of color and used their examples to counter those stereotype symbols and labels that often offend and disconnect students and teachers in building relationships. Shares in his advocacy for the rights and needs of students that he supports colleagues with his vast learning knowledge on students of color as examples to counter those stereotype symbols and labels that often offend and disconnect students and teachers.

In relation to Subquestions 3 and 4, NPT4 said, “It was other people – colleagues, mentors, and her former administrators who affirmed her – they think you just know.

She was inspired to attain her administrator license as every principal of whom she worked with highly encouraged her to do so. She said:

I feel in my current position as a coordinator of pupil services in her middle school building that it gives her the luxury to employ herself in extended reading and researching, I like that I can be smart for the benefit of others who do not have this opportunity.

Her colleagues, mentors, and former administrators affirmed her skill-set and talents often throughout her career stages and inspired her to take steps towards leadership.

In relation to Subquestions 3, 4, and 5, NPT5 discussed how her knowledge of different back grounds, cultures, and languages in the school community have encouraged her to advance her focus into community outreach actions and parent engagement objectives. She said:

I want to be an advocate and expert on community issues for African American families to support their roles for their children with college preparation guidance. She finds her own cultural and racial background, and understandings of the special needs of families of color greatly support and inspire her goals to extend her leadership into the community in a positive trajectory. I hope one day to teach classes on parent empowerment as a future aspiration in my professional development work.

This teacher is also currently a facilitator in the TLCP and teaches classes on culturally responsive education.

Phase Nine: Building competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships (The person continues to practice their new roles with greater confidence and a wider range of situations such as trying a new job or continuing with new work in their existing job).

In relation to Subquestion 5, NPT1 surmised that she has never viewed herself as a “teacher leader,” but to her inner core she loves being a teacher. She said:

In my new position as a gifted and talented coordinator I feel it is highly important to model the best practices in everything we do. My inspiration to others is driven from my own personal passion that I try to model and demonstrate in my own life example.

In her new role at this time, she is acclimating to the transition of leaving her former role as a classroom teacher and staff developer by striving to be collaborative and self-reflective within her own practice. She said:

I enjoy the discussions and dialogue that help to build relationships with new staff colleagues, and I am open and receptive to being generous, sharing my resources, and learning much and supporting others authentically in their leadership journeys.

This teacher is a staff developer for the TLCP cohort as well.

In relation to Subquestion 5, NPT2, when asked to speak to the essay prompt “The Teacher Leader I’ve Become” she began our discussion with a quote by Kavitas Ramdas, Director of the Global Fund for Women. She said:

Be so strong you are gentle, so educated you are humble, so fierce you are compassionate, so passionate you are rational, and so disciplined I can be free. I believe this statement reflects and resonates with my advocacy very strongly for students and the impact I hold for those adults in the daily encounters of this profession of education that I am dedicated to.

This teacher also likes being an active part of the problem solving within her building and the challenges that emerge from the process of growth. She is convicted to grow by stepping out into new territory and wants to encourage others to grow to their fullest potential.

In relation to Subquestion 5, NPT3 passionately declared that writing the paragraph on “The Teacher Leader I’ve Become” was the hardest thing he has had yet to do as an educator. His sharing of his own personal reflection of the person I am was emotionally fulfilling and challenging at the same time. He said:

My promptings and feelings to make a career move at this time in his career as a middle school teacher have begun to emerge progressively. I am not sure of what lies ahead in terms of a career change but I have no doubt that a leadership role, potentially a mentor or instruction coaching position is in my future.

He concluded that his hope is for the collegial relationships and bonds he has established will support him as he ascends the ladder into potential leadership roles.

In relation to Subquestion 5, NPT4 implied the teacher leader trajectory came as a result of both an accidental and an intentional planned journey. She expressed that for a large portion of her career she landed as a teacher leader by accident, as colleagues and administrators recognized her leadership attributes before she did. She said:

I guess you could say that there were people in my professional life that recognized leadership characteristics in me before I recognized them in myself. Later, I began to see that I had knowledge and expertise to contribute to the greater good. I began to hone and develop my skills as a teacher leader through professional learning like the TLCP and other district trainings. The leader I've become in this district has been the result of faith, encouragement, and the intentional development of building a strong skill-set.

She reflects her own recognition of the knowledge and expertise she possessed came into being over time as she took on leadership roles and responsibilities on her high school campus that brought a distinguished perspective to her teaching role.

In relation to Subquestion 5, NPT5 said:

I believe everyone possesses an innate ability to be a teacher leader, but willingness is the determining factor. The willingness to be vulnerable; to be accepting; to be inspiring to others is largely determined by your capacity to serve and support others in their development. Growth as a team relies on strong interaction with colleagues

with a positive and motivated mindset and she feels she has become a recognized resource for teachers in her building.

She understands that she must be objective and give commendations as well as recommendations as she supports teachers' thinking. She contends that she is someone who is comfortable in her own skin and that being recognized as a teacher leader makes her proud but humble.

Five Emergent Themes

Five transformative themes developed in the data analysis will be described as follows. It is important to note that these five emergent themes developed in relation to the respective research question as well as the subquestions considered in this project study.

Theme 1: The processes that steered the emergence of a teacher leader.

Examples were: the narrative portrait examples of each teacher leader shared various early career experiences with reflection practices; those significant persons and building situations where they were encouraged to step up as leaders; the recognition of talents and expertise shared by peers and administrators which supported their emerging reflection to see themselves with new perceptions and observe those initial steps in gaining confidence to aspire as teacher leaders. Key elements of Theme 1 are reflected in Mezirow (2000), Phase 2, Phase 5, and Phase 9 and addresses Research Subquestions A and B.

Theme 2: The ways in which teacher leaders developed their understanding of leadership. Narrative portrait data from portfolio analysis as well as interview protocols revealed a gradual developmental process took place for each teacher participant in their understanding of leadership and that it transpired from those initial experiences of willingness to participate in leadership events and activities at the school level. This analysis provided pedagogical resource evidence most relevant to understanding Theme 2. Participants also shared participation in TLCP as a pivotal profound experience to their professional development growth. All participants as a result of their participation have added additional responsibilities to their roles, and receive recognition of their attributes and contributions from respective administrators and peers. Key elements of Theme 2 is reflected in Mezirow (2000), Transformative Learning Phase 5 and Phase 9, this addresses Research Subquestions A and B as well.

Theme 3: The professional interest in, and natural occurrence of, becoming teacher leaders. The teacher narrative portrait data collected for this theme was comprised from interview protocols and the professional development observation protocol tool and provided insights for understanding Theme 3. Teacher participants cited multiple personal and professional development experiences, integral colleagues, mentors, and administrators who supported their early growth and development, participation in numerous professional development learning and facilitation experiences, attendance at local and national conferences, aiding and giving generous support to colleagues, assignments of new roles, recognized as growth and natural phenomenon

transference of transformational leaders in their natural occurrence and professional interest development as cited in Key Element of Transformative Learning Phases 2, 5, and 9, this addresses Research Sub-question C.

Theme 4: Organizational procedures (Teacher Leadership Cohort Program) development that facilitated the emergence of teacher leaders. The thorough data analysis review of the TLCP portfolio documents for each teacher participant provided narrative portrait evidence to witness and understand how the TLCP facilitated the emerging teacher leader. Substantial evidence provided from the documents conveyed the TLCP participation of each teacher leader was significant to the exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions that facilitated the emergence of teacher leadership as cited in Key Elements of Transformative Learning Phase 2, Phase 5, and Phase 9, this addresses Research Sub-question D.

Theme 5: Impact of Diversity and Cultural Identity as Teacher Leaders. Data collected on the backgrounds, experiences, and training of the teacher leader in their individual cultural identities was evidenced from an analysis of the TLCP portfolio, which revealed each teacher participant received extensive instruction in their final module of the cohort on Cultural Responsive Education from a district staff developer. Narrative information gleaned from the analysis along with the interview protocols of this study gleaned rich narrative portrait evidence. Each teacher participant portrayed significant exploration in self-reflection which additionally supports the participant's understanding of their own cultural-racial background as well as those of others. The

impact of diversity and cultural identity knowledge and exploration supports Key Elements of Transformative Learning Phase 2, Phase 5, and Phase 9 and addresses Research Sub-question E.

Each teacher's narrative portrait described the vital steps shared in helping them realize their transformations were valued and beneficial to their outcomes as change agents.

Assumptions and Limitations

This project study focused on teachers' stories and their progressive career development and aspirations as teacher leaders. The study took place at a large public suburban school district in the Southwest United States. The study comprised five teachers who are recognized as teacher leaders in their respective schools as well as at the district level. Data collection time scheduling and subjective participant selection and numbers are areas that could influence this project study's results as well. These teachers participated in a teacher leadership certification cohort program for a period of a year. It was assumed that the experiences of these teachers would align to those of most teachers and that they would cite similar or likeness in their examples from personal experience. It was assumed that "most" teachers have transformational encounters throughout their teaching careers as well.

Conclusion

The concentration of this research on teacher leaders and their transformational reflections was explored through interpreting the oldest and most natural form of sense

making, stories or narratives. The literature shares teachers' transformation as change agents resulting in taking on new identities in positions of leadership. Teachers aspiring to teacher leadership roles often find challenge in navigating career advancement. The teacher leadership processes that emerged through the teacher leadership program not only had transformative impact on each teacher leader personally, but also contributed to the advancement of the participants' professional careers. Each respondent identified their participation in the teacher leadership program as a beneficial contributing factor towards their future aspirations in leadership. Participation of teachers in a certified district teacher-leadership program (Rebora, 2012) supports and expands the increasing number of teachers looking to advance in their careers and expand their instructional knowledge as well in the classroom in this southwestern suburban school district. Twenty-first century teacher leadership programs concentrate more on instructional practice and tend to emphasize inquiry-based instruction, coaching and mentoring, cultural responsiveness, professional development design, curriculum development, and technological understanding (Darling-Hammond, 2012).

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

In Section 3, I present a description of the professional development project design, the goals of the project, and the rationale for selecting the project. Next, I present the literature review focused on the research and transformative learning theory of teacher leadership processes. Then I provide specific details about the project, including the resources needed, the implementation process, time table, and roles of the participants. In the final section, I present the implications for social change.

This professional development project consists of a comprehensive 3-day teacher leadership forum. The Day 1 session is titled, The Emergence and Development of Teacher-to -Leadership Roles; the Day 2 session is titled, Teacher Leaders: Professional Development & District Teacher Leadership Cohort Program; and the day-three session is titled, Culturally Responsive Pedagogy for Teacher Leaders. Included in Appendix A are the detailed descriptions for each day and a multi-day Powerpoint highlighting aspects of the professional development activities, objectives, and goal.

The project (Appendix A) consists of a 3-day professional development seminar in which I present the findings of this study. Five themes were identified: (a) teacher leaders generally emerge through informal processes of leadership in their schools and school districts; (b) teacher leaders develop a broader understanding of educational leadership and policy when they work across jurisdictions and school contexts; (c) teacher leaders can be recruited into broader leadership roles by attending to their

professional interests and passions, and participating in a teacher leadership program such as TLCP; (d) teacher leaders require flexible structures in the school that facilitate the development of trust and collegiality with their peers; and (e) cultural identity impacts teacher leadership in significant ways.

Description and Goals

The goal of this project was to provide teacher leaders in the district with the knowledge and understanding that would allow them to identify the critical self-reflection elements of a teacher education program that facilitate the successful transformation of teachers to leadership positions. This project concentrates on the participants' presentations in which they share their transformation from participation in a teacher leadership certification program to career advancement roles as teacher leaders. I developed this training based on the five themes listed in Section 2. For Day 1, the first two themes were merged to provide background on the emergence of teachers in leadership roles and the ways in which leadership is developed and understood by teachers. For Day 2, Themes 3 and 4 were merged to explain the professional interest and natural occurrence in becoming teacher leaders, including the organizational procedures of the TLCP. On Day 3, the significance of cultural identity awareness in a teacher leader's life will be reviewed .

The guiding research question forms the basis of Section 3: What was the change process using the transformational theory elements of critical reflection and options for new roles, relationships and actions for five teacher leaders as they participated in a year-

long district teacher leadership certification program?” The project study discovered additionally that Mezirow (2000), Phase nine of transformative learning building competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships was paramount to success in these roles. A goal of this project is to utilize it as an informational learning forum in the local setting. This forum style setting can be flexible in its design and is possible to use individual sections independently as appropriate.

Rationale

This project study was created from the rationale of my own self-reflective approaches as I examined my personal and professional landscape over the decades as a classroom teacher and presently as a district teacher leader coordinator of a secondary program. I found there to be minimal shared research in relation to scholarship on teacher identity and the emotional status of teaching in the personal and professional lives of educators. The 21st century education reform has made the element of self-analysis a responsive and practical ritual for all educators, and especially those moving into career advancement leadership roles.

This research disclosed strong evidence from the interview data of my participants which revealed the seeking of a collaborative and reflective shared space where self-reflective practices take place in a group environment is valued and highly sought by teachers as a beneficial necessity in their daily tasks and routines. According to OECD (2011) to improve educational performance, teachers, their well-being, their professionalism and their professional development are critical to discussions and the

case for enhancing the teaching profession. Interview data revealed teachers consistently expressed the need for this sacred space, a dedicated time and purposeful setting solely developed for teacher collaborative purposes, they collectively ascertain the environment represented respect, protection, and the trusted relationship of the coordinator.

Hess (2013) shares teachers hold power to construct schools and systems in which they perform at their best. Thus, it is in well-structured professional development contexts that teachers thrive. The author reports that teachers feel trapped in their classrooms and refers to savvy teachers as cage-busters – those who reject the hopelessness from poorly planned professional development conditions. The constructivist approaches create new opportunities and possibilities as to not can I do this? and to start asking how can we do this?

This study contributes to research about teacher change by re-conceptualizing teacher change as an identity process that is a vibrant, self-motivated, and complicated praxis. Thus, it recognizes that transformation is about a shift in both theory and practice (Chapman & Heater, 2010; Kegan, 1994). The narrative descriptions of these teacher leaders are a device of which each teacher takes on a new position. Clandinin, Connelly, and Craig (1995) and Skinner, Pach, and Holland (1998) contend that the professional knowledge landscape occupied by teachers provides rich narratives, understood as sacred and surreptitious. Four epistemological questions framed their teacher narrative stories research: What is known about effective teaching: What do teachers know? What knowledge is essential for teaching? Who produces knowledge about teaching? Each

teacher situated him/herself as a leader who successfully took on a new position that promoted change within their individual schools.

Presenting a 3-day forum and implementation plan was developed based on the results of the data analysis presented in Section 2, which identified thoughts and reflective personal and professional remarks made by teacher leaders currently in practice. The three-day training forum is inclusive of the five teacher narrative portraits and those themes derived from the coding during the analysis stage. The implementation of this pedagogy will include the input and investment of district staff, teacher leaders, professional learning office administrators, and the community at large. New professional development learning topics are receptive to keen interest in my school district to all stakeholders. This resultant training and implementation plan will provide further knowledge based learning in the area of teacher leadership, as there is significant interest in this research matter with as the seventh year of the TLCP continues with popularity.

Review of Literature

The literature review is currently rife with studies that show the values of the role that teacher leaders portray. Rich international literature abounds regarding transformational studies exploring the development and preparation of educational leaders and their transition to leadership roles. The review of literature presents compelling and urgent information on the critical need for universities and colleges of teacher-education to take the lead in encouraging change in content and pedagogy in view of the emerging educational trends and issues. The literature review is divided into

two sections. The first section heading begins with the topics of Teacher Leadership Programs and Professional Development as the study focus. In the second heading, I present teachers as leaders and change agents in regards to constructivist practices. Both of these sections culminated into the structure of the project (see Appendix A) of this paper. Literature pertaining to identity change, self-conception, teacher leadership programs, professional development and career opportunities, and constructive-developmental theory is used to provide a lens through which the theoretical concept of transformation may be viewed.

The following Walden databases were used in the literature search: ERIC, Education Research Complete, ProQuest Dissertation, Google Scholar, and Education from SAGE and Thoreau. I began the search by using keywords *teacher/s*, *leadership*, *teacher leaders*, *teacher leadership programs*, *career development*, *career advancement*, *transformative learning theory*, *transformational leadership*, *change agents*, and *self-reflection*. Many articles were seminal in respect to topic influence and thereby included as noteworthy supplements. Nonetheless, observed in my research is a new fresh trend of focus and interest noted in current literature reviews on both topics of teacher leadership and professional development in contrast to my original literature review for this project study.

Teacher Leadership Programs and Professional Development

Gabriel, Pereira, and Allington (2011) professed three influential factors promote the development of excellent teachers: systematic and meaningful professional

development, collegial support, and freedom to engage in the decision making process (collectively or individually). Sanchez (2012) suggested effective professional development opportunities allow for teachers to work collaboratively and engage in meaningful teacher learning methods. She further professes today's classroom teachers find themselves overworked, from the pressures to accept testing requirements created by state mandates to ensure the successful achievement of their students. Parr and Timperley's (2010) premise is that teacher leaders are instrumental and valuable community experts who influence literacy and writing for all students.

Clemans, Berry, and Loughran (2010) and Loughran et al. (2011) examined a professional learning program, named Leading Professional Learning (LPL), developed for teacher leaders in primary and secondary schools. These novice teacher leaders hold responsibilities as both classroom teacher and leaders of professional learning. It is noted that reflection on their own practice was an important program feature and the use of case writing as a professional tool to document personal learning and foster support in the identity shift was a purposeful and imperative aspect of the program.

In Kentucky, the Teacher Leader Master (TLM) degree program offered at Murray State University (2011) consists of core courses in teacher leadership, classroom management, curriculum development, instruction for diverse students, and research to improve student learning according to (Xu & Patmor, 2012). Semadeni (2010) revealed an effective teacher-led professional development model called Fusion in which "teachers collaborate to study, experiment, and coach one another in research-based strategies" (p.

6). This model is successful as it identifies the leadership capacity in teachers and offers those opportunities in leadership to further develop that potential. Research has indicated that learning activities which are one of individual nature and isolated have little sustained impact (Gallucci, 2008; Margolis & Doring, 2012).

Blandford (2014) attested to the evidence of core values, focus on mission and strong ethos in being significant contributing success factors that contribute to the Teach First Leadership Development Programme in several school districts in England. Government policy affirmed the programme as an effective means of training teachers in response to the need for more drastic strategies to raise the achievement of underprivileged children (Department for Education, 2010, 2011; Snyder & Dillow, 2011). Muijs, Chapman, Collins, and Armstrong (2010) findings' indicated those teachers who set academic focused and classroom-based personal goals were more confident in their work, produced advanced quality reflections and had an impressive degree of success.

Teachers as Leaders and Change Agents

Researched information explored in data analysis using Guskey's (2013) framework for evaluating professional development, that when a year-long professional development school-university partnership was used to focus on academic language proficiency, strong perceptions of staff members shifted and eventually changed. The local university, two principals and 14 teachers partnered in this professional development and through results discovered the principal's insight changed from a

manager to an instructional leader, content teachers became teacher leaders, instruction focused on academic language proficiency; and there was evidence of academic growth for low achieving students. The results cited overall that the teachers in this project were the catalysts of change by example.

Andreas (2012) supported teacher leadership at the policy level and delves into attrition and its growing problem in the teaching profession. To leverage teacher leadership to tackle the conundrum of teacher attrition, leadership opportunities must attract the kind of ambitious, talented teachers who are seeking professional growth but feel ambivalent about leaving the classroom (Coggins & McGovern, 2014) claims teachers who are on the fence regarding commitment to life-long classroom careers, leadership opportunities can be the make-or-break difference. Nonetheless, leadership opportunities can be the compelling variance between a two-year teacher and a 10-year teacher.

Nudrat and Akhtar (2014) underscored the fact that teachers who view themselves as leaders, irrespective of any formal position or designation, can improvise teaching-learning practices, manage their classrooms effectively, and lead towards overall school improvement. They noted that the review of literature on teacher leadership presents an array of themes regarding the requisite abilities and skills for teacher leaders proposed by various authors. Four pillars were identified as follows: teaching proficiency, learning prowess, collaboration, and initiative-taking. Arneson (2015) argued that teachers need space to have professional dialogue to be heard in real conversations about improving

professional practice. She further states school leaders can make conversations about improving professional practice more collaborative, shifting the focus from a culture of inspection to one of reflection.

Bangs and Frost (2012) cited teacher as leader means “taking the initiative to improve practice, acting strategically with colleagues to embed change, gathering and using evidence in collaborative processes, and creating and contributing to the dissemination of professional knowledge” (p. 210). Helterbran (2010) articulated that (it) involves those informal aspects of leadership, where a teacher takes the reins when the need arises or identifies a problem and will address it within his or her means.” (p. 365). The author further explained that “teacher leadership arises from within the teaching ranks and conveys itself in innumerable ways for the progress of students, specifically, and school in general” (p. 364). They conclude “teachers cannot act as leaders unless and until (they) recognize their own leadership potential” (p. 365).

The Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium (2011) claimed the emphatic need for a teacher leader to be well informed of the trends in research about teaching effectiveness and student learning. Mangin and Stoelinga (2011) affirmed that a teacher leader must additionally share an “honest critique of classroom practice though the critique could actively challenge the teacher’s preferred practice and may lead to some experiences of professional discomfort” (Lord et al., 2002 cited in Mangin & Stoelinga, 2011, p. 49). Mangin and Stoeling (2011) additionally explained that honest feedback is

“necessary to accelerate deep and sustainable changes in in a teachers’ practice” (p. 39).

Macdonald (2011) believed teacher leaders must take the initiative to address a problem.

Scribner and Bradley-Levine (2010) affirmed that teacher leader perceptions are influenced by the understandings of the teacher’s influence in their schools and districts. They note the existence of a “cultural logic” in the school context that legalizes specific leadership practices and weakens others. Yet, Palmer’s (2011) descriptive account of formal and informal teacher leaders shared: formal teacher leaders are often chosen via a select application process after applying for their positions, and they usually obtain training for their potential responsibilities.

Reason and Reason (2011) defined a teacher leader as The Method Master leader which indicates responsibility for being informed of content and teaching practices. They implied that The Method Master is not just well-informed, but cares about sharing the knowledge with peers. Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium 2011 cited the characteristic of leading by example as a necessary attribute to be a teacher leader. Grant (2010) described teacher leadership as a framework that is central to context as it is likely to vary depending on the historical, cultural and institutional setting in which it is located. Grant’s framework described how teachers can lead within four zones as in this manner, in the classroom; working with other teachers; in whole school development; and beyond the school and into the community. She identified possible roles linked to each of the zones of leadership as indicators of likely behavior. For example, in the zone of the classroom, teacher leaders are expected to teach with passion and continue to improve

one's pedagogy. Nevertheless, informal teacher leaders emerged conversely spontaneously from the general teacher ranks" (p. 42). Consequently, Angelle and DeHart (2011) debated that those in formal leadership positions (i.e., principals) have a critical role to play in the identification, development, and training of teacher leaders. As researchers and policy makers continue seeking strategies to entice teachers to link leadership roles in school (Fink, 2010, 2011; Gronn & Lacey, 2010; White & Cooper, 2011) this point is central to the experience of teacher leadership as a requirement for teacher leaders to move beyond the confines of their own classrooms. Thus, allowing teacher leaders to experience a broader perspective on schools and districts, providing them with opportunities to be exposed to various practices and contexts of teaching and leadership (Riveros, Newton, & da Costa, 2013).

Change for teacher leaders requires the desire to change, a shift in personal values, and transformation in the way they know themselves. Research by Feldman and Weiss (2010) and Parise and Spilaine (2010) shared theories of change imply that teachers acquire new knowledge and put this new knowledge into practice to foster learning in their classrooms. The theory further identified teacher change rarely happens through formal professional development in workshops, special trainings, or conferences with a professional developer expert seeking to train teachers in a specific area. Likewise, practitioner researcher groups (i.e., teachers, counselors, principals, etc.) supported inquiry projects leading to change in professional confidence, awareness of classroom events, dispositions towards reflection, broadened views of teaching teacher beliefs about

themselves, their roles as teachers, and attitudes towards students (Goodnough, 2010). On the contrary, Gilles, Wilson, and Elias (2010) indicated not all such groups are successful and those that are foster change because they provide contexts in which practitioners share multiple perspectives, critique experiences, assumptions, and beliefs about teaching. In addition, to create opportunities for all learners, and identify areas of change for people is a worthy objective.

Fairbanks-Schutz (2010) suggested that teachers engage in an inquiry of the self in which they explore new positioning. He shared they should “make their beliefs explicit, and therefore, available for conscious examination and action” (p. 3). Masterson alluded that such practices would help to increase knowledge of teaching and of self” and perhaps develop “narratives and practices of agency” (Masterson, 2010, p. 216). The narration of stories about new identities required that teaches engage in a narrative inquiry that fosters teacher’s process of becoming transformational change agents as this project study so illustrates. A seminal study of Clandinin and Connelly (1996) denoted the imagination of teacher inquiry groups in telling and retelling stories in making sense of classroom experiences.

Frost (2012) supported the view that it is only with appropriate support that teachers really can lead innovation; build professional knowledge; develop the capacity for leadership, and can influence their colleagues and the nature of professional practice in their schools. He further shared the concept of teacher leadership carries conceivable prospect with focus on a range of activities and conditions which will enhance the

professional capacity of teachers. Similarly, Bangs (2011) promoted the worthwhile goal to consider the role of organizations representing teachers, such as subject associations and unions, in enhancing the capacity of teachers to show professional leadership.

The first line in the 2011 NEA Commission on Effective Teachers and Teaching report, *Transforming Teaching: Connecting Professional Responsibility with Student Learning*, stated that “we envision a teaching profession that embraces collective accountability for student learning balanced with collaborative autonomy that allows educators to do what is best for students.” Collective accountability when coupled with collaborative autonomy attracts great teachers and sustains them to stay.

Danielson (2015) supported that professional conversations are utmost important to professional learning. She shared there is great gain from such discourse and educators need to have a common language of what constitutes good teaching. Communication skills for equipped leaders is the lifeblood of any organization she professes as teaching is a thinking person’s job and therefore, conversations about teaching must center around cognition. To structure professional conversations she has redesigned her infamous “The Framework for Teaching” into six large clusters representing the big ideas of teaching that will inform professional conversations with all of the components and elements of the original 1996 design:

Cluster 1. Clarity of Instructional Purpose and Accuracy of Content

Cluster 2. A Safe, Respectful, Supportive, and Challenging Learning Environment

Cluster 3. Classroom Management

Cluster 4. Student Intellectual Engagement

Cluster 5. Successful Learning by all students

Cluster 6. Professionalism

Kaplan and Owings (2013) believed teachers can build their professional capacities for leadership and instruction in the many arenas within school structures.

They confirm formal teacher leadership is visible in three main areas:

Leadership of students or other teachers: Serving as facilitator, coach, mentor, trainer, curriculum specialist; becoming a union representative; creating new approaches for instruction, parent engagement, or professional development; and leading study groups.

Leadership of operational tasks: Keeping the school organized and moving toward its goals through roles such as department head, action researcher, and school improvement team member.

Leadership through decision making or partnership: Serving on school committees or instigating partnerships with businesses, higher education, local school districts, and parent-teacher-student associations.

The author identified teacher leaders as individuals who are or have been a teacher or (school counselors) with significant classroom experiences, hold reputation among their colleagues as respected educators, and hold their peers' esteem. Similarly, such teachers are drawn to leadership positions are usually achievement and learning

oriented and are willing to take risks and assume responsibility. The following eight factors denote a teacher's readiness to assume leadership roles and responsibilities:

1. Excellent professional teaching skills;
2. A clear and well developed personal philosophy of education;
3. Have reached personal and career stages that enable them to give time, energy, and attention to others and to assume a leadership role;
4. Interest in adult development;
5. Cognitive and affective depth and flexibility-he or she enjoys thinking abstractly, tying the conjectural to the concrete, and showing sensitivity and receptiveness to others' thoughts and feelings;
6. Strong work ethic;
7. Excellent people skills;
8. Strong organizational and administrative skills.

The authors conveyed many teachers become leaders without planning to do so, yet find themselves doing leadership tasks such as chairing school committees; building collegial relations with principals; developing insights into what people want, mean, think, and feel; and designing improved instructional approaches. In conclusion, learning to lead requires performance, cognitive, and emotional learning.

Honest discourse is a critical element of shifting school culture according to MacDonald (2011). School culture shifts occur when teacher leaders are able and willing to expose their struggles and failures with their colleagues. The author argues that teacher

leaders who recognize the signs of a dysfunctional culture, though they cannot make a person or group change thinking and behaviors but can initiate moments that move the team beyond the culture of nice – the underlying culture that inhibits rigorous collaborative discourse where teachers thinking, beliefs, assumptions, and practice are challenged. In addition she shares the role of the teacher leader is to recognize the signs of an unhealthy culture; respond proactively by creating a safe environment with living norms that comprise sharing responsibility and modeling; responding in the moment; and lastly, follow-up which includes a debrief, giving exit tickets, and check in individually.

Peer relationships challenge teacher leaders as they struggle to gain trust while establishing their expertise discusses Mangin and Stoelinga (2011). The authors acknowledged significant examples as to the egalitarian cultural norms established in these peer relationships and why they must be re-conceptualized for teachers to lead in areas where they have strengths. Importantly, Sartain, Stoelinga, and Brown (2011) recognized teacher leaders and teachers will not have difficult discussions regarding change if they do not know how to establish them. They revealed that a recent study indicated that effectively asking meaningful questions of students is among the most challenging aspects of instructional practice for teachers. Likewise, principals struggled in asking deep questions in conversations with teachers about their instruction. In summation, teachers, principals, and teacher leaders all should acquire knowledge in asking critical questions to promote reflective thinking and discussion that will improve practice.

Nudrat and Akhtar (2014) conveyed in order for teachers to emerge as leaders, institutions of teacher education have a major role to take on. In their findings from a study proposed to assess prospective teachers as to their potential to become teacher leaders in their professional endeavors found that the prospective teachers have the awareness of their strong teacher-leader potential which invariably is the initial rung on the ladder of teacher leadership.

Beals, Hipkins, Cameron, and Watson (2014) supported the concept of the effective PLC (PLC) has been embraced as an element to initiate change within an institution through an awareness and creative use of the dissonance arising from the coexistence of justified competing and/or conflicting values. Consequently the PLC plays a significant role in the dynamic organizational process, while destabilizing the rigidities with which the school surrounds itself. Thereby, the author encouraged teachers as leaders to re-examine the true meaning of PLC as a vehicle for teacher led change in schools.

The phenomenon of teachers taking on leadership roles and tasks beyond their classroom duties has become widespread globally. Struyve, Meredith, and Gielen (2014) presented while a catalyst for educational change and improvement, the divisional lines have been blurred between teaching and leading and therefore challenges the conventional professional relationships in schools as well as the professional self-understanding of teacher leaders. Their study demonstrated how teacher leadership introduces new frames of interactions in schools that teacher leaders find themselves

continuously juggling between two different agendas of professional interests; namely recognition as a teacher leader by their colleagues as well as maintaining their social-professional relationships with their colleagues.

Bond (2014) highlighted Shillingstad, McGlamery, Davis, and Gillees' (2014) suggesting teacher mentors contribute to the development of strong teacher leaders. In three case studies they present the personal challenges mentors face as teacher leaders and how their leadership has influenced the development of their mentees as teacher leaders. They noted mentors serve their mentees, district and P-12 students as curriculum and instructional specialists, resource providers, classroom supporters and learning facilitators, school leaders and learners, data coaches, and catalysts for change (Teacher Leadership: New Roles for Teacher Leaders, 2013).

A provincial teacher-leader program where teacher respondents were asked questions related to their program experience and how their participation in this initiative influenced their understanding of teacher leadership (Newton, Riveros, & da Costa, 2013) revealed four themes through an interpretive analysis of the data. Teacher leaders generally emerge through informal process of leadership in their schools and school districts. Teacher leaders develop a broader understanding of educational leadership and policy when they work across jurisdictions and school contexts. Teacher leaders can be recruited into broader leadership roles by attending to their professional interests and passions. Lastly, teacher leaders require flexible structures in the school that facilitate the development of trust and collegiality with their peers. The authors concluded these four

themes played a critical role in the development of teacher leadership, and that findings of this study had implications for policy development, leader recruitment and retention, and teacher professional development approaches in schools.

Implementation

The project is an interactive professional development model that includes 3 full work days of formal training. The development and expansion for future teacher leadership certificate programs will be a crucial element of the program as teacher leadership grows in the 21st century (add a citation). This professional learning opportunity will focus on those specific features of the course module entitled “*Teacher Leadership: Vital Skills*” section which focuses on teacher leaders as Instructional Specialist, Professional Developer, and Culturally Responsive Pedagogy as important 21st century themes for educators. In all, the TLCP curriculum design is based on what the literature review emphasized regarding meaningful professional development. Resolutely, elementary, middle and high school teachers and administrators will engage in this comprehensive discourse of teacher leadership coursework to broaden their basic understanding of the tools necessary to be an effective leader in 21st century schools.

Learning Outcomes

It is anticipated that all grade level teachers who attended and participated, will apply and re-teach their new learned information in their current roles from the TLCP cohort program presentation by the five teacher leaders who participated in this study.

The projected outcomes of the TLCP cohort are as follows:

Teacher leaders will be able to:

- Organize and lead PLT meetings to maximize efficiency and focus;
- Complete complex performance tasks to ensure that learning experiences are applied in school settings;
- Direct professional development work in schools that is purposeful and related to equity and excellence goals; and
- Design, implement, and assess curriculum methodology to address students' needs.

Potential Resources and Existing Support

The three professional development training days will be scheduled on days built into the district's school calendar that are designated for professional development, school-based and district-based. Therefore, teacher participants will not need substitute teachers. The multi-day training will be scheduled throughout the school year on 3 separate occasions obligated as in-service professional development days that were selected by school officials for this purpose. I will facilitate the training and since professional development is a duty of my job I will not need to be compensated for my time in this work. The following resources are needed for the TLCP professional training as follows:

- Approval from The Office of Professional Learning Director;
- Support from the Certificate Program Director;

- Support from elementary, middle, and high school teachers who participated in the TLCP cohort;
- Approval and support from the technology coordinator and his department staff to help develop a TLCP website for communication of teacher feedback, new ideas, trends, and curriculum designs.

The format for each day's demonstration will begin with a presentation by a member or panel of teacher leaders who have participated in the TLCP. These teachers would be the five teachers who participated in my study, as well as other volunteers from the TLCP. The time frame for this seminar will be structured as a three-day professional development event that will provide an open forum audience for key administrators of this district as well as community stakeholders, consisting of volunteers, teachers, and other. This presentation will be supported financially (refreshments and materials), and philosophically by the Professional Development Office of my school district and will be welcomed by the Executive Director who has knowledge of this study and is keenly interested in the outcomes of this program. Teachers who would attend could receive district credit as this would be considered professional development enrichment from the department administrator. The program designer and coordinator of the TLCP will be invited to attend the multi-day forum, as the feedback of the panelist and observations will be of great interest and instrumental to supporting her future programming initiatives of the TLCP.

The five teacher participants of my study will be asked to present as a panel group for the purposes of sharing their commentary in regard to being in the TLCP. I as the researcher would facilitate the 3-day training and structure the format for each day's presentation. The 3 full-day presentation would host a vast array of professional development sources to engage teachers in comprehensive teacher leadership learning and reflective discussions. A power point will provide the agenda based on the four themes. A segment of the presentation on Day 1 will inform the audience as to the understandings of what qualitative research is, particularly, the narrative inquiry approach which was used for this study. I believe it will be helpful for the audience to have an overview of this approach as it is highly suggested as a vehicle in the self-identity analysis of teacher stories.

Potential Barriers

There are no known barriers to the implementation of this project as the study would provide meaningful insights and discoveries in understanding the ideals around the creation of this program, as well as demonstrate specifically to principals the urgent necessity for future teacher leaders to engage in this district teacher leadership program opportunity. It is intended that this three-day presentation will also spotlight and bring new recognition and distinction to the district TLCP as a means to explore and understand the perceptions around the traditional division between teaching and leadership practices.

The limitations of this study focus on the nature of the narrative inquiry approach. Because the cases of leadership described in this study represent the growth and professional development of individual teacher leaders, the ability to generalize to other contexts may be limited. However, researchers may find the stories of these exemplary teacher leaders useful as a point of reference for future studies of teacher leadership. Hence, the discussion of teacher career development in leadership may be furthered through other qualitative approaches such as ethnographic and phenomenology studies which would provide a cultural and humanistic lens for the knowledge of the reader.

Implications Including Social Change

The implications for social change that lie within this project are numerous. For each of these teacher leaders there are implications for professional development and teacher change. This study contributes to social change as the foci regarding teacher change re-conceptualized as an identity process suggest that discursive practices within collaborative groups can foster interactive and reflective positioning that lead to conversion in beliefs and practices. Personal stories and narrative portraits are a device in which one takes on a new position (Clandinin & Connelly, 1996; Holland, Frank, & Cook, 1998). The district TLCP group provided such space in which these teacher leaders took on new position through personal story and dialogic conversation that posed problems, validated ideas and new thinking, suggested solutions, and supported their personal self-identity understandings.

The stakeholders will embrace this project's descriptive language used in sharing the transformative learning change of a teacher's trajectory from the classroom to that of a teacher leader within their career development. Furthermore stakeholders and others will partake in the uncovering and deeper understanding of the diverse cultural and racial backgrounds of each teacher leader and the integral parts and pieces of their unique and individual stories as they identify their own transformation at various points as agents of change.

The overall implication of this presentation will ultimately point out that when classroom teacher leaders are supported through professional development programs such as the TLCP, professional learning communities, opportunities for dialogue, and other ways in school districts, the ultimate victors are the students. The students gain in achievement when their teachers have a strong sense of self-concept, are valued by administrators for their competence, and recognized for their skill set and efficacy.

Conclusion

Teachers need to share their stories of transformation in local settings, as well as national conferences and to pre-service education candidate teachers. Each teacher's narrative portrait described the vital steps shared in helping them realize their transformations were valued and beneficial to their outcomes as change agents. All educators need opportunities to illustrate stories about teachers' process of change as well as to identify their own *narrative portraits*. Educator input is needed to also provide more insight on how to develop spaces in which such identity work occurs.

This study focused on the role and importance of a teacher leadership professional development model (TLCP) that provided teacher leader relationships to thrive with peers facilitated in an environment in which risk-taking and experimentation were the norm. The result of selecting three critical phases of Mezirow's transformative learning theory to reveal transformation in the career development and advancement of these five teachers highlights the insights into the emergent processes of teacher leadership that take place when teachers are given opportunity to take risks and explore other contexts of practice.

Section 4 presents a summative review of reflections and conclusions, as well as the project's impact implications for social change.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate the narrative stories of teacher leaders and to acquire a basic understanding of their transformation in career advancement roles. After collecting the qualitative data and analyzing it using narrative analysis, I decided that the project would enhance the knowledge and perceptions of school administrators, teachers, and community stakeholders if a 3-day professional development forum were held. This forum would focus on the project's five themes.

I will reflect on, and make suggestions about, the project's strengths, limitations, and what I have learned about the transformational experiences of teacher leaders as they advance to new roles in their careers. This section will culminate with my reflections as a scholar and practitioner. I will also comment on the project's implications for social change.

Project Strengths

Killion (2014) pointed out that research has clearly shown that teachers become more effective, efficient, and joyful when they have time to plan, observe, problem-solve, coach, reflect, and learn together. Significant strengths developed from the research study that resonate with this professional development project. The most critical is that self-reflection is a common element in the career advancement of teachers as they move into teacher leadership roles. Secondly, analysis of the five teacher leaders' comments revealed that advancement to new roles was an aspiration influenced by change and self-

reflection, a process that happens in a dedicated professional development environment, such as a teacher leadership program. When analyzing the data for the narrative portraits was complete, it was determined that the project would necessitate district focus on a 3-day training for school administrators, teachers, and community stakeholders. The training would demonstrate pedagogy engaged around teacher leadership curriculum and the five themes developed from the study. The project emphasized the theme results, and featured panel and individual presentations from teacher leaders within the school district. Included in the project are activities and pedagogy which reflected rigorous educational instruction in the selected Southwest school district.

A primary strength of the project was that it was data driven, and the contributions collected during the project study provided the basis for the five themes as a frame of reference for the project. The themes were developed from interviews with teacher leaders who will participate in the presentations for the training forum. In summary, the deliverable training and presentation guide supports the structure and course modules of the original district teacher leadership certificate program.

Recommendations for Remediation of Limitations

The limitations of this project are minimal as the elements of the three-day project have been carefully planned with emphasis on engagement and motivation for all learners. The only limitation infraction that may exist would be that the time limitations of the day may prevent presenters as to their allotted time allocations.

Scholarship

Narrative inquiry, proved a strong choice as both a method and an inimitable approach to offer substantial revelations in thinking about and making sense of experience in my journey to develop teacher leader portraits for this project study. Clandinin, Downey, and Huber (2009) purport narrative inquiry in teacher education has thrived and creates and discloses a teachers' personal and practical knowledge, realized in the teacher's practice. The depth and breadth of my research involving this qualitative approach resulted in my creation of a multi-day professional development forum on teacher leadership. It is from this profound learning experience in the narrative inquiry approach of qualitative research that I too have undergone transformation within myself as an agent of social change.

I have grown in my scholarship on the subject of transformative learning theory by Mezirow (1991), in understanding the complexities of adults learning differently than children, but also how adults learn and the environments in which they learn best, being imperative to the successful education of adults. The identification of what is important to adult learners in their journey towards becoming successful teacher leaders was guided by Mezirow's transformative learning theory, but also my own experience with adult learners. Over the course of my career, I have taught adolescents as well as adults; and find the differences in how these groups learn and react to learning striking. This study resulted in identifying five themes and elements important to adult learners in their advancement as successful teacher leaders.

I realize that through this research I became keenly acquainted with myself as a life-long learner and scholar, and have developed numerous significant insights and acquisitions regarding my experience over the last years as a Walden University doctoral practitioner that include the following: Critical self-reflection highly supported my critical thinking and analysis throughout the teacher leadership doctoral classes and prospectus; time management was a critical element to the process of working full time and being a student part time; the art of inquiry; the aptitude to ask deep-rooted questions of my professors and classmates; delving into scholarly reading and writing were integral and rigorous elements of the doctoral coursework which resulted in over 150 peer-reviewed APA sources added to my final project; a spirit of determination and perseverance provided thrust throughout the doctoral process; and finally, an organizational mindset and skills to research materials and resources was vital in my overall success.

As a result, the manifestation of a Teacher Leadership Professional Development TLPD Forum was developed by me as the project developer. In developing this (TLPD Forum, I considered teacher interview data and the current resources presented in the second literature review. This TLPD Forum is innovative in nature to the district as an original product and is anticipated to incite the future of such forums whereby teacher leaders facilitate similar learning for others in this district and local surrounding districts. As the project developer, I would welcome the opportunity to present this TLPD Forum

project as it would promote a focus and provide greater knowledge and sustenance to benefit administrators in their understanding of teacher leaders.

Conclusively, I perceive myself as a teacher leader and change agent who will advance in my next career role as a creative, 21st century problem solver. I am committed and contributing greatly to positive and immediate social change daily as I support teacher leaders within my district in their trajectories as teacher leaders and change agents. I am a ceaseless advocate for young people and their interests, and have had the fortune of addressing numerous social justice issues in my professional and personal communities. I will continue to forge ahead as a teacher leader in support of providing learning opportunities through professional development experiences for my school district.

Project Development and Evaluation

The (TLPD) project design was developed and based on my experiences in working with teacher leaders at my school site. The five teacher leader participants all participated in the Teacher Leadership Certificate Program created by a school district coordinator and her staff. As a teacher leader coordinator in the school district I became interested in the dynamics of the cohort and the rigorous curriculum course modules that were offered to teachers. It was after the collection of data, analysis of it, coding, and sorting into themes that the idea to construct a (TLPD) forum was actually explored. The process of the data collection took the form of individual interviews with teacher leaders at either their classrooms or office settings during the pre-week busyness of school start-

up. It involved tight scheduling and juggling to schedule the interviews as teachers were involved in a multitude of back to school meetings and trainings that took priority over their commitment at times to my interview dates. Several of the interviews took place at a different time than scheduled and one of the participants decided he could not participate after-all and withdrew his interest. The data collected from the interviews was intimate, authentic, and shared with integrity and passion for the profession. I consider this information invaluable and highly honoring to the study. Once the analysis, coding, and theming culminated, the process was complete.

The next part of the process focused on the design of the three days and the most effective course of action for such a project. It was revealed in my review of the data analysis, to construct and develop a multi-day training on pedagogy activities reflective of teacher leadership education, complete with background and implementation. The outcome of this training is geared toward teacher leaders, administrators, school leaders at large, and community stakeholders, and takes into account discrepancies that may impact implementation.

The training introspectively considered the adult learning style modes modeled in alignment and similarity to the differentiation strategies used for student learners. The activities include ice breakers and researched based strategies situated in collaborative small group activities that will stimulate adult learners throughout the span of each three day session. The training was designed to meet the needs of the participants and be engaging, innovative, energizing, reflective and relevant to each participant attendee.

During this project study I learned data collection and data analysis when examined, reveals unique variations and can contrast quite differently from participant to participant. The approach used to address the guiding research question and the subquestions proved effective and practical in relevance to the nature of the teacher's experiences from classroom teachers to those with new roles as teacher leaders. The project is inclusive of the teacher participants themselves in their authentic roles, as well as several non-participating teacher leaders within the district who will support me in facilitating the forum for those three days. Finally, a brief checklist will be emailed to each attendee to ascertain the relevance and effectiveness of the professional development project and discover what formidable professional development events would be desired for future trainings. I personally would like to see such opportunities made available to teacher leaders as a sacred space such as a professional development environment is highly regarded as necessary and invaluable to sustained success in their roles (Margolis & Doring, 2012).

Leadership and Change

Leadership and transformational change occurred often for me throughout the process of this program. As a teacher leader in my current role of the last seven years, I am a coordinator whose daily routine leadership tasks range in a multiplicity of assignments. I find trust, honesty, and commitment in leadership to have profound impact on the culture, values, philosophy, beliefs, and mission of an educational institution. Leaders are the catalyst for change in an education program, a school system, as well as

at the individual school level. Judy Seltz, Manager Editor of ASCD (2015) shares growing teacher leaders is about more than making the principal's role manageable. She states it mandates a change that engages both teachers and administrators in setting goals, coaching teachers, and designing curriculum.

In my preparation of this (TLPD) forum, I relied largely upon former past professional development experiences to develop such a project that deemed noteworthy and useful for its participants. In my experience it was important that I ruled out disconnected interactions and placed importance to authenticity prevailing in relevant activities where teacher leaders modeled lessons or referenced student work (Margolis & Huggins, 2012). A rigorous array of research based activities, engaging best practices in professional development on brain research, culturally relevant teaching, and thoughtful yet reflective pedagogical journal readings were carefully selected for implementation. Important to my planning were the welcomed commitments from various district teacher leaders and speaker presenters whom were requested by choice for this multi-day event. Relevance and responsiveness to subject matter took priority in my planning for this project as research shares the respect teachers hold for authenticity and relativity in professional development discourse (Mindich & Lieberman, 2012). Thus the rally for highly effective team-members were sought and gathered to persist in this goal, they consist of administrative para-professionals, technology assistants, building principals, teacher leader cohort members and a host of varied classroom teachers from around the district were contacted for their consent and availability. Fortunately, all were secured for

their involvement in this multi-day district project when approached with the invitation and showed visible enthusiasm to participate.

Developing this project revealed much about my personal leadership style which lends solidly towards servant-leadership (Greenleaf, 1970). Walden's emphasis of study in this area regarding teacher leadership was pinnacle for me in translating understanding that a servant-leader puts the needs of others first and helps people develop and perform as highly as possible. As a strong proponent of this philosophy I discovered my focus for the impact of the three days was to build a framework focus of reference to "what do teacher leaders want most and through what medium can I best engage them?" Honoring my authenticity around this leadership style, I have decided I will begin and end each day's session with the reading of a quote from a servant-leadership advocate (i.e., Margaret Wheatley, Ken Blanchard, or Peter Senge). I feel it takes great courage and years of practice to become an effective leader of change and transformation in the impact of teacher leader viability and efficacy. At this stage in my career, I feel like I have made an indelible impression in leadership roles within my school district, but that my best days are those ahead as I seek outside leadership roles in addition. Walden University's compelling leadership coursework has definitely prepared me with a vision and determined spirit as a resourceful scholar and supporter of educational change at all levels and walks of life.

Analysis of Self as Scholar

My reflective thoughts of the process are quite humbling and full of rich and sometimes daunting experiences and challenges throughout my doctoral journey. I ponder back to my first class with Dr. James Thomasson, and all the prophetic wisdom he shared in light of the road ahead towards this arduous journey as a doctoral novice in progress. I also reflect back on one of those early memorable assignments in which my ideas came together to explore and investigate the research world around transformative learning theory. At that time I knew nothing about Mezirow (1970), theorist of transformative learning theory, whom I would later become essentially acquainted via numerous readings, videos, and other media sources on his seminal work. I became enamored with the idea of adult learners and transformation being integral in their lives and began to see vivid correlations in his research and my own life story. Being passionate about the art of storytelling, I began to construct and design ideas concretely and metaphorically about how I could bring such a story to life about the career journeys of teachers as it was my personal trajectory that evolved initially, and then the latter.

I am a teacher leader and I am a scholar practitioner and this I know for sure. This evolution became known to me some years actually before I pursued Walden's doctoral program for teacher leadership. As an educator my unrelenting thirst and quenching of new learning was noted early on by me in my self-reflection as a college student where reading and researching writers was and still is a favorite pastime habit. As an efficacious adult learner returning to college with a three year old in tow, juggling a part-time job

and embracing all aspects of the coursework, I then characterized myself as a student learner for life. Books and learning have always been a central force in my life, as they are the implication of imaginative wonder and inquiry that have always intrigued me to search deeper. Webster Dictionary defines the word scholar as “one who has profound knowledge of a particular subject.” Though this may be true, I find my scholarship goes beyond a particular subject as I seek to make meaning of everyday life through teacher conversations and dialogue that lead to stories, understandings, and sometimes new relationships as a result. The voice of a teacher speaks directly to the tugs and pulls of leadership life. Ackerman and Mackenzie (2007) share “these slices of teacher leaders’ inner lives tap into the teacher in all educational leaders who wrestle with the similar issues: What is my role? Who am I to take this on? What inner resources must I have to do this kind of work? Can I afford to be vulnerable when I step out of my comfort zone as leadership demands? It is these pieces that for me expose the inner lives of teacher leaders” (p. xi).

Analysis of Self as Practitioner

In my observance of self as a seasoned practitioner at this season of my life, I am frequently sought by district staff, particularly teachers and teacher leaders, for general pedagogical guidance, teaching strategies and to share ideas. In my role as a practitioner and change agent I collaborate with teachers often on issues of equity and cultural identity recognition of themselves as educators, but also provide a means for building and developing relationships overall with their students. I relish time to stop by and visit

classrooms where teachers welcome an ally to offer and receive feedback and collegial perspective. It is in my many years of building sustaining relationships with staff members that I am observed as a respected teacher leader mentor and staff developer. It is my fulfillment to support teachers in self- confidence, instructional development, and in recognizing those innate talents I observe in my peers, I find this leadership influence is an important element for a researcher to discern and examine of oneself as a scholar and practitioner.

Analysis of Self as Project Developer

As somewhat of an experienced staff developer from numerous professional development demonstrations over the years, I have learned and acquired key presentation style qualities that project audience engagement. Though I was not sure of the results that my data analysis would reveal, I anticipated the interview data and other sources would supply me with a sufficient amount of information to plan an effective professional development forum for three days. The generous amounts of data collected incited the issue for me of what to select as most important in my initial planning. I then drafted and revised a plan several times that ensured the research based strategies had the potential to impact educational practice. Exploring activities and pedagogy reflective of teacher leadership revealed a bounty of resources that then became a daunting task of selection from the mass of options. The end product is one of substance and quality, and will provide purposeful and authentic relevance for teacher leaders to reflect on their practice and take in new learning on leadership methodologies.

The Project's Potential Impact on Social Change

For twenty-nine years I have been a vital force in the system as a social justice educator and a change agent for justice and advocacy for all students; I believe every child deserves an equitable education and that every child can learn something. I am fortunate to have come to the determining factor that I would participate in a doctoral study program and that I chose Walden University's online option in the genre of teacher leadership. As I reflect on the project and the arduous and intensive labor entailed in bringing such a final product to completion, I realize that this was accomplished through diligence an organizational skill-set foci with intentionality. Over the course of the doctoral program, I have arguably read more than 200 peer reviewed journal articles and deciphered unquestionably vast amounts of scholarly writings on teacher leadership, transformative learning theory, adult learning and professional development. Conclusively, I produced a qualitative narrative analysis study that gathered narrative information from five teacher leaders.

This narrative analysis study will be presented as a featured agenda item in each of the three-day sessions by the researcher in this professional development forum. I feel it is important for administrators, teachers, and community stakeholders to understand the basis of the study centering the stories of the teacher leaders who participated in the teacher leadership certificate program, and also to understand the use of narrative data sources. The interviews, field notes, teacher observations, teacher leadership portfolios, and the teacher essay will all be shared as effective tools in structuring the narrative.

Samples of the research question and subquestions will be shared as well as those used in the interviews for greater understanding by those attending the forums.

In the overall program of study, I have evolved as a teacher leader with greater wisdom, leadership capacity, self- confidence, courage, and an unabated drive to shed light on issues, but to act on those matters as a problem solver to create change in the culture. The project that I have developed is one that will offer teacher leaders new insights and discoveries in a collaborative environment where they are given significant time to work together and develop an intellectual culture of inquiry with high expectations, and best practices.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

My expansive investigation of the project study resulted in the development of the Teacher Leadership Professional Development (TLPD) forum for district teachers, administrators, and community stakeholders. An underpinning assumption in this study is that an invitation to become teacher leaders should be extended to all teachers. However, the reality is that teacher leadership really may not be for every teacher at all stages in one's career. My attempts to design the (TLPD) forum project were based much on the characteristics of what constitutes purposeful professional development. The literature has shown that professional development is best done with and by the membership of a school and, or district to ensure it is locally relevant, met with less resistance and

sustainable-rather than “delivered” by outside parties unfamiliar with the context and character of the setting, and not engage with solutions to problem solve or sustain focus (Baecher, 2012).

Ideally, several implications that may arise from this project study reflect around educational change. The (TLPD) forum will support three primary unique components of teacher leaders:

1. Teachers cannot presume to lead others before they understand themselves. The time they will spend in self-assessment activities during this forum aims to support the different sets of values, beliefs, concerns, personal philosophies, question assumptions and behaviors at different stages of development for teacher leaders.
2. As teachers move through career stages they have different needs. A teacher panel presentation will engage the audience into an informational dialogue on career development concerns related to four stages; exploration, establishment, maintenance and disengagement stage.
3. Acknowledging diversity of teacher leaders and their personal identities, and how they relate to the various sets of beliefs and values that their colleagues, administrators, and parents bring to school. Teacher leaders must also work with a broader group of stakeholders, inclusive of business and community representatives who come from diverse cultural and socioeconomic

backgrounds; all of whom bring their own multiple perspectives to the district climate and school setting.

One of the participants in the study has formal training and expertise in cultural competence education that includes information on racial and cultural identity themes for educators. She will present her topic on the final day of the three day forum and I will assist her in the small group discussions.

In consideration of the expansiveness of the topics for the agenda, there is great possibility and positivity around the school district's decision to promote this forum with passion and enthusiasm. Teachers receiving meaningful professional development and implementing those leadership practices within their roles can contribute significantly to preparing students and other teachers for achievement success and life skills.

In conclusion, the plethora of topics and the depth and breadth of learning that teachers will acquire and be exposed from this multi-day project forum can significantly create motivation for change and new resolve in teacher loyalty to their roles. Once the program has been implemented, future district forums such as this to promote teacher leadership strategies should be attempted. A mixed-methods approach using quantitative data is a viable option as well as a phenomenological or ethnography approach in qualitative research could be performed with a specific sample to produce case studies as alternative methodology. Futuristically, a longitudinal study could be conducted along with the Assessment and Evaluation department of this district in alignment to the ideals

and structures of the Teacher Leadership Certificate Program that includes the qualitative reported outcomes of this project.

Conclusion

In my seeking of new knowledge and the eternal light of wisdom I have left behind my former questions and ponderings. Individual determination as a teacher leader does support my reflective practice and new learning. My final reflective thoughts on the project, the data collection and analysis results of this study, I bring to district-level administrators and community stakeholders a proposed project to consider in better understanding and supporting teacher leaders in their efficacy as building leaders, but more importantly, in honoring the uniqueness of teacher identity in their teacher leadership. The vision of teacher leadership of true collaborative leadership of schools, involves changing beliefs about functions and roles of all teachers in the school. The results of this professional development project will highlight the five themes found in Section 2 Methodology. Two themes will be covered on Day 1 and Day 2 of the project, and Day 3 will cover the last theme separately as the depth of the content is voluminous. As adults mature they accumulate experiences which come together to validate more increasingly complex frames of reference (Mezirow, 1991). Of the 10 phases of transformative learning that make up the original framework for Mezirow's theory and the analytical tool for this research, four were the foci for this study: (a) self-examination; (b) exploration of options for new roles, relationships, actions; (c) acquiring knowledge

and skills, for implementing one's plans; and (d) building competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships

Teacher participants of this study experienced each of the phases in unique and individually varied details which were shared in each narrative portrait in Section 2 Methodology. Teacher participants of this study found exploring the notion of becoming teacher leaders that the praxis of self-reflection was a non-negotiable exercise in the process. Several identified they considered what aspects of their personal lives might influence their timing and readiness or willingness to take on advanced roles. In addition, they valued the encouragement from building administrators who in some cases, sought to match the needs of the organization with those of the individual teacher leaders. Administrators who established and created opportunities for growth such as teacher mentoring, coaching of new staff, committee work and other were cited as internal building roles for potential teacher leaders. The participation of each teacher leader's involvement in the district teacher leadership certificate program for a year supported the transformative learning phase for the needs of teacher leaders to acquire professional knowledge and skills through such an environment as they prepared for career advancement. Finally, these teacher leaders developed confidence and competence in their new roles, and established critical administrative, teacher, and community relationships, supporting new district and building partnerships and understanding administrative processes regarding school policy.

The design of this strategically planned professional development project will support 21st century teacher leaders and stakeholders with those important questions and reflections for conversation that will support a changing global culture in education. It is my belief through this professional development forum and its viable implications regarding leadership stories, social justice themes, and the transformational narrative portraits of teacher leaders that a new and robust teacher leadership will occur within the district. I foresee a force of motivation and successful leadership developed towards service and education equity to impact district students, staff, and stakeholder. I am convicted for what can be observed as a sometimes undervalued notion of leading from behind in the service of others. However, in my servant teacher leadership role, I do hope with anticipation for each attendee's internalization of this project's goals to promote and support a sustaining social justice culture that distinguishes and honors both individual and collective academic success for all students. It is my belief and philosophy, that this district TLCP forum will provide teacher leaders, administrators, and community stakeholders with a plethora of pedagogical methodologies to build and support greater learning capacity towards the response to problem solving strategies and actions. As transformed teacher leader change agents of the 21st Century, they will characterize a unified embodiment of caliber prepared for future challenges that lie ahead in the inevitable changing field of education.

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Appendix A: Professional Development for Transformational Teacher Leaders

Module 1- Day 1 of Professional Development
(Summer In-service Day Forum)

Day 1 – The Emergence and Development of Teachers to Leadership roles
Duration: 8:30 – 3:30 p.m. – Instructional Support Facility Building – Room 146

8:30 a.m. – 9:15 a.m.

- Introductions – Ice Breaker – Welcome and Sign in
- Ice Breaker: As a table group, participants will create attributes of effective teacher leaders. (Chart paper and one person is a recorder)

Panel of Teacher Leaders from Cohort 1 and 2: Teachers share their roles, grade levels, and brief biographical introductions

- Overview of Teacher Leadership and 21st Century Education article
Rotherham, A. J.& Willingham, D. (2009). To work, the 21st century skills movement will require keen attention to curriculum, teacher quality, and assessment. *Educational leadership*, 9(1), 15-20.
- Why Teacher Leadership programs are critical: YouTube: What is a Teacher Leader?

Researcher Presentation by Cassandra Mason

“Narratives of Elementary and Secondary Teacher Leaders as Transformational Change Agents”

- Overview of my research design and origins of the 5 themes which resulted.

9:15 a.m. – 9:50 a.m.

- Getting grounded in teacher leadership
- Reflection: What is your leadership role? Circle Map activity

9:50-10:10 a.m. (Morning Break for 15 minutes)

10:10 a.m. – 11: 30 a.m.

- Self-Assessment: “Who am I as a teacher leader?”
(Teachers write a self-reflective paragraph for 10 min.)

- **Jigsaw Activity and Shared Reading:** The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership (Instructions on ppt.)
Kouzes, J. M. & Posner, B.Z. (2011). *The Five Practices of exemplary leadership*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

11:30 p.m. -12:55 p.m. – Lunch (catered by district food services)

Guest Speaker: Coordinator of the District Teacher Leadership Cohort
“The District Teacher Leadership Cohort Program”

1:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.

- Educational Leadership Opportunities –Walden Video: Leadership Skills for Ethical Leaders
- Dialogue and Discussion: Elbow partners – “share 3 take-aways” with a table mate – how will you use this information?

1:30 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

- Teacher Leader Model Standards (Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium) ppt.
- Activity: Reflection Activity – examining the domains. Sharing out and a quick write narrative.

2:00-2:15 p.m. (Afternoon break for 15 minutes)

2:15 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

- Self-reflective article reading activity – A bold move forward
Killion, J. (2011). A bold move forward. *Journal of Staff Development*, 32(3), 10-14.
- Socratic Seminar Article Reading and Collaborative group activity – instructions on ppt.

3:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. (CLOSING ACTIVITY)

Writing Prompt Exercise: Where are you in your teacher leadership journey?

Choose one selection below and write a narrative paragraph

- The Teacher Leader I Seek to Become
- Teacher Leader I’ve Become

- **Wrap-up – Planning for Day 2 (Winter Institute Date: January)**
- **Reflections on the day . . .**
- **Commit to action – what leadership tool will you implement (Exit ticket out the door)**

Module 2 Day 2 of Professional Development

(Fall In-service Day Forum)

Day 2 Teacher Leaders: Professional Development & District Teacher Leadership Cohort Program

Duration: 8:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

8:00 a.m. – 9:15 a.m.

- **Introductions, Icebreaker – Welcome and Sign in**
- **Introduction of Panel: Teacher Leaders from Cohort 2 and 3:**
- Overview of Teacher Leadership & Professional Learning
- Panel of teacher leaders across the district
- Activity: Protocol Model
- **Results from Literature Review on Professional Development: Cassandra Mason, Researcher**

9:15 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. – Icebreaker Activity

Professional Development Dialogue: KWL Activity (Table Talk)

9:30 a.m. – 10:15 a.m.

Key Findings on Professional Learning:

- Read Article: Why Quality Professional Development for Teachers Matters by Ben Johnson, author and educator
Retrieved from: <https://www.edutopia.org>
- Summarizing our Thoughts . . .

10:15-10:30 a.m. (Morning Break for 15 minutes)

10:30 a.m. – 11:25 a.m.

The Teacher Leadership Program Cohort: Vital Skills Module Focus

- Who I was and Who Am I Now as a Teacher Leader!
- Instructional Specialist

- Professional Developer
- Culturally Responsive Teaching Coach

Implications for our work? Teacher Reflections

TED Talk: Your Body Language Shapes who You Are by Amy Cuddy: Retrieved from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v+Ks-_Mh1QhMc

11:30 p.m. – 12:55 p.m. – Lunch (catered by district food services)

1:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.:

Reflection on Morning: Questions and Needs

Listening Poem Activity by Jiddu Krishnamurti.

Krishnamurti, J. (2001). *The book of life: Daily meditations with Krishnamurti*. India: Penguin Books.

1:30 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.:

The World Café Conversations Protocol using Jane Vella’s Adult Learning Principles.

Vella, J. (1994). *Learning To Listen, Learning to Teach. The power of Dialogue in Educating Adults. Jossey-Bass Higher Adult Education Series.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

2:00 p.m. – 2:15 p.m. (Afternoon break for 15 minutes)

2:15 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

World Café Conversation continued

Your talents as a Mentor: Self–Assessment

3:00 p.m.-3:30 p.m. (CLOSING ACTIVITY)

Writing Prompt Exercise: Where are you as a professional developer?

Choose one selection below and write a narrative paragraph

- What are my talents and natural gifts as a staff developer?
- What will I need to develop to ensure my success?

- **Wrap-up: Planning for final Day 3 (Spring Institute Date)**
- **Reflections on the day . . .**
- **Commit to action – what leadership tool or strategy will you implement? (Exit ticket out the door)**

**Module 3 Day 3 of Professional Development
(Spring In-service Day forum)**

**Day 3 Teacher Leaders: Cultural Responsive Pedagogy
Duration: 8:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.**

8:00 a.m. – 9:15 a.m.:

- **Introductions – Ice Breaker – Welcome and Sign in**

- Teacher Leaders from Cohort 5 and 6:**
- Overview of Teacher Leadership: Cultural Diversity
- Panel of teacher leaders across the district

- **Researcher Teacher Leadership Presenter: Cultural Identity in Teacher Leadership**

9:15 a.m. – 10:10 a.m.:

- Cultural Responsive Pedagogy – What is it?
- Ice Breaker: Get to Know You (Name Tag Activity)
- The Why of Culturally Relevant Teaching Article
- Building Relationships

10:10 a.m. – 10:25 a.m. (Morning Break for 15 minutes)

10:30 a.m. – 11:25 a.m.:

- Your Personal Perspective – dialogue and quick write activity
- Gallery Walk Experience
- Reflection using a Thinking Map graphic organizer

11:30 a.m. – 12:55 p.m. – Lunch (catered by district food services)

1:00 p.m. – 1:45 p.m.:

- Powerpoint: What is Culturally Relevant Teaching, Patrick Briggs, AVID Texas State Director, pbriggs@avidcenter.org
- TED Talk Perspective: Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie: The danger of a single story Retrieved from: https://www.ted.com/.../chimamanda_adichie_the...TED
- Reflection: Your single story perspective

1:30 p.m.- 2:05 p.m.:

- The Power of Your Personal Narrative – YouTube: Tell Your Story, Build Your Brand
- Your Racial Autobiography as a Teacher Leader: “Where I Am From” template

2:10 p.m. – 2:25 p.m. (Afternoon break for 15 minutes)

2:15 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.:

- Your Racial Autobiography as a Teacher Leader: “Where I Am From” template for writing personal poem
- Dialogue and Reflect? As a teacher leader how will you use your racial autobiography at your building to support equity learning for others?

3:00 pm. – 3:30 p.m. (CLOSING ACTIVITY):

Writing Prompt Exercise: How will you take today’s learning back to your students and staff to support equity knowledge and experiences?

Choose one selection below and write a narrative paragraph

My I Am Poem can be shared . . . ?

What have I missed telling my students about me?

Wrap-up (Ideas for next school year professional development)

Reflections on the day . . .

Commit to action – what steps will you take to become a culturally responsive teacher leader? (Exit ticket out the door)

Appendix B: Professional Development for Teacher Leaders



The Emergence & Development of Teachers to Leadership Roles Day 1

By Cassandra Mason
District AVID Coordinator

Welcome and Introductions



Opening Activity

As a table group, create a list of attributes characterizing successful and effective teacher leaders.

Objective: This activity will generate enthusiasm and activate schema for participants.



Introduction of Teacher Leader Panel

Teachers give brief bio introduction,
grade level and where they teach,
describe their roles as leaders



Overview of Teacher Leadership and 21st Century Education

Participants will read article 21st Century Skills:
The Challenges Ahead, Rotterham and
Willingham, 2009.

Discuss, and reflect on current research and
literature related to teacher leadership.



Why Teacher Leadership Programs are Critical?

▶ 4:57

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HreyTkVjo8w>

Feb 25, 2013 - Uploaded by wendi206

Graphic visualization on thoughts about *Teacher Leadership*.

[What Is a Teacher Leader? - YouTube](#)

▶ 4:03

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_R1i4RZQbuY



Researcher Presentation by
Cassandra Mason
An overview of my research and why
this project?

“Narratives of Elementary and
Secondary Teachers Leaders as
Transformational Change Agents”



Activity #1: Reflection Sharing

What is your leadership role?
Teachers create a circle map to express
their various titles, jobs, etc. and share
with a table partner.

Who Am I as a Teacher Leader?

Narrative Self-Assessment Exercise

Take 10 min. to write a self reflective paragraph about yourself as a teacher leader.



Jigsaw Activity #2 - Shared Reading: The 5 Practices of Exemplary Leadership, Kouzes and Posner, 2011



- - 5 min. (form groups and distribute articles)
- 15 min. (read article in expert groups)
- 20 min. (produce poster)
- 15 min. (share with home group)
- 10 min. (compare/contrast the article)



Educational Leadership Opportunities

[Leadership Skills for Ethical Leaders - Walden University](http://www.waldenu.edu/about/.../todays-leadership-skills)
www.waldenu.edu/about/.../todays-leadership-skills **Cached**
Walden University
Loading...
Explore the skills necessary for creating ethical *leaders* and preparing such *leaders* for tomorrow's challenges.



Elbow Partner Activity: Dialogue & Reflection

Turn to a table mate and share 3
take-aways from the video.

How will you utilize this information?

Teacher Leader Model Standards

Overview

Infographic designed by sunnibrown.com

The Teacher Leader Model Standards are intended to codify, promote, and support teacher leadership as a vehicle for transforming schools to meet the needs of 21st-century learners. Rather than serve as a comprehensive job description for teacher leaders, the Standards instead describe seven domains of leadership. Each domain is further developed and supported by a list of functions that a teacher leader who is an expert in that domain might perform.

[Domain I: Fostering a Collaborative Culture to Support Educator Development and Student Learning](#)

[Domain II: Accessing and Using Research to Improve Practice and Student Learning](#)

[Domain III: Promoting Professional Learning for Continuous Improvement](#)

[Domain IV: Facilitating Improvements in Instruction and Student Learning](#)

[Domain V: Promoting the Use of Assessments and Data for School and District Improvement](#)

[Domain VI: Improving Outreach and Collaboration with Families and Community](#)

[Domain VII: Advocating for Student Learning and the Profession](#)

- See more at: http://www.teacherleaderstandards.org/standards_overview#sthash.UEpM0W0S.dpuf

Reflection Activity



Using an index note card select the following:

3 domains you feel strongest

3 domains you are still developing

What is your plan as a teacher leader to advance your knowledge in those areas not yet proficient?
Share with a table mate.

Quick Write: What will it take to ensure you reach your capacity in those areas?

Socratic Seminar

Self-reflective Article Reading:

“A Bold Move Forward, Joellen Killion, 2011

SOCRATIC SEMINAR:

Essential Question: How can one’s own narrative memoirs as a teacher build capacity in others?

Objective: The teachers will be able to critically read, writer higher level questions, and collaboratively discuss a text using Socratic Seminar rules. (Facilitator will provide instructions).

Closing Activity: Self-Assessment

Writing Prompt Exercise

Essential Question: Where are you in your teacher leadership journey?

Choose one prompt below and write a one page narrative paragraph.

- a. The Teacher Leader I Seek to Become
- b. The Teacher Leader I have Become



Professional Development & District Teacher Leadership Program Cohort

Day 2

Presenter: Cassandra Mason, District
AVID Coordinator



Introduction of Panel: Teacher Leaders from Past Cohorts

Overview of Teacher Leadership &
Professional Learning, Presenter



Icebreaker Activity: Professional Development Dialogue

KWL Chart: Teachers fill in KWL

K – What do you **KNOW** about PD?

W- What do your **WANT** to know?

L- What did you **LEARN** from the table conversation?



Article: Why Quality Professional Development for Teachers Matters by Ben Johnson

- See Jigsaw Instructions in packet
- Complete the reading and note-taking for your section
- Be prepared to discuss thoughts with your table group

Summarizing our Thoughts . . .

The Teacher Leadership Program
Cohort: Vital Skills Module Focus

Presentations of

Cohort Teacher Leaders:

Who I am now as a teacher leader!

- Instructional Specialist
- Professional Developer
- Culturally Relevant Teaching Coach



Implications for our Work?

- How can we apply this knowledge to our work with teachers?
- Are there strategic steps that might be taken in each role to address this information?

TED TALK

- [Your Body Language Shapes Who You Are | Amy Cuddy ...](#)
- [*https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ks-_Mh1QhMc*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ks-_Mh1QhMc)





Reflecting on the Morning

What are you Pondering?

Questions?

Needs?



Listening Poem

[Jiddu Krishnamurti: The Art Of Listening](http://consciousnessminded.com/jiddu-krishnamurti-art-listening)

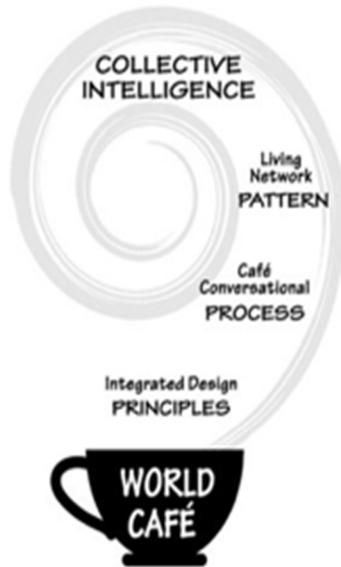
*consciousnessminded.com/jiddu-
krishnamurti-art-listening*



World Café Conversations Afternoon Activity

Professional Development Rounds:
12 Principles of Adult Learning,
Author and educator Jane Vella

World Café Conversations



Using the 12 Principles of Adult Learning as a guide table hosts will engage questions related to the given principles. Facilitator will provide World Café instructions for the conversations rounds.

Self-Reflective Closing Activity



Writing Prompt Exercise: Where are you in your understanding as a professional developer?

Choose one selection below and write a narrative paragraph

What are my talents and natural gifts?

What will I need to develop to ensure my success?



Day #3 – Cultural Responsive Pedagogy for Teacher Leaders

Welcome and Presentation of
Teacher Leaders from past cohorts



Researcher as Presenter: Cultural Identity in Teacher Leadership

Your Cultural Identity Activity:

Use the graphic organizer to create a circle map. Brainstorm the ways others might see who you are. . . . As a frame of reference, use these ideals to define who you are as a leader.



Cultural Responsive Pedagogy

Ice Breaker: Get to Know You?

Pass out the Imaginative Name Tag handout and give teachers instructions for the activity as follows:

Draw something you do well

Draw something you value

List four words that describe you best.



The Why of Culturally Relevant Teaching

Teachers read excerpt of article from
Why Should I Teach About Culture?
James A. Banks, Teaching Strategies for
Ethnic Studies



Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

Building Relationships through Student Engagement

* Introduction to Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (4:40)
(1:08 – 3:00) (3:52-4:15) (Gay, 2000)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nGTVjJuRaZ8&feature=related>

Perspective

In a brief statement, describe your personal perspective about being an educator. Align your perspective with why you decided to complete the Teacher Leadership Certificate Program.





Gallery Walk



Located throughout the room are quotes about education, educators, and those they educate. In rank order, determine which three quotes best aligns with your perspective or epitomizes your perspective about teaching. You will have ten minutes to make your selections.

Now that you have rank ordered the statements that best align with your philosophy, share the “why” with one other person in the room.

Reflection

In your framed philosophy about education and your purpose in being a Teacher Leader, using a Thinking Map to frame your thoughts. Do not include your name.



What is Culturally Relevant Teaching?

Read the article by Patrick Briggs, AVID Texas State Director

At your table – Share what you think?

Helpful questions to help facilitate conversation:

1. Can I apply anything in the article to my teaching?
2. I found _____ to be very profound?
3. I still do not understand CRT?
4. I do not agree with _____ .
5. I agree with _____.

Perspective

- [Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie: The danger of a single story ...](#)
- ▶ [18:49](#)
- [*https://www.ted.com/.../chimamanda_adichie_the...TED*](https://www.ted.com/.../chimamanda_adichie_the...TED)
- Loading...
- Novelist Chimamanda Adichie tells the *story* of how she found her authentic ... if we hear only a *single story* ...



Your single story . . .

Reflecting with a story partner . . . Find someone you do not know.

Share a snippet of your life story. What do you have in common, or not with your partner?



The Power of Your Personal Narrative

[Tell Your Story, Build Your Brand - YouTube](#)

▶ 57:19

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nXrrPyGETsc>

Jan 15, 2013 - Uploaded by University of Denver

Shari Caudron of The Narrative Group shows how to use *your* personal story to define and promote *your brand*.



Your Racial Autobiography as a Teacher Leader

Develop a poem: "Where I am From"
Teachers will be given template to
complete their ideas.



How will you use your racial autobiography with your students and staff?

Teachers share and discuss
One person acts as a recorder to chart ideas. Facilitator will hear share out from each table.

Appendix B: Teacher Leader Questionnaire

(Preliminary Session prior to interviews)

Addresses: RQ 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6

1. Who asked you to assume the role as a teacher leader in your school?
2. How were you approached?
3. How did you feel about taking on the role of professional developer/team leader/etc.? What are the benefits and challenges of this role?
4. In what ways have you worked with others in your building to access or utilize student learning data?
5. In what ways have you provided feedback to colleagues to strengthen teaching practice or improve student learning? Have you been in the role of peer evaluator or cooperating teacher?
6. In what ways have you served as a mentor, coach, or content facilitator? What types of projects were you asked to lead?
7. In what ways have you accessed resources and expertise both inside and outside the school to support student achievement? Have you brought in outside resources/partnerships? If so, please describe their nature.
8. In what ways have you worked with colleagues to use assessment results to recommend potential changes in organizational practice to enhance student achievement?
9. In what ways have you used knowledge of different backgrounds, cultures, or languages in the school community to promote effective interactions among colleagues, families, and the larger community?
10. In what ways have you worked with colleagues to advocate for the rights/and or needs of students, or represented the profession in contexts outside the classroom (task forces, committees, professional associations)?

Appendix C: Narrative Inquiry Interviews

Interview Session 1 Addresses: RQ2 and RQ6

The purpose of this interview was to gather autobiographical narratives, stories about teachers' career development experiences and teaching.

Guiding questions for this interview:

1. Where were you born and raised?
2. When did you decide to become a teacher?
3. Who was a major influence in this decision for you?
4. Describe a teacher role model that inspired you early on?
5. What stands out as a pivotal moment in your early teaching career towards leadership?
6. Share and describe mentors in your career development.
7. How does critical self-reflection support you? If not, how do you gain a sense of self in your practice?
8. How do you maintain your passion for this work?
9. What is your racial and cultural identity?
10. How does this impact your role as an educator in your work with others?

Appendix D: Interview Questions for Teacher Leaders (Set A)

Interview Session 2 Addresses: RQ 1, 3, 4, 5, and 6

Research Subquestions:

1. How do teachers define leadership within their own professional contexts?
2. What transformational differences and similarities emerge in the teacher leader narratives?
3. In what ways do teachers perceive themselves as leaders?
4. What kinds of activities do teachers consider to be leadership?
5. Did teacher leaders find career advancement opportunities as a result of their participation in the district teacher leadership certification program?
6. What are the backgrounds, experiences, and training of the teacher leader in diversity multicultural education?

Teacher Interview Questions:

1. How would you define teacher leadership in your current role?
2. How would you define teacher leadership as a role in your school?
3. How do classroom teachers view teacher leadership in general?
4. What kinds of activities or events are teacher leaders involved in at your site?
5. Do you find being a teacher leader prestigious? Is it a status symbol among teachers?
6. Have you found being named a “teacher leader” an advantage in your role?
7. How or has the teacher leadership program supported your career advancement?
8. If so, please describe in detail please.
9. If not, please share how the teacher leadership cohort did not support your goals.
10. What is your cultural background?
11. Can you share some cultural experiences that supported your learning as a leader?

12. What aspects of the Culturally Responsive Teacher (CRT) training in this cohort were new to you?
13. How affective to your role as a teacher leader is cultural responsive training?
14. What was your biggest take-away from this module on Culturally Responsive Teaching?
15. How do you use (CRT) training knowledge in your role as a teacher leader and as a staff developer?

Appendix E: Interview Questions for Teacher Leaders (Set B)

Interview Session 3 Addresses: RQ 3, 4, 6

1. What do you spend the most time thinking about and doing as a teacher leader?
1. In your view, what is the most important goal you have as a teacher leader?
2. What would you say is the current level of participation and collaboration within your department?
3. What do you devote most of your time to during your department meetings?
4. What are some strategies that you use to promote broad-based participation and collaboration among teachers in the school?
5. Inquiry-based decisions and practices based on student data inform actions you take as a department to support student learning (circle one):

(Never)	(Sometimes)	(Almost always)
---------	-------------	--------------------
6. Innovation is a word that you would use to describe your department (circle one):

(Yes)	(No)
-------	------

Please share why?
7. Is student achievement related to Common Core Standards steadily increasing, decreasing, or staying the same regarding the curriculum goals within your department?

8. In your view, what would be the best way to improve student achievement in your school?
9. What might your specific background (DME) contribute to leadership at your school?

Note: Definition of DME (Diversity and Multicultural Education, Sonia Nieto (2011)).

Appendix F: Teacher Interview Questions

Session 4 Addresses: RQ 1

Research Question: What was the change process using the transformational theory component of critical reflection for eight teacher leaders as they participated in a year-long district teacher leadership certification program?

Share the initial experience of your thinking in becoming a teacher leader in your school?

1. Describe any feelings that may have resulted from your thinking?
2. What assumptions did you have about what a teacher leader's role is?
3. When did you realize you were discontent as a classroom teacher only?
4. How did you go about exploring new roles, relationships?
5. Describe the actions you took to discover and plan a course of action.
6. What perceptions did you have about the new role?
7. What new knowledge would you need to attain for this position?
8. How did you imagine yourself in this role?
9. Has this new position integrated into your personal and professional life naturally?
10. Describe any transformational experiences you've had as an adult learner?
11. How did you identify them as transformational?

12. What in the leadership program cohort was pinnacle for you as transformative?
13. Are you familiar with Mezirow's theory on transformative learning?
14. Do you feel your principal or supervisor is a transformational change agent and how have they impacted your growth?

Appendix G: Transformative Learning Theory Framework Concepts

Addresses: RQ 1

Research Question: What was the change process using the transformation theory component of critical reflection for eight teacher leaders as they participated in a year-long district teacher leadership certification program?

The Ten Phases are:

1. A Disorienting Dilemma
 - e.g., the discovery that teaching is much harder than thought
2. Self-examination with feelings of anger, guilt, or shame
 - e.g., shame that they are having difficulty doing this job for which teachers prepared
3. A critical assessment of assumptions
 - e.g., is the problem really them and their preparation, or is it a host of external characteristics?
4. Recognition that one's discontent and the process of transformation shared:
 - e.g., teachers realize others have also struggled in their first years of practice
5. Exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions:
 - e.g., teachers explore how they might be able to find someone to assist them, such as a mentor or coach
6. Planning a course of action
 - e.g., teachers plan how they are going about learning new skills and abilities, perhaps with their mentor or coach
7. Acquiring knowledge and skills for implementing one's plans'
 - Teachers figure out what they need to do to be more effective teachers

8. Provisional trying of new roles;
 - Use the new skills teachers have learned
9. Building competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships
 - People become more confident and competent over time
10. Reintegration into one's life on the basis of conditions dictated by one's new perspective (Mezirow, 2000, p. 22)
 - People reintegrate into their lives based on the conditions ordered by their new perspective.

Appendix H: Interview Criteria Checklist for Researcher

Interviewee Name _____

Date _____

Interviewee Phone Number

Interviewee Email _____

(Answer Y or N) to the following statements for each interviewee:

Did you ask probing questions for
elaboration?_____
Was the location of interview conducive
for a quality interview?_____
Was the location of the interview calm
and quiet?_____
Did you have any trouble with the
equipment during the interview?_____
Did you encourage the interviewee to feel
comfortable and at ease in intervals
during the interviews?_____
Did you provide the interviewee time to
ponder the questions?_____
Were you carefully listening to the
interviewee?

Appendix I: Teacher Narrative Essay

(Take 10 minutes or less to share a brief paragraph/s of your perspective on this topic.)

“The Teacher Leader I’ve Become”

Appendix J: Professional Development Observation Protocol

Research Question 3

How do teachers define leadership within their own professional contexts?

Research Question 5

Did teacher leaders find career advancement opportunities as a result of their participation in the (Teacher Leadership Certification Program)?

Research Question 6

What are the backgrounds, experiences, and training of the teacher leader in diversity multicultural education?

This protocol will serve as a basic guide in the observation of a professional development session (random topics, i.e., cultural competency, etc.), of the participants as teacher leaders in their schools or as presenters in the school district. Summative information recorded will be inclusive in the participant's narrative. This is not an evaluative tool nor is it mandatory that each subject of this study be a professional staff developer. NOTE: *This tool was constructed by the researcher for the natural purposes of this project study to observe elements of transformational theory within the teacher.*

Name of Participant _____

Name of Session _____

Date of the Session _____

Number of Participants _____

Length of the Session _____

Location of the Session _____

Page 2

Objective of the session stated by the presenter/facilitator:

Researcher will make brief observation notations on the following actions of the professional developer:

Engagement of Participants:

- a. Engage in hands-on activities

- b. Engage group in small group discussions

- c. Respect and Courtesy

- d. Interaction with teachers

Presenter/Facilitator Development:

- a. Facilitate/present activities as planned

- b. Achieve objectives as stated by participant

- c. Collaboration with small or large group

Page 3

Researcher's Summative of Teacher Leader role:

Summative Notes to be added to participant's narrative portrait: