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AN EXPLORATIVE STUDY OF KENTUCKY TEACHER LEADER GRADUATE
PROGRAMS: RESPONSE TO POLICY CHANGE

DISSERTATION

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the
College of Education
at the University of Kentucky

By

Bailey M. Ubellacker
Lexington, Kentucky

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Lexington, Kentucky
2021

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

AN EXPLORATIVE STUDY OF KENTUCKY TEACHER LEADER GRADUATE PROGRAMS: RESPONSE TO POLICY CHANGE

Teacher leadership is a growing practice for supporting K-12 teachers and students. Recent policy regulations in the Commonwealth of Kentucky mandated a change in the professional standards used by approved graduate programs that prepare teacher leaders. To support this foundational change, program leaders designed programmatic goals, curriculum, structure, and tasks to align with the Teacher Leader Model Standards that emphasize promising research-based practices. The programs support development of teacher leadership through pedagogical approach, requirements, and programmatic structure.

Using a qualitative, multi-site case-study approach, this dissertation explored Kentucky teacher leadership graduate programs to understand how teacher leaders were formally prepared. Program leaders, faculty, and review of materials communicated how their programs support teacher leaders within and beyond the classroom, thus serving the greater community. Professional learning for teachers as leaders was a focus of this study. The study sought to uncover how formal development occurs within the context of Education Professional Standards Board (EPSB)-approved graduate leadership programs. *Layered Framework for, Models of, and Development within Teacher Leadership* served as the dissertation's conceptual framework.

Because the new legislative shift to Teacher Leader Model Standards was effective August 1, 2019, conclusions drawn from this study added to the literature base and field of study. This case study provided a foundational exploration of how high-graduate yielding teacher leader programs (TLPs) in Kentucky institutions formally prepared teacher leaders leading up to, during, and after new legislation adoption. The TLPs of interest are those approved by EPSB. In addition to programmatic individuals' dialogue, a Teacher Leader Review Committee member shared the process and intention behind the adoption of the Teacher Leader Model Standards for Kentucky's EPSB-approved teacher leadership programs.

KEYWORDS: Teacher Leadership, Teacher Leadership Graduate Programs, Professional Learning, Kentucky Educational Professional Standards Board, Teacher Leader Model Standards

Bailey M. Ubellacker

Student's Signature

04/19/2021

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DEDICATION

To my cherished family and friends for supporting and believing in me.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Teacher leaders support instruction and learning to meet students' learning needs (Jacques, Weber, Bosso, Olson, & Bassett, 2016). Their important roles in positively impacting student success lend to the need to understand how teacher leaders are formally developed. This qualitative, multi-site case-study explored how the Commonwealth of Kentucky formally develops teacher leaders through Education Professional Standards Board (EPSB)-approved graduate programs. Program faculty and leaders designed programmatic goals, curriculum, structure, and tasks to align with the Teacher Leader Model Standards that emphasize promising research-based practices. The conceptual frameworks for this study were policy diffusion (Shipan & Volden, 2008) and the researcher-created conceptual framework *Layered Framework for, Models of, and Development within Teacher Leadership* (Danielson, 2006; TLEC, 2011). To understand the origins and thus development of teacher leaders a holistic discussion about leadership was required.

To understand the function and practice of teacher leaders, a discussion on leadership is necessary. Leaders respond to changing organizational landscapes (Ahmed, Nawaz, & Khan, 2016; Dess & Picken, 2000). They engender leadership strategies to fit current needs, situations, experiences, and perspectives. Over time, theorists and practitioners alike developed ideas about leadership within and among organizations. Leadership definitions emerged nationally in the 1930s and have since dynamically transformed to stifle misconceptions (Ahmed et al., 2016; Rost, 1991). Misconceptions included the innate ability to lead among all persons, management as leadership, and

positional title as evidence of leadership. Leadership theorists provided foundational understandings of leadership that propel organizational members towards meeting goals, developing skills, and gaining knowledge among *all* members (Dess & Picken, 2000). Thus, effective leaders understand leadership theory and suitably apply practices. A comprehensive approach supporting such paired with decisive organizational leadership was proposed by Bolman and Deal (2017) in their following four-frame model.

Framing Leadership within Organizations

When developed and carried out effectively, leadership motivates organizational members to achieve shared goals and visions (Ahmed et al., 2016; Bass & Avolio, 1997). As proposed by Bolman and Deal (2017), effective leadership skills can be developed through holistic comprehension of the four organizational frames (i.e., structural, human resource, political, and symbolic) and how to address each appropriately. Each frame provides a unique approach to understanding organizational situations through overt and covert indicators.

In addition to providing guidance in solving organizational dilemmas, this four-framed approach equips leaders with tools and knowledge of specific technique utilization. For example, the reframing of organizational leadership encourages leaders to consider all four frames when developing and implementing solutions, expectantly resulting in the most effective solution. Only with a multi-framed approach can leaders confidently address diverse challenges and determine appropriate solutions to organizational issues. Thus, effective leaders take time to understand the benefits and challenges within the four organizational frames (Bolman & Deal, 2017).

Leadership theorists built on existing literature to conceptualize new perspectives and develop their own definitions, including in practice manifestation (Ahmed et al., 2016). During the 1990s, a post-industrial change occurred that launched new perspectives about leadership and separated concepts into management or leadership. One influential leadership researcher, Rost (1991), followed the evolution of leadership from its assumed notion of good management to its application in distinct settings. Although the two terms are sometimes perceived as similar, Rost proposed a complementary relationship.

To convey a more appropriate and holistic definition of leadership, Rost (1991) considered four concepts required for leadership: the relationship should be influence based, include both leaders and active followers, intend real changes, and develop a shared purpose. These elements appear in Rost's definition: "Leadership is an influence relationship among leaders and followers who intend real changes that reflect their mutual purposes" (p. 102). This definition describes the essence of leadership as it is reflected in daily organizational application.

In leadership, influence relationships are multi-directional as fluid and non-coercive movement occurs between a temporary position as a leader and as a follower (Bell, 1975; Rost, 1991). Influence is a robust process eliciting specific responses. Within this process, active followers assume leadership roles and participate in leadership—not passive followership. Authentic change emerges from transformational leadership through changes in organizational members' attitudes and behaviors that in turn reshape institutions (Burns, 1978). Building on this notion, Rost (1991) surmises that leadership requires a substantive intent of real change, even if the intended goal is not met. Mutual

purpose grows among leaders and followers over time through their interactions and achievement of shared goals, thus producing common visions and encouraging collective leadership.

Emergence of documented detailed leadership descriptions appeared nationally in the early twentieth century (Ahmed et al., 2016; Rost, 1991). The idea of leadership consumed much literature in the 1980s, and it continues to evolve to meet the needs of the twenty-first century and in varied domains, such as business, government, and education (Bolman & Deal, 2017; Rost, 1991). Divergence in organizational goals, leadership paradigms, and leadership influence in daily activities impact how leaders are selected, trained, and maintained (Rost, 1991). Although leadership looks, feels, and develops differently across different organizations, there is a common thread uniting diverse leadership experiences together. Beginning in the late 1920s, conversations on leadership were galvanized in academia, yet a universal definition of leadership remains unestablished.

Following Rost's (1991) definition of leadership, Ogawa and Bossert (1995) described leadership as a free-flowing organizational feature at various organizational levels manifesting beyond individuals' actions to influence the system itself. This definition likewise breaks down traditional views of unidirectional leadership and allows leaders to assume expansive roles essential to address twenty-first century situations, thus encouraging a new kind of school leadership (Leithwood et al., 2004). This contemporary definition provides direction for teacher leadership as it continually evolves and shapes to meet circumstantial educational needs. Hence, the modern teacher leader must develop leadership skills, content knowledge, maintain ability to utilize recommended best

practices, foster awareness of developing technologies, and skillfully navigate the system to adopt necessitated societal and contextual change (Kaya, Habaci, Kurt, Kurt, & Habaci, 2011; Rost, 1991).

Conceptual Usefulness in Defining Teacher Leadership

Teacher leadership is described as an influence relationship based on implicit empowerment, innovation for new programs, and high expectations of organizational accomplishments (Chew & Andrews, 2010; Murphy, 2005). Teachers serving as leaders utilize decentralized power to incite meaningful changes in instructional practices and to enhance the educational environment within their schools (Murphy & Beck, 1995).

Teacher leaders gain power and flexibility while immersed in leadership. Stemming from leadership characteristics, teacher leadership similarly reflects a fluid transition among leaders and followers—conditional on situations and skill sets of organizational members (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004; Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2001).

The influence relationship among teacher leaders, administrators, and other teachers allows those with pedagogical expertise to address specific situations and give diverse perspectives towards innovative solutions and improved practice (Murphy, 2005; Wasley, 1991). Responsibilities of teacher leaders increase in practice, encouraging seamless transitions between roles as leader and follower as they actively engage and react to their workplaces' needs with their developed skillsets. Teachers empowered through leadership can generate novel perspectives, enhance professional experiences, and develop skills that collectively assure student success (Miller, Moon, & Elko, 2000; Murphy, 2005).

Teacher leaders work towards change. They take initiative to form advocacy groups based on shared purpose and carry out meaningful change when supported by resources (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009; Wenger, 1998). Real change that is actualized by teacher leaders is dynamic in both content and magnitude when it impacts their daily community interactions and aligns with school missions (Pellicer & Anderson, 1995). Teacher leaders must intend real change and change must positively impact their students and school (Rost, 1991). Resources such as time, effort, and funds are limited and should not be misused on disingenuous change.

One purpose of teacher leadership stems from a responsibility to address a changing society (ASCD, 2015). A second is to prepare students to be engaged and impactful citizens with critical thinking skills to overcome unknown challenges and pursue career opportunities. These underlying purposes connect teacher leaders to their mission—to increase the potential for student achievement. As curricular standards and instructional strategies for success are rewritten, teacher leaders are trained to respond with mutual purposes for creating a community of best practices beyond instruction.

Framing teacher leadership through Rost's (1991) leadership definition provides a unique opportunity to dissect the core of teacher leadership. Although teacher leadership definitions remain far from ubiquitous, a common thread is woven within interpretations (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2011; Murphy, 2005; Smylie, Conley, & Marks, 2011; Wasley, 1991). Of the many developed definitions of leadership reviewed, Moore and Suleiman's (1997) description reflected Rost's (1991) lens holistically. Their definition asserts teacher leadership is "a transforming relationship between teachers, administrators,

community, and concerned others who intend real educational reform grounded in shared consensus coupled with successful classroom application and research” (p. 6).

Emergence of Contemporary Teacher Leadership

Teacher leadership is an embedded concept within a broader reform movement leading to increased attention on the P-12 education system in the United States of America (Murphy, 2005). Contrary to other reform initiatives, teacher leadership is an ongoing and underlying process interwoven into a more significant reform movement as opposed to a single strategy (Murphy, 2005; Snell & Swanson, 2000). Teacher leadership broke barriers (Lynch & Strodl, 1991; Yarger & Lee, 1994). It dismantled assumptions that teachers' sole role was teaching and administrators' was leading with top-to-bottom commands. The emergence of teacher leadership was influenced by educational reform movements driven by new expectations for improved student success (Donaldson et al., 2005; Wenner & Campbell, 2017). These expectations required an increased instructional capacity and job responsibilities.

Historically, leadership roles in education were formal and based on authority (Smylie et al., 2011). Teacher leadership emerged formally during the 1980s education reform initiatives in the United States and was integrated into teacher roles as a means to attract quality teachers to the learning field (Björk, Kowalski, & Browne-Ferrigno, 2014; Smylie et al., 2011; Sykes, 1990). Teacher leadership aligns with the leadership paradigm as they share similar central functionality in education (Crowther, Kaagan, Ferguson, & Hann, 2002; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009; Rost, 1991).

The notion of teacher leadership was further solidified when teachers operated outside of their classrooms to assist and support educational changes (Wenner &

Campbell, 2017; Murphy, 2005). Decentralized power and collective empowerment pervaded the education systems (Murphy, 2005; Murphy & Beck, 1995), allowing for the practice of shared and collective decision making among teacher leaders and peers (Silva, Gimbert, & Nolan, 2000). Sharing and exchanging pedagogical expertise within and beyond the classroom paved the way for more lasting school improvement. A tool through which sharing and building of ideas can occur is communities of practice (CoP). These arenas support relationship building, development of effective domain skills, and active engagement with co-professionals (Crawford, Roberts, & Hickmann, 2010; Frick & Browne-Ferrigno, 2016; Murphy, 2005).

Importance of Teacher Leadership

“Teacher leadership is receiving increased attention as a potential lever for improved instruction, recruitment and retention of effective teachers, and student outcomes” (Jacques et al., 2016, p. 1). Research suggests that teacher leaders are instrumental in cultivating high-functioning schools capable of heightened and sustained teaching and learning (Ogawa & Bossert, 1995; Silva et al., 2000; Spillane et al., 2001; Wells, Maxfield, Klocko, & Feun, 2010). Teacher leaders impact students and organizations through their learned and developed skills (NNSTOY, 2015). They influence their peers and turn research into practice and policy (Jacques et al., 2016). Other positive impacts of teacher leaders include decreased turnover of effective teachers and increased engagement in their educational settings. Teacher leadership is recognized with roles and actions as promoting collaboration, modeling, and risk taking. These actions mirror literature pertaining to leadership in general and serve as an extension of leadership.

Statement of Exploration

Within the literature, the definitions and responsibilities of teacher leadership are not uniform in theory or in practice (Killion, Harrison, Colton, Bryan, Delehant, & Cooke, 2016). This widens the range of how teacher leaders interact and utilize their skills to increase student achievement. Because responsibilities and actions of teacher leaders are comprehensive and diverse a challenge of understanding how teacher leaders are effectively developed exists. Developmental supports themselves are wide-ranging and involved. Strategies used to develop teacher leaders range from informal professional development activities to formal graduate programs (Browne-Ferrigno, 2016).

Between 2007 and 2008, the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky and Educational Professional Standards Board (EPSB) directed new models of advanced preparation for P-12 educators. The General Assembly mandated new models through revised statutes and the EPSB mandated through updated administrative regulations. EPSB, not the Kentucky Department of Education, serves as the teacher-based agency with authority to approve educator preparation programs. EPSB also certifies P-12 educators including teachers, counselors, principals, superintendents. These mandates required all formerly approved masters' programs for teachers be redesigned into teacher leader master's and Planned Fifth-Year Programs that incorporate leadership courses and experiences (Browne-Ferrigno, 2013). In 2018, the Kentucky General Assembly mandated that all EPSB-approved teacher leader programs adopt the Teacher Leader Model Standards (TLMS) as the framework for the preparation of teacher leaders, effective August 1, 2019 (16 KAR 1:016 Standards for Certified Teacher Leader). EPSB-approved teacher leader programs (TLPs) are those that provide a teacher leader for

advanced certification after successful program completion and have the approval of teacher leader master preparation programs from EPSB. Understanding how graduate teacher leadership programs in Kentucky are currently operating to formally prepare teacher leaders based on required adoption of the TLMS (Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium, 2011) is the focus of this research.

As a graduate of the teacher leadership program offered by the Department of Educational Leadership Studies at the University of Kentucky, I am personally invested in the preparation of teachers through graduate studies. As a Kentucky certified teacher, I care about the students attending P-12 schools in the Commonwealth and strive for a system that produces effective, well-trained teacher leaders. I experienced a teacher leader preparation program that allowed me to grow as a learner and a leader through curriculum, content, practice-based assignments, and action research that truly transformed my thinking about teachers as leaders. Thus, I hope to contribute to the research base that promotes promising preparation practices for all future teacher leaders.

Significance of the Study

This study is needed to understand more fully how teacher leaders are formally prepared in Kentucky and how their adherence to the TLMS ultimately provides more effective student learning. Teacher leaders equipped to navigate both within and beyond their classrooms support the entire culture and academic atmosphere of their educational setting (Chew & Andrews, 2010; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009; Muijs & Harris, 2006; Wenner & Campbell, 2017). Teacher leaders are foundational in supporting students and schools for academic success (Killion et al., 2016). Thus, through this I strove to identify how teacher leaders are being formally prepared in Kentucky and to identify strategies

and commonalities among the selected programs within the recent regulation changes. Because teacher leadership is being utilized to achieve diverse and comprehensive goals in schools, attention to how teacher leaders are developed is needed to navigate and respond to a changing educational landscape (Curtis, 2013; Duncan, 2014; Pennington, 2013; Smylie & Eckert, 2017).

Research Questions

This study is guided by the overarching question, *How are teacher leaders formally prepared in Kentucky?* Four sub-questions guide data collection and analysis to support answering the study's central question. These inquiries informed the development of the study's data collection instruments.

1. How are frameworks (i.e., supporting structures, concepts, research) used at selected institutions for designing and delivering the programs?
2. How do Kentucky teacher leadership programs at selected institutions align instructional strategies to support teacher leader development with the Teacher Leader Model Standards?
3. What role do professional learning communities or communities of practice play in supporting teacher leader development within the selected institutions' programs?
4. How do Kentucky teacher leadership programs at selected institutions evaluate candidates' success in addressing their program goals?

The research design was a case study investigating multiple sites and was conducted between March 2020 and August 2020. Data were collected for the study sites through document reviews, questionnaires, and voluntary interviews.

This research was timely: Kentucky policy mandated a significant change in program-content requirements that became effective in August 2019, thus providing a unique opportunity to understand the design of programs' progression towards adhering to the new regulation. Kentucky's TLPs were required to adopt the national TLMS (TLEC, 2011), which now frame program design and expected graduate competence. This change creates a timely opportunity for examining past and future designs of transformational teacher-leadership programs (Carver, 2016). In addition, the 2020 global pandemic surfaced needs for innovative student instruction and reliance on teachers as leaders to pioneer reimagined virtual learning. This increased drive for excellently prepared teacher leaders to pivot nationally and across the Commonwealth added to the immediate need for quality teacher leader development and training.

Target Population

The target population for this study emerged from Kentucky's current 21 accredited TLPs (EPSB, 2018). From this population, a purposive sample was composed of the institutions with the highest producing teacher leadership degrees from academic years 2014–2015 to 2018–2019. Comprehensive institutions produced the highest number of TLP graduates according to a national study as described in Table 1.1 (Perrone & Tucker, 2019). These potential study sites were chosen due to their common characteristics of high degree production thus creating a purposive sampling (Cohen et al., 2011; Gerring, 2012; Goertz & Mahoney, 2012).

Table 1.1

Changes in Degrees Conferred in Educational Leadership from 2000 to 2014

Carnegie Classification	Master's			Specialist			Doctoral		
	2000	2014	% change	2000	2014	% change	2000	2014	% change
Research I	906	1,433	58	234	254	9	519	868	67
Research II	815	691	-15	120	163	36	201	296	47
Doctoral I	1,490	1,901	28	165	325	97	464	452	-3
Doctoral II	1,094	1,158	6	91	192	111	332	341	3
Comprehensive I	6,289	10,949	74	1,421	3,719	162	334	1,611	382
Comprehensive II	181	736	307	2	124	6,100	0	50	
Baccalaureate I	28	103	268	0	51		0	22	
Baccalaureate II	274	2,605	851	0	194		0	224	

Source: Integrated Postsecondary Educational Data System analyzed by and retrieved from Perrone and Tucker (2019).

Definition of Key Terms

Key terms related to this research are presented in Table 1.2. These guiding terms and definitions provide a foundation to the literature review and study.

Table 1.2

Key Terms Defined

Term	Definition
Communities of Practice (CoP)	Arenas that support relationship building, development of effective domain skills, and active engagement with co-professionals that are formed, designed, and driven by the professional (Crawford, Roberts, & Hickmann, 2010; Frick & Browne-Ferrigno, 2016; Murphy, 2005; Wenger, 1998)
Comprehensive Institutions	A higher learning institution equipped with teaching and learning services including graduate and professional programs and schools able to grant bachelor, master, and doctoral degrees (Schneider & Deane, 2015).

Table 1.2 (continued)

Formal Teacher Leadership Development	Practices specifically designed to increase leadership understanding and skills and school outcomes through structured and planned support (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009; OECD, 2009).
Informal Teacher Leadership Development	Practices in which teachers engage to increase their capacity to improve student learning outside of being asked or within the guidelines of an established program (NCTL, 2014).
Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)	Structured learning groups that blur the lines of classroom and community through practice, personnel, curriculum, and activities by allowing engagement among teachers and administrators so that learning for all occurs (Hord, 1997). The creation, organization, and directive of PLCs are traditionally policy driven.
Teacher Leader Model Standards (TLMS)	Guiding standards to promote teacher leader preparation and implementation in practice in Kentucky (EPSB, 2018).
Teacher Leadership	Operationally defined as teachers collaborating through collective skills, promising effective practices, and professional learning to influence and promote effective school and student improvement as defined by the TLMS (TLEC, 2011).

Summary

This chapter provided an introduction to the study, its significance, contextual background information, and an overview of key elements in the study design. The relationship and extension of leadership to teacher leadership was presented. The importance and impact of teacher leaders served to highlight the potential positive influence they have in student success and learning. Chapter 2 includes a review of salient literature beginning with the background, definition, and supports needed for teacher leader development and concluding with the study’s conceptual framework. Chapter 3

details the carefully considered study design and methods utilized for data collection and analysis. In Chapter 4, I report key findings from analysis of data gathered through document reviews, websites, questionnaires, and individual interviews. The dissertation closes with a presentation of key findings with a discussion of implications for research and practice in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The study sought to understand how Kentucky teacher leaders were formally prepared through approved graduate programs within policy diffusion (Shipan & Volden, 2008) and the researcher-created conceptual framework *Layered Framework for, Models of, and Development within Teacher Leadership* (Danielson, 2006; TLEC, 2011). The following literature review culminates into a conceptual framework for professional learning needs for formal TLP development. Thus, the review focused on teacher leadership professional learning in both informal and formal ways to explore needed effective strategies. The scope of the literature review was a comprehensive investigation of teacher leadership spanning from early understandings of the concept to current implementation. The citations used are various and extensive, and methodical processes for searching and manuscript organization, such as generating keywords and accessing Endnote applications, were utilized in the creation of this literature review. I pulled from an in-depth literature base both within and beyond coursework experiences and literature. Recommendations from faculty members and peers guided the process and extended selection for reviewed literature. Both online, university-provided database searches and library visits cultivated the literature presented in this chapter.

In the literature review, I first discussed diverse perspectives of teacher leadership to develop an operational definition of teacher leadership for study purposes. The discussion preceded the need for teacher leadership and a dialogue surrounding advocates for and opposition against teacher leaders. The literature review broadens with an overview of guidance types and support indispensable to develop effective teacher

leaders, inclusive of both formal and informal learning. The chapter subsequently narrows to specific recommended strategies and activities for teacher leaders' professional learning within formal preparation programs. Next, the reviewed literature explains how CoP, instructional coaching or mentoring, action research, and other formal structures provide professional learning opportunities. The chapter concludes with specific information about the study setting, Kentucky teacher leadership programs, and the agency that approves programs. A conceptual framework arose out of the literature, presented within this chapter.

Teacher Leadership

Teacher leadership emerged and remained at the forefront of educational transformation with teacher leaders as advocates for teacher development, collaboration, and best practices for student success (Crowther, Kaagan, Ferguson, & Hann, 2002; Danielson, 2007; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009; Killion et al., 2016; Muijs & Harris, 2006). A focus on teacher leadership offers benefits through retaining highly qualified teachers; equipping them with skills for continuous, comprehensive changes; and supporting teachers to make critical decisions (Boyd-Dimock & McGree, 1995; Howey, 1988; Killion et al., 2016; Livingston, 1992). The term teacher leadership encompasses the skillsets and learned competences that teachers exhibit within and beyond their classrooms. Teacher leaders practice teacher leadership. This definition and relationship are further explored in this section.

Carefully designed, intensive professional learning is required to develop effective teacher leaders who then promote positive growth for colleagues, students, and visions in our nation's schools (Donaldson, 2006; Fullan, 2006; Killion et al., 2016).

Research on and reflection in application provide insight into needed learning, structures, and effective training. Through research-based ongoing development and preparation, teacher leaders are equipped to assume their impactful and multilevel roles as they are occasionally leaders and followers throughout their given responsibilities (Danielson, 2006; Miller & Pasley, 2012).

Leadership is complex and uniquely connected to specific educational settings. Thus, the notion of teacher leadership is flexible and not clearly defined (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009; Smylie et al., 2011; York-Barr & Duke, 2004). It requires much input from practitioners and theorists across context and time to fashion a universal definition of teacher leadership (Danielson, 2006; Murphy, 2005; Teacher Leadership Exploratory Commission, 2011; York-Barr & Duke, 2004). Connecting threads of best practices and conceptualization materialize the construct.

Literature-Informed Definition of Teacher Leadership

Daily education practices increasingly emphasize the change-driving aspects and influences of teacher leadership (Ogawa & Bossert, 1995; Spillane et al., 2001; York-Barr & Duke, 2004). As teacher leaders' roles expand—becoming ubiquitous with hope for a stronger school community—it grows even more critical to identify an all-encompassing definition (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009; Murphy, 2005; Smylie et al., 2011; Wasley, 1991). Currently, ambiguity surrounds teacher leadership definitions which can prevent universal recognition of the title, responsibilities, and needed development. Conventionally and broadly, teacher leadership has been defined as a role with a “set of practices that enhance the teaching profession” (Killion et al., 2016, p. 4).

As teacher leadership moved towards the current emergence of re-culturing schools, even this imprecise definition is too narrow to capture the span of roles and responsibilities that teacher leaders assume (Silva et al., 2000). Teacher leadership is achieved by teachers in P-12 classes as they assume both teaching and leadership responsibilities in and out of the classroom (Wenner & Campbell, 2017). Danielson (2006) offers the idea that the term *teacher leader* "refers to that set of skills demonstrated by teachers who continue to teach students but also have an influence that extends beyond their classrooms to others within their school and elsewhere" (p. 12). Elements of this definition are reflected in the TLMS (Teacher Leadership Exploratory Commission, 2011) adopted by many states nationwide, including the Commonwealth of Kentucky. The definition describes strategies capable of promoting effective, collaborative teaching, thus positively increasing student achievement (Harrison & Killion, 2007). The definition also speaks of improving school and district decision making and of creating an active teaching community to fit twenty-first century learning (Wenner & Campbell, 2017). Structured guidelines for teacher leadership ushered in the need for operationalization for research and continuous improvement of best practices in leadership.

Operational Definition of Teacher Leadership

Teacher leadership is contextually defined and operationalized as appropriate to align with the diverse characteristics of each school environment, making a universal delineation challenging (Killion et al., 2016). Thus, teacher leadership is insufficiently conceptually and operationally defined (York-Barr & Duke, 2004). Yet, to investigate the questions outlined in this study, an operational definition of teacher leadership was

compulsory. The definition must support observation and identification of teacher leadership elements in Kentucky TLPs. Thus, to transform this abstract concept into specific observable traits, the question “What do teacher leaders do?” was first asked (York-Barr & Duke, 2004, p. 260).

Teacher leaders “do” many things in and beyond their classroom with the ultimate goal to provide equitable educational opportunities for each student (Wenner & Campbell, 2017). Daily teacher leadership actions include those carried out in formal and informal positions (York-Barr & Duke, 2004). Formal positions are those with defined jobs, such as department heads, instructional coaches, professional-development facilitators (Darling-Hammond, 1988), and members of school improvement teams. Informal roles include actions that encourage collaboration, improve vision, resolve conflicts, and advocate for teachers and students. Actions of teacher leadership are complex, diverse, and need-specific as leaders react to their surroundings via distributed leadership (Spillane et al., 2001). For the study, *teacher leadership* is operationally defined as *teachers collaborating through collective skills, promoting effective practices, and professional learning to influence and promote effective school and student improvement as aligned with the Teacher Leader Model Standards* (TLEC, 2011).

Connection to study. The study was to understand current formal TLPs in Kentucky and to identify aspects of the programs that may promote effective teacher leadership. To explore how TLPs prepare teachers as leaders experientially, cognitively, and collaboratively in practice, an understanding of what teacher leaders do in action is necessary (Gates & Robinson, 2009). Embracing an identified understanding and operationalized definition of how teacher leaders interact with their school environment

directly relates to preparation and growth. The operational definition is foundational to addressing aspects of formal development in teacher leadership certification programs.

Need for teacher leadership. Educational practices change to meet the learning needs of individual students (Wenner & Campbell, 2017), and teacher leaders are valuable agents of change. They serve both formal and informal roles in decision making, understand the needs of the school where they work, and engage in best practices shared through collaboration (Muijs & Harris, 2006). Benefits of teacher leaders include assisting administrators with everyday learning tasks, teacher development (Yarger & Lee, 1994), increased school vision (Wenner & Campbell, 2018), school culture development, and ultimately student success defined by the state, school, teacher, and student. Uniquely positioned as teachers, teacher leaders have opportunities to support peers in classroom pedagogy in ways that school administrators cannot. Positional power barriers and limited time of teacher leaders to invest in each teacher's individual development can inhibit this productivity (Muijs & Harris, 2006; Murphy, 2005; Yarger & Lee, 1994). In addition to supporting peers, teacher leaders embrace various identities (Wenner & Campbell, 2018), fulfill multiple purposes (TLEC, 2011), and perform a "broad array of actions" (Miller et al., 2000, p. 5). Ultimately, their assumed roles maintain school progress and allow for increased student success.

Teacher Leadership Advocates

Teacher leaders are advocates for positive culture, student learning, and educational improvement (Chew & Andrews, 2010; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009; Muijs & Harris, 2006; Wenner & Campbell, 2017). Although often not directly, the literature also promotes group advocacy for teacher leadership (Killion et al., 2016). Positive

impacts are evident within all levels of the education community including district personnel, school administrative staffs, and faculties. Teacher leadership leads to high impact employment, career advancement, school improvement, and an environment of continuous learning. School administrators gain benefits from expanding teacher roles to leadership roles. This enhancement creates career development, accordingly, attracting and retaining qualified educators (Boyd-Dimock & McGree, 1995). Many administrators select their teacher leaders based on teachers evidencing abilities to address diverse leadership challenges.

Schooling is changing (ASCD, 2015). Teachers serving as teacher leaders are foundational to student achievement. They meet outcomes through utilizing effective learning practices, developing welcoming and supportive classroom cultures, and engaging in their own continuous professional learning (Killion et al., 2016; Wenner & Campbell, 2017). Because teacher leaders fulfill daily school routines, they are aware of what is happening in their schools and are able to address challenges (Howey, 1988; Livingston, 1992). Thus,

Advocacy for teacher professionalism and expanded leadership opportunities and roles is based on the understanding that teachers because they have daily contact with students, are in the best position to make critical decisions about issues related to teaching and learning. (Killion et al., 2016, p. 5)

Teachers as leaders within their profession have the capacity to increase collaboration, share best practices, advocate for ongoing professional development, and assist with content- and situation-specific problems (Muijs & Harris, 2006; Wenner & Campbell, 2017). It is a natural step to expand leadership to teachers because they provide unique educational views. When adequately supported, teacher leaders can serve their school community as leaders in their profession.

Teacher Leadership Opponents

Although the literature does not highlight true opposition of teacher leadership, some obstacles can emerge when implementing teacher leadership—particularly when engagement by key players is lacking (Murphy, 2005; Wenner & Campbell, 2017).

Teacher unions designed to protect teachers' rights may oppose the concept of teachers supporting school administrators in completing their tasks (Murphy, 2005). Additionally, oppositional challenges surface in the different interpretations of teacher leadership and changes to traditional leadership structures. These differences in understanding of teacher leadership come from the complexity in responsibilities and ambiguity in the definition (Ackerman & Mackenzie, 2006 as cited in Donaldson, 2007; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2011). Some sub-groups within a school community see teacher leadership as a ladder for individual career advancement, while others seek the position to build a professional community. Thus, opposition occurs as a response to how teacher leadership is being implemented and possibly manipulated when used in educational reform initiatives (Miller et al., 2000).

Based on the principles of shared leadership, which occurs among teacher leaders and administrators, challenges and opposition to proposed ideas may arise within a school community. Principals and other administrators may have difficulty surrendering control and authority that is needed for teacher leaders to be effective (Friedman, 2011). Additionally, resistance from teachers and parents familiar with the traditional hierarchical structures can cause rifts—particularly when teachers become jealous or fearful when peers assume leadership responsibilities (Chew & Andrews, 2010; Friedman, 2011; Muijs & Harris, 2006). Internal opposition from colleagues over teacher

leadership undertaking has materialized through blocked progress of proposed initiatives, ostracization of teacher leaders by peers, resentment from colleagues, and development of cliques within the faculty (Brosky, 2011; Wenner & Campbell, 2017). At times, both administrators and teachers can foster opposition to the progression of teacher leadership since it is difficult for a teacher to be a “leader when others do not wish to follow” (Wenner & Campbell, 2017, p. 155). Thus, teachers aspiring to engage in leadership and principals supporting teacher leadership need to be mindful of possible obstacles that can emerge when leadership by teachers is new within a school.

Teacher Leadership Supports

Teacher leaders require a variety of supports. These supports include environmental and developmental structures that provide the frame in which teacher leadership is built. Discussed supports can help or hinder fostering teacher leadership depending on their presence or absence. Outcomes can be contingent on design and implementation.

Environmental structures. Environmental factors on the state, district, school, and classroom level impact the richness or lack thereof of teacher leadership development and implementation (Clemson-Ingram & Fessler, 1997; Murphy, 2005). Policymakers at the state level have the responsibility to establish and regulate teacher leadership preparation, certification, position creation, and funding to support the practice (Killion et al., 2016). Administrators at the district level are responsible for advocating and providing growth opportunities for teacher leadership, transparency about expectations for teacher leadership, and fostering respect for the position. Respect is established by recognizing the job via title and salary, providing advancement opportunities, and offering appropriate accolades.

To cultivate teacher leaders, administrators at the school level should provide time and space for teacher leader collaboration, reflection, and practice with their peers (Chesson, 2011; Chew & Andrews, 2010). Along with these beneficial work practices, identification and announcement of teacher leaders by school administrators sow authority in the hierarchical structure (Wenner & Campbell, 2017). Cultivation does not singularly stem from administrators—it also comes from teacher communities. Teacher communities allow teacher leaders to thrive by recognizing their position through collaborating, listening, and questioning. Once structures by administrators and teacher communities are established, teacher leaders can grow through developmental structures gained through positive relationships and access to resources.

Developmental structures. Similar to many organization members, teacher leaders require positive relationships with administrators, colleagues, and other teacher leaders (Wenner & Campbell, 2017). Support from principals is an invaluable contribution to the given relationships. Principals foster schoolwide relationships through providing resources (Klinker, Watson, Furgerson, Halsey, & Janisch, 2010), autonomy (Friedman, 2011), appreciation (Killion et al., 2016; Sanders, 2006), and asking faculty for support to acknowledge the individuals as teacher leaders (Margolis & Doring, 2012). They can modify and set the tone for how the school community interacts with teacher leaders. Minimizing collegial resentment and resistance to ensure teacher leaders can successfully perform their roles is the principal's responsibility (Wenner & Campbell, 2017).

In addition to solid relationships, school climates that embrace change can lead to collective visions which support teacher leader effectiveness (Brooks, Scribner, &

Eferakorho, 2004). A fluid hierarchical structure—divergent from traditional single or dual leader structure—both showcases a change-embracing environment as well as enhances it (Chew & Andrews, 2010; Friedman, 2011; Muijs & Harris, 2006). Building and cultivating a teacher leadership-centered community requires a collective willingness to change paired with honest communication among staff members and between teacher leaders and administrators (Chesson, 2011; Margolis & Doring, 2012).

Teacher Leader Professional Learning

Professionals must continue to learn and develop their practices through appropriate supports, active engagement, and opportunities for applying learned materials (Killion et al., 2016). Adults gain knowledge through processes within and beyond their formal or professional practice (Calleja, 2014; Frick & Browne-Ferrigno, 2016; Schön, 1987). As teacher leaders navigate their unique school and classroom environments, they engage in both formal and informal development (Cherkowski, 2018; Danielson, 2006; Education Professional Standards Board, 2018; TLEC, 2011).

Effective teacher leadership necessitates purposeful development of leadership roles (Muijs & Harris, 2006; Klar, 2012a; York-Barr & Duke, 2004). Thus, to produce active agents of change and maintain teacher leadership in education, teacher leaders need to be trained, supported, guided, and given opportunities to experiment using their new knowledge and skills in a safe environment (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009). Higher education TLPs are often the structure in which formal learning for teacher leaders occurs (Perrone & Tucker, 2019). However, learning experiences both within and beyond the program structures likewise promote effective teacher leadership practices. Effective teacher leadership development grows from health-centric and structural supports

(Killion et al., 2016), active and collaborative engagement (Danielson, 2016; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009), and application in practice (Crowther, Ferguson, & Hann, 2009; Gigante & Firestone, 2008; Valdez, Broin, & Carroll, 2015).

Teacher leadership development supports. Based on a review of the literature, supports and guidance for teacher leadership development are categorized by the impact on health and culture of the leadership environment (Killion et al., 2016). Additionally, they are categorized by supports that reinforce operational conditions through established structures (Killion et al., 2016). Conditions for teacher leadership development and stability include relational trust, collective responsibility, continuous development, recognition and encouragement, and autonomy (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Danielson, 2007; Goddard, Hoy, & Hoy, 2000; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009; Pink, 2011). Specific structural supports necessary to promote teacher leadership include a defined and comprehensive plan for teacher leadership, established roles, supervisor support, opportunities for reflection, and clearly defined legislation pertaining to the criteria of effective teacher leadership (Danielson, 2007; Killion et al., 2016).

Health-centric supports. Through a mutually beneficial relationship, healthy school systems and teacher leadership positively impact each other (Crowther et al., 2009; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009; Killion et al., 2016; Valdez et al., 2015). Teacher leaders support a healthy culture and decrease teacher turnover through proper resource allocation and focus on shared decision making and student-centric professional development methods (Moller, Childs-Bowen, & Scrivner, 2001; Ogawa & Bossert, 1995). However, healthy schools and cultures are also pivotal to increasing meaningful teacher leadership (Crowther et al., 2009; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009; Valdez et al.,

2015). This reciprocal relationship supports teacher leaders in fostering a healthy culture positively.

School culture. Conditions for a healthy school culture to nurture teacher leadership development include relational trust, collective responsibility, continuous development, recognition, and autonomy (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Goddard et al., 2000; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009; Killion et al., 2016; Pink, 2011). Fostering relational trust in a school community strengthens teacher leadership development as a degree of vulnerability is required when working towards common outcomes (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). However, fostering a favorable climate that nurtures and supports teacher leaders takes time—understanding from the entire educational community is required (Moller & Pankake, 2006). To establish organizational trust, individuals need confidence that colleagues will match their actions and words, share information and control, follow through, have others' best interests in mind, and be honest in their abilities (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Tschannen-Moran, 2014). Collective responsibility emphasizes understanding that students can benefit from the thinking of all teachers and that teachers are collectively responsible for the learning of all students in their community (Goddard et al., 2000). This collectivity supports teacher-leader development in shared leadership as all teachers and administrators share the same collective learning beliefs (Lambert, 2002).

Recognition and autonomy. Recognition or celebration of shared goal accomplishments and professional learning expertise provide a healthy culture, thus maintaining conditions for effective teacher leadership growth (Pink, 2011). Healthy organizational cultures promote autonomy in teaching by removing barriers and

allocating resources to support teachers to act independently. These aspects of a healthy culture create a productive environment for teacher leaders to learn and lead in a safe setting. They also grant teacher leaders flexibility to experiment in the moment to discover innovative ways for improving instruction and student achievement. A culture that rewards and identifies these risk-taking behaviors self-nurtures through exploration of effective learning strategies (Danielson, 2007).

Principal supports. Principals are essential to the development and ultimate success of teacher leaders (Moller & Pankake, 2006). They should genuinely and actively participate in shared leadership while encouraging diverse perspectives for an improved school environment. Principals are responsible for selecting individuals for a leadership position that complements and challenges teachers' skills, talents, and personalities (ASCD, 2015). Expectantly included with the leadership role, opportunities for professional development increase teacher leadership efficacy (Blase & Blase, 2006; Harrison & Killion, 2007). Additionally, principals support teacher leaders emotionally—listening to concerns, encouraging risk taking, and supporting teacher leaders in school improvement choices. They need to provide ongoing professional growth and resources for preparation (Killion et al., 2016). Support also comes from clear goals, conversational feedback, and reflection, further identified as structures of success for teacher leaders.

Structural supports. Along with a healthy culture and school system supports, supportive structures are needed for effective teacher leadership facilitation. Established structures and norms provide needed clarity to the role of teacher leaders and provide the means to carry out the roles effectively. Teacher leaders should be confident in their

roles, supplied needed resources, and engage in professional learning (Danielson, 2007; Killion et al., 2016).

Transparency of responsibilities and policies. Effective development of teacher leaders requires already established school leaders sharing leadership (Danielson, 2007). Giving up authority, influence, and power are a few characteristics of this shared leadership. Role changes within administration should be clear, deliberate, and consistent, providing security for the teacher to grow and explore their new responsibilities. Teacher leaders need a clear definition of teacher leadership and expectations within the macrocosm and microcosm of their work, often defined by a formalized set of district policies (CFTL, 2017). Principals need to provide specific and clear expectations as a school leader (Moller & Pankake, 2006). These include procedures, resources, and policies specific to the school systems (Killion et al., 2016).

Legislation also impacts the development of teacher leaders as districts provide support through positions, policies, and practices (Shipan & Volden, 2008). Districts have the authority to pave the way for effective teacher leadership and have a broad implementation and development reach (CFTL, 2017). Thus, support from policies and districts is vital to the development and success of teacher leadership.

Identified resources. Commitment to the process and daily tasks of teacher leadership is also needed (Killion et al., 2016). Comprehensive plans for teacher leadership with guidelines of how the teacher can grow over time demonstrate dedication to the success of teacher leaders. Set resources such as time for collaboration, guided risk taking (Suranna & Moss, 2002), and professional development provide security for teacher leaders to grow collaboratively and refine skills (Cherkowski, 2018). Teacher

leaders need time to engage in CoP, thereby gaining guidance from peers and discussing ways to improve learning in their school environments (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002).

Opportunities for professional development. Deliberate professional development encourages continuous growth. Growth includes identifying new practices through reflection (Cherkowski, 2018), feedback, and learning inquiry-based practices (Porter, Garet, Desimone, & Birman, 2003). Professional development supports teacher leaders through empowering change, building content knowledge, exposure to experiences, and providing long-term improvement opportunities (Darling-Hammond, Chung Wei, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009; Johnson, 2006). It takes many shapes, including continuing education, research, skill-based training, workshops, and professional learning communities (PLCs).

Teacher leadership engagement supports. Current promising practices in learning require students' active engagement with content and exploration of new constructs to enhance abilities to gain understanding on how to learn—and ultimately pursue lifelong learning (Gilbert, 2007). Active engagement can deepen teacher leadership learning through problem-based inquiry and exploratory practice (Barnes, Marateo, & Ferris, 2007; Oblinger & Oblinger, 2005; Willms, Friesen, & Milton, 2009). This occurs through collaboration and shared leadership (Lambert, 2002).

Collaboration is defined as a mutual engagement among members in a group through problem-solving and serves as a central component of teacher leadership (Mainous, 2012; Williams & Sheridan, 2006). Teacher leader development occurs through the continuous evaluation and improvement of instructional practices (Danielson,

2006). Formal teacher leader programs support collaborative skills to increase communication, productivity, and student success (Gigante & Firestone, 2008; Goins, 2017). Collaboration with colleagues reinforces the positive impacts of engaging as a teacher leader.

A 1960s paradigm shift from highly structured, hierarchical leadership styles to more flexible, inclusive leadership occurred as focus on leadership traits and behaviors decreased and informal leadership emerged (Polite, 1993). This shift influenced school atmospheres by re-culturing personal paradigm about teaching and learning and brought change through conflict and tension as “differing expectations of the role of the building principal” surfaced (Polite, 1993, p. 10). An outcome of this shift was the rise of shared leadership.

Shared leadership surfaced as a practice to allow teacher leaders to actively share power and influence with others, thus displacing the traditional single individual authority figure (Goins, 2017; Pearce, Manz, & Sims, 2009). Teacher leaders ensure their voices and those of others are heard by taking ownership of decisions and garnering significant influence (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2011). Teacher leaders become active agents in charge of their learning and practices following the shift. They use their skills to participate in active engagement of standard procedures (Lambert, 2002), and as leadership is shared, teacher leaders develop through learning from and with others, both systemically and informally (NCTL, 2014). These meaningful informal developments allow teacher leaders opportunities for growth and reflection, expanding the potential for further leadership development in alignment with the given paradigm shift (Killion et al., 2016; White & Guthrie, 2016).

Teacher Leadership Development

Teacher leader roles are both formal and informal (Smylie, Conley, & Marks, 2011; York-Barr & Duke, 2004) and are developed both formally and informally (Katzenmayer & Moller, 2009). Teacher leaders influence change through building relationships among teacher leaders, principals, and peers. Characteristics of informal teacher learning occur daily and are voluntary, dependent on the culture of the school, and they occur outside of the school's development plans (NCTL, 2014).

For the purposes of the study, I define informal development as practices in which teachers engage to increase their capacity to improve student learning outside of being asked or within the guidelines of an established program. In contrast, formal development are practices specifically designed to increase teachers' understanding of leadership, school outcomes, and skills through structured support, such as programs, workshops, courses, and coaching/mentoring (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009; OECD, 2009).

Informal Development

Informal teacher leadership development occurs through everyday interactions in CoP (Fullan, 2006), peer learning, and professional reading. Other routine practices, such as searching for web-based materials and implementing new strategies support continuous learning (NCTL, 2014). Informal learning is essential—it emphasizes lifelong learning, occurs naturally and when needed, and reinforces intrinsic motivation towards reaching school goals. There exists significantly less research presented on informal development for teacher leaders compared to formal development, yet informal practices help teachers collectively improve teaching.

Peer learning. Peer learning occurs in pairs and small groups where teacher leaders can share and benefit from the experience and expertise of colleagues (NCTL, 2014). Educational leaders' influence includes increasing teachers' instructional practices and facilitating educational leadership and student learning (Supovitz, Sirinides, & May, 2009). Peer learning occurs through teacher leaders engaging in active dialogue, observations, questioning, experimenting, and sharing among colleagues (OECD, 2009). Informal learning commonly occurs within CoP or informal networks of professional learners that develop around shared meaning and partake in collective knowledge building (Fullan, 2006; Lave & Wenger, 1991).

Social media serve as additional and emerging sources of peer learning through digital networks (Wang, Sauers, & Richardson, 2016). Twitter was specifically highlighted in research as a tool that benefits educational leaders through sharing of resources, personal learning and reflection, and professional development among other applications (Jackson, 2012; Sauers & Richardson, 2015). Peer learning occurs while individuals engage with Twitter to share and gain resources, generate and collaborate within professional communities, and have real-time conversations with fellow educators, policymakers, and other stakeholders (Carpenter & Krutka, 2014; Cox & McLeod, 2014; Wang et al., 2016). Teacher leaders engage with Twitter as a means to serve as a knowledge broker within and beyond their school communities (Richardson, Sauers, Cho, & Lingat, 2019). They disseminate their absorbed information in formal and informal ways through conversations, emails, announcements, and through implementation into their own practice.

Voluntary research. Teachers who engage in leadership gain learning in less formal ways including reviewing literature, reflection (Cherkowski, 2018), work experiences, and practices to increase their capacities to teach and guide colleagues in current instructional trends (OECD, 2009). This learning is essential to the development of individual teacher leaders and to the improvement of the school as educators are actively seeking innovative best practices as detailed in the literature. Without the introduction of new findings and diverse global perspectives of student learning, teacher leaders would lack the needed knowledge to address school challenges and problems. Voluntary research provides teacher leaders with tools to gain insight into how other educators have overcome student achievement challenges and support to consider mirroring and sharing research practices in their classrooms. Research can range from searching the Internet for reliable sources or reading teacher testimonials to an in-depth literature review on specific topics, such as project-based learning for K-5 mathematics students.

Implementation and feedback. Informal learning for teacher leaders occurs through risk taking and assuming more responsibilities (Beachum & Dentith, 2004; Harrison & Killion, 2007; Suranna & Moss, 2002), taking time for feedback and reflection (Cherkowski, 2018), and implementing newly-learned strategies (Argyris & Schon, 1974; Kolb & Kolb, 2012). Teacher leaders engage in continuous learning loops of outcomes, practices, and feedback to fit their needs and address identified problems or challenges in student learning (Argyris & Schon, 1974). Following experiential learning theory, teachers pore over data, establish questions, hypotheses, and generalize through evidence-based practices in hopes of resolving classroom problems (Kolb & Kolb, 2012).

Teacher leaders use everyday observation and feedback as ways to improve practice, which also strengthens their skills of teacher leadership by modeling best practices in classroom instruction. Principals provide foundations for the development and success of teacher leaders through engaging in feedback processes (Moller & Pankake, 2006) and by being aware of teacher leader growth. Opportunities for personal reflection and small group interactions align with research focusing on the importance of social-emotional development for educational leadership for teachers (Bridgeland, Bruce & Hariharan, 2013; Cherkowski, 2018).

Formal Development

Formal development for teacher leadership preparation seeks to improve implementation for both pre- and in-service teachers (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009; Silva et al., 2000; York-Barr & Duke, 2004). Teacher leader formal development is a part of many policy agendas at school, district, and state levels. Formal development of teacher leaders includes structured professional development (i.e., workshops and seminars), coaching (Knight, 2018), mentorship (Pelan, 2012), structured action research (Diana, 2011), and advanced degree programs (Cherkowski, 2018; Perrone & Tucker, 2019). Participation in formal development is key to leadership development. Accordingly, it increases effectiveness of teacher leaders through informing decisions, capacities for growth, and mindsets (Drago-Severson, 2016; Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2018).

Professional development outlets. Types of formal professional development are planned with specific purposes and outcomes with the ultimate goal of increasing student learning and influencing the teaching of others (Katzenmayer & Moller, 2009).

Commonly, professional development is associated with traditional workshops, conferences, seminars, presentations, site visits, and observations. Teachers engage in and lead professional development based on strong theoretical and empirical support (Wenner & Campbell, 2017) to expand their knowledge bases, explore research-supported teaching practices, understand diverse perspectives, and further their education. This process disseminates new learnings and innovative ideas among peers and other collaborators. Consequently, teacher leaders gain the confidence (Cherkowski, 2018), knowledge, and tools needed to effectively perform their responsibilities along with the byproduct of reducing teacher attrition (Wenner & Campbell, 2017).

Coaching and mentorship. Coaching and mentoring provide development through cycles of learning and collaboration with experienced individuals (Knight, 2018). Mentoring encompasses the relationship of an experienced individual helping a novice teacher succeed through guidance (Pelan, 2012). Mentors often hold more experience, higher skills, and serve as role models to new members in their field. Instructional coaches focus on improving performance and outcomes through a reciprocal relationship based on trust and collaboration among peers. Coaching builds on the coachee's strengths through open-ended questioning and guided risk-taking. Coaches embrace inquiry to learn and develop best instructional practices to share and develop their own and other teacher leaders' skills. This formal development provides teacher leaders with a safe and flexible environment to grow and ask questions with a trusted, experienced colleague.

Action research. Action research provides teacher leaders with a systematic process to incorporate instructional techniques and evidence-based practices to explore usefulness to classroom environments (Diana, 2011). Taking the next step to structured

action research creates a meaningful opportunity for teacher leader development through sustaining characteristics of pride, energy, dedication to learning, and excitement for effective change. Classroom-based action research is defined as a systematic inquiry by teachers and teacher leaders seeking solutions that are both timely and practical to address learning obstacles (Tillotson, Ochanji, & Diana, 2004). Action research allows teacher leaders to grow professionally through evaluation, reflection, and risk-taking in their teaching, resulting in more effective teaching, higher achievement of students, and increased school community through the sharing of ideas and findings (Diana, 2011).

Teacher Leadership Preparation Programs

Teachers enroll in teacher and educational leadership programs to gain skills, knowledge, ideas, a degree, and a rank or position change, among other personal and professional benefits (Snoek, Enthoven, Kessels, & Volman, 2017). TLPs provide structured guidance for continuous learning and student wellbeing (Cherkowski, 2018), and, consequently, school improvement. It is assumed that content, outcomes, standards, activities, and strategies within the framework of a teacher leadership program define the quality of development of teacher leaders. Additionally, the boundary crossing between the graduate program and school in which teacher leaders work is assumed to increase impact on teacher leaders and school development (Snoek et al., 2017). Understanding the specific characteristics of formal teacher leadership graduate programs provides insight into the development of effective K-12 teacher leaders.

Policy guides the development of formal TLPs to create effective teacher leaders. Thus, program policy needs to shape and support leaders by following best practices and current research. Higher education TLPs require clear goals and outcomes for each

graduate (Mainous, 2012). An effective TLP exhibits clear structure (i.e., syllabi and program descriptions), a constant and manageable enrollment, focus on research-informed practices and strategies to foster collaboration (Gigante & Firestone, 2008; Goins, 2017; Mainous, 2012; Ries, 2003), shared leadership (Goins, 2017; Velchansky, 2011), change processes (Mainous, 2012; Ries, 2003; Velchansky, 2011), and shared vision (Goins, 2017; Mainous, 2012; Velchansky, 2011) in teacher leaders' respective educational settings. Programs should follow clear goals and outcomes to "align with the skills, knowledge, and dispositions needed by emerging conceptions of teacher leaders" as well as meeting policy requirements for state certification (Mainous, 2012, p. 4).

Teacher leadership is not a new idea. However, improvements, changes, and discussions around the who, what, and why of teacher leader research are vital as they influence the landscape of effective leadership practices and school improvement (Wenner & Campbell, 2017). Understanding these changes and their impact on K-12 education requires descriptions of teacher leadership, effective teacher leadership programs, and successful teacher leaders. Teacher leadership, an identified component of school improvement, is defined as traits and behaviors that influence the community and culture both inside and outside of the classroom (Goins, 2017; Mainous, 2012; Ries, 2003). Teacher leadership materializes in unique ways based on situations, personality, training, and experience with teacher leadership skills.

Program Practices, Strategies, and Activities

Development of teacher leadership activities has been shown to improve classroom teaching and engagement with new teaching techniques (Harris & Townsend, 2007; Wenner & Campbell, 2017). As identified previously, formal activities and

strategies support the development of effective teacher leaders, and their incorporation into TLPs can benefit candidates. These components include a system for strategic observations through coaching and mentoring (Pelan, 2012), development of action research within one's own educational environment (Diana, 2011), engaging with experts through collaboration (Danielson, 2006) and conversation (Danielson, 2016), review of literature, and reflective practices (Hord & Sommers, 2008). These strategies and activities embedded into formal graduate programs provide a toolkit for teacher leader instruction and growth within and beyond their implementation in practice.

Preparation of teacher leaders is most often conducted as professional development such as training and conferences, or through formal certification or graduate programs (Wenner & Campbell, 2017). Development differs nationwide based on differences in teaching styles, policies, and specific outcomes. Development such as PLCs, coaching or mentorship, and action research supports teacher leaders formally to carry out effective positional and informal responsibilities.

CoP and PLCs. In educational practice, CoP and PLCs share a common goal of learning and supporting student success (Wenger et al., 2002). This learning strategy brings diverse members together to learn and grow to meet shared goals. A CoP provides teacher leaders with a network for support, collaboration, accountability, and shared learning (Fullan, 2006; Wenger et al., 2002). Although born out of informal development, CoP support teacher leaders both emotionally and structurally within the frames of formal teacher leadership development. CoP are designed to support members' shared learning and continually encourage action on collective learning. Formal practices include purposely fostering leadership through CoP or professional communities, thus

intentionally fostering formal and informal teacher leadership (Klar, 2012b). Likewise, formal development through a PLC facilitates learning through collective engagement of shared beliefs, visions, conversations, sharing resources, and overall supportive conditions (Hord & Sommers, 2008). School leaders have a role in establishing PLCs as they help teachers become leaders themselves (Barton & Stepanek, 2012). PLCs encourage motivation for teachers to learn, grow, and develop both individually and as a community through shared responsibility, inclusive culture, and focus on students' learning needs (Hord & Sommers, 2008).

Both systems include opportunities for reflection and feedback for learning and create a welcoming space for professional conversations. Professional conversations are conversations among peers who share expertise, inquiries, issues, and solutions that ultimately develop healthy school cultures (Danielson, 2016). Conversations are a growth platform for teachers to share best practices, clarify goals, gain knowledge, and explore diverse perspectives. It is through conversations that teacher leaders can encourage understanding and analysis of classroom events.

Coaching and mentoring. Although instructional coaching and mentoring are inherently different supports in meaning and practice, they share similar characteristics in how they are implemented to guide development of teacher leaders. A mentoring relationship is one where an expert helps a novice reach success through direct guidance (Pelan, 2012). Instructional coaches provide teacher leaders with continuous support through feedback and self-reflection cycles through a relationship built on trust and collaboration towards a unified goal. Specifically, teacher leaders develop their skills necessary to fulfill their responsibilities through creating a safe relationship that supports

asking questions, taking risks, and building on strengths. Specifically, for coaches, they encourage a process of inquiry to learn and grow in best educational practices, thus allowing teacher leaders to grow internally and share with their school community and beyond (Knight, 2018). Having an identified relationship such as coaching and mentoring provides formal development within the framework of a learning teacher leader.

Action research. Continuing from the earlier conversation, action research supplies teacher leaders with tools to examine student learning within and beyond their classroom because the research is self-conducted (Diana, 2011). Teachers gain insight from examining their practices and identifying ways to improve their teaching to support student learning. Action research, as implemented as part of formal teacher leadership programs, is defined as a continuation of learning and actionized inquiry collaboratively developed by educational leaders and teachers to address classroom-based issues (Diana, 2011). It is assumed that teacher leaders can grow in how they empower themselves and colleagues to engage in meaningful and relevant issues. Through active learning in leading, designing, and carrying out action research, teacher leaders create space to be reflective practitioners (Cherkowski, 2018). Action research sustains engagement, change, and reflection, creating a system of continuous leadership development as practitioners gain new skills necessary for success within and beyond the classroom.

Reflection. Reflection is a strategic process used to encourage formal development of teacher leadership skills (Göker, 2016). Specific reflection types that occur in practice are called *reflection on action*, *reflection for action*, *reflection in action*, and *reflecting within* (Hord & Sommers, 2008). Reflection on action is conducted after an event and includes thoughts for adjusting in the future. Reflection for action includes

planning, goal setting, and forward thinking about future events. Reflection in action is reflection that occurs within the moment and is also known as *situational awareness*, whereas *reflecting within* are those peaceful moments to think alone about one's actions and resulting outcomes. All reflection types support growth of teacher leadership. One specific activity to engage in reflection includes the use of reflective journals (Göker, 2016). Teacher leaders can formally write journals focusing on the different types of reflection in practice both within their roles as teachers and as teacher leaders. Reflection is also a valuable component of other formal development activities such as coaching, mentoring, observations, and action research.

Engagement with expertise. Engagement with expertise, whether through mentorship (Pelan, 2012), professor relationship (Cherkowski, 2018), listening to keynote speakers, reading literature, or talking with others fosters formal development of teacher leaders. This formal activity includes active engagement with knowledge, skills, or experience that provides an opportunity to strengthen and build upon foundational knowledge in teacher leadership areas. For example, teacher leaders can seek answers in journal special issues and articles, by asking more experienced educational leaders, or by attending seminars and workshops led by experts in the field or specific growth area topic.

Teacher Leadership Program Outcomes

Although teachers become teacher leaders for various professional and personal reasons, a goal of increasing student achievement is a common focus of leadership development (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009). In order to best serve educational communities, teacher leadership programs provide educational professionals with

structure, strategies, and resources to become a successful teacher leader, thus crossing the boundaries of formal graduate programs and schools (Snoek et al., 2017). These formal accredited professional development programs for teacher leadership are increasing in number and provide a coordinated approach to teacher leadership development (Cherkowski, 2018; Perrone & Tucker, 2019). They create platforms to develop ideas and capacities for effective teacher leadership by interweaving practices on “positive psychology and positive organisational scholarship” (Cherkowski, 2018, p. 64).

Teacher leaders assume diverse roles to produce desired student-centered outcomes (Danielson, 2006). In their educational organizations, teacher leaders head subcommittees, lead meetings, and step in when needed to reach a shared vision of increasing student achievement as well as listening to and meeting students’ needs. Teacher leaders also work to improve the communication, community, processes, and quality of the school as a whole. Due to a lack of a universal teacher leadership definition (Killion et al., 2016), it is operationally defined for this exploratory investigation as *teachers collaborating through collective skills, promising effective practices, and professional learning to influence and promote effective school and student improvement as aligned with the Teacher Leader Model Standards (TLEC, 2011).*

Kentucky Teacher Leadership Programs

Policies shape and build systems, thus forcing organizations and individuals to change and adapt (Honig, 2006). Policy changes impact other policies and learning occurs between and among legislative bodies (Shipan & Volden, 2008). States, such as Michigan, Illinois, Georgia, and New York, are modifying and revising licensure requirements for teacher leadership in post-secondary programs to meet changing needs

in practice and as new research is developed (Killion et al., 2016). Likewise, Kentucky was experiencing a transition from the Kentucky Teacher Standards to the TLMS beginning in the fall of 2019 (EPSB, 2018; TLEC, 2011). To understand the components required by the agency within Kentucky for teacher leadership endorsement, a review of the transition of policies is necessary.

Prior Teacher Leadership Requirements

Kentucky's EPSB creates regulations that teacher leader endorsement programs must follow to be accredited. Previous EPSB legislation for teacher leader EPSB-approved graduate programs required compliance with requirements based on the six standards of the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008) and the advanced-level performance expectations from 10 standards in the Kentucky Teacher Standards (KTS). Conversations with EPSB personnel and personal experience with the ISLLC provided familiarity with requirements, outcomes, and application in practice. It is essential to understand the policy and processes before a change to gain understanding and reasoning behind specific changes and new implementations that impact systems beyond the candidate and their program. It should be noted that policy alone cannot foster collective and collaborative accountability for candidate success for which teacher leaders strive (Talbert, 2009).

Current Teacher Leadership Requirements

Effective August 1, 2019, advanced certification and approval of teacher leader preparation programs are required to follow the teacher leader Standards for Educator Preparation and Certification (TLEC, 2011). This change occurred with the introduction of the 2011 TLMS that inform best practices in professional development, learning, and

growth. All programs leading to the teacher leader certification in Kentucky must demonstrate alignment with the teacher leader standards as identified in Regulation 16 KAR 1:016. Standards for Certified Teacher Leader.

Domain I. The first component of the TLMS for Educator Preparation and Certification is “Foster a Collaborative Culture to Support Educator Development and Student Learning” (TLEC, 2011, p. 9). Collaborative leaders strive to create, maintain, and promote a collective culture for learning for both adult and student learning. Effective teacher leaders should collaborate, create, and foster a shared culture of student achievement. An effective leader produces lifelong learners in partnership with students, teacher, and the school community.

Domain II. The second element of the TLMS is “Accessing and Using Research to Improve Practice and Student Learning” (TLEC, 2011, p. 9). Teacher leaders assume responsibility to encourage, advocate for, and maximize student learning through research-based approaches. This includes action research, systematic inquiry, and resources to new instructional strategies to appeal to students’ differentiated learning styles and foster a culture of learning.

Domain III. The third TLMS Domain is titled "Promoting Professional Learning for Continuous Improvement" (TLEC, 2011, p. 9). This describes a teacher leader’s acknowledgment that teaching and learning are interconnected and are ongoing processes for continual improvement. Teacher leaders should be responsible for increasing professional learning and working towards goals.

Domain IV. “Facilitating Improvements in Instruction and Student Learning” means teacher leaders should also be effective teachers who carry a deep understanding

of teaching and learning (TLEC, 2011, p. 9). They are asked to model continuous learning and reflection in practice for the benefit of their school community, including fostering a healthy school culture through collaboration to cyclically improve instruction.

Domain V. The fifth professional responsibility for teacher leaders is “Promoting the Use of Assessments and Data for School and District Improvement” (TLEC, 2011, p. 9). This can be accomplished through gaining skills and knowledge about formative and summative assessment design. Teacher leaders also need to work in tandem with colleagues for data analysis and interpretation. Findings should then be implemented in student learning improvement and goals.

Domain VI. “Improving Outreach and Collaboration with Families and Community” requires teacher leaders to engage with community leaders in collaborating, engaging, and organizing with a diverse group of faculty and community members, including forging partnerships towards a common goal (TLEC, 2011, p. 9). Maintaining successful relationships is built on listening to diverse perspectives and fostering a sense of culture and community. This standard demonstrates the responsibility to collaborate with others to discover insights, ideas, and inspirations to serve the students with increased learning.

Domain VII. Teacher leaders interact with policies and regulations that impact learning from multiple levels of government through TLMS Domain 7, “Advocating for Student Learning and the Profession” (TLEC, 2011, p. 9). They should understand and converse with key players and stakeholders in educational policy. Teacher leaders also need to assume roles as advocates for teachers and student learning by seeking out and supporting policies that benefit both groups.

Needed Research

Although much effort has been directed to supporting teacher leaders and integrating their important roles into everyday school practices, more research in practical guidance for “developing systemic approaches that advance and sustain viable teacher leadership” (Killion et al., 2016, p. 4) is needed. Innovative and new recommended practices in effective teacher leadership development are continuously emerging. Thus, it is essential for research to continue in this area and for TLPs to be informed and reactive to improving their program and experience for aspiring teacher leaders.

Conceptual Framework for Study

It is assumed that providing teachers with carefully designed and research-based teacher leadership program can positively impact students and school communities. By nature of the position, teacher leaders engage with their colleagues, stakeholders, and students to increase student achievement. As with many goals in education, the anticipated impact is directly focused on the students and how teacher leaders can support them. Following reviewed research pertaining to professional learning required for effective teacher leadership, two encompassing conceptual approaches for the proposed study are developed from influences of The Framework for Teacher Leadership (Danielson, 2006) and the TLMS (TLEC, 2011) and applied from policy diffusion (Shipan & Volden, 2008).

Framework for Teacher Leadership

This dissertation follows a conceptual framework that incorporates Danielson’s (2006) three levels of where teacher leadership extends and exists within the school realm: (a) schoolwide policies and programs, (b) teaching and learning, and (c)

communications and community relations both with aspects within the classroom and within and beyond the school and the required adoption of the TLMS in Kentucky (EPSB, 2018; TLEC, 2011). I developed this conceptual framework and titled it, *Layered Framework for, Models of, and Development within Teacher Leadership* (see Figure 2.2) In Chapter 2, I provided details about how the framework was developed from the literature and presents a detailed illustration of its components.

Understanding how to develop effective teacher leaders through formal and informal professional learning activities within a formal teacher leadership program relies on outcome expectations. For program design to be meaningful in practice, outcomes and development should align with the needs of teacher leaders. Thus, a conceptual framework that incorporates Danielson’s (2006) three levels of teacher leadership reach in school life guides this study to understand the developmental and programmatic support needed (see Figure 2.1). Figure 2.1 was developed by Danielson and inspired my

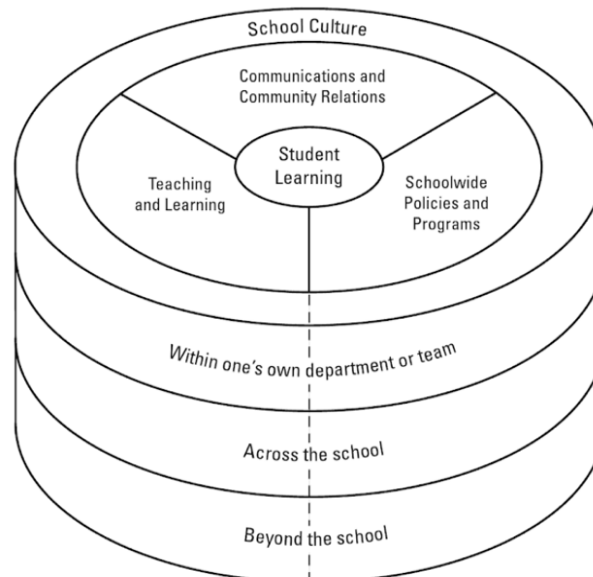


Figure 2.1 Visual representation of Framework for Teacher Leadership by C. Danielson, 2006, *Teacher leadership that strengthens professional practice*, p. 25. Copyright 2006 by Charlette Danielson. Reprinted with permission.

conceptual framework which is displayed in Figure 2.2. Permission for figure use presented in Appendix B Danielson's framework describes the areas in which teacher leadership is involved: (a) schoolwide policies and programs, (b) teaching and learning, and (c) communications and community relations. These aspects house sub-areas and are layered within the classroom and within and beyond the school. The modified framework includes an interwoven dimension of formal development specific to addressing needs central to the success and learning of students. Knowing where teacher leadership resides within school life allows for targeted development of skills and practices. Connection to the newly established TLMS in Kentucky (EPSB, 2018; TLEC, 2011) serves as the third dimension layering with Danielson's (2006) Framework for Teacher Leadership and corresponding researched methods for development in these areas. The following outlines the inclusion of the three aspects into this study's conceptual framework of *Layered Framework for, Models of, and Development within Teacher Leadership*. The literature revealed that all three dimensions are important for the holistic approach to understanding and developing effective teacher leaders. This conceptual framework serves as a lens to view the proposed study and provides development of guiding questions and how to answer them best. Figure 2.2 provides a visual representation of the extended *Framework for, Models of, and Development within Teacher Leadership*.

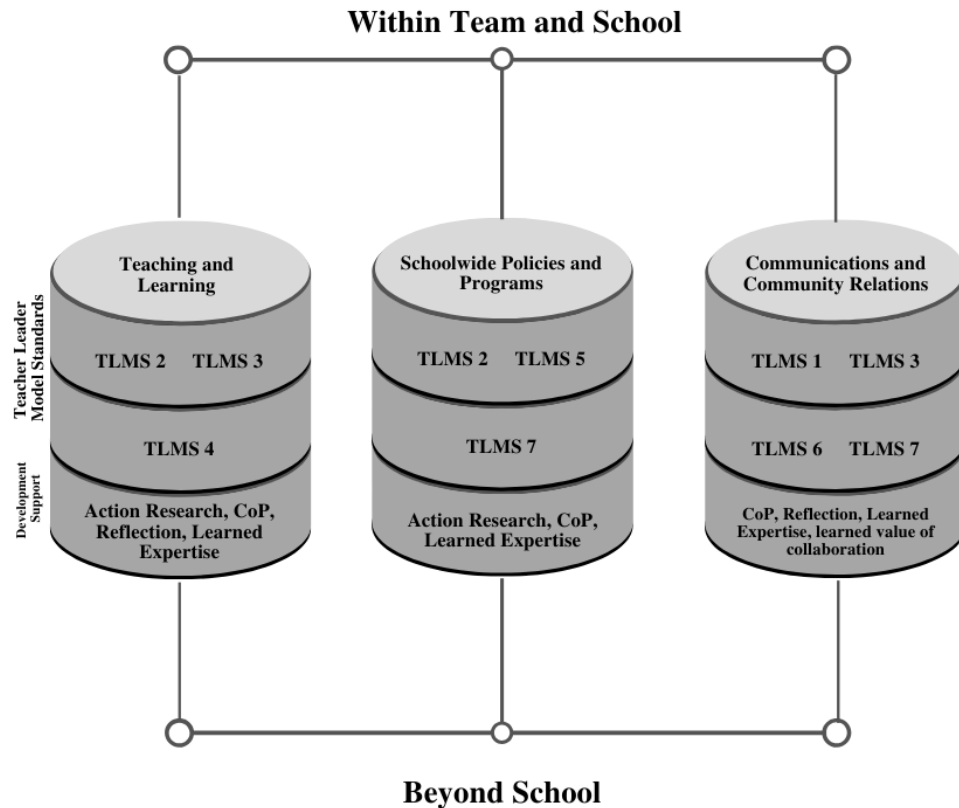


Figure 2.2 Visual representation of developed conceptual framework of Layered Framework for, Models of, and Development within Teacher Leadership incorporating Danielson’s (2006) Framework and the TLMS (TLEC, 2011).

Learning and teaching. Learning and teaching extend beyond the individual teacher and their classroom to mobilize and energize colleagues to support the school's vision (Crowther et al., 2002; Danielson, 2006). They also support the performance of teaching as teacher leadership contributes to whole-school success. To advance teaching and learning, teacher leaders model effective and continuous practices to share evidence- and experience-based research and skills (York-Barr & Duke, 2004). Thus, Domains II, III, and IV of the TLMS create a layering of specific direction teachers should follow to address the need for teaching and learning in their workplaces (TLEC, 2011). Domain II describes the responsibility to encourage, advocate, and optimize student learning through research-based approaches (e.g., action research, systematic inquiry, innovative

differentiation). A focus on promoting continuous improvement for the teacher leader and others addresses the intertwining of teaching and learning and need for continued professional development to propel the school forward. This is often developed through CoP and reflective processes (Wenger et al., 2002). Teacher leaders should facilitate improvements in instruction and student learning accomplished through an in-depth knowledge base and experience (Domain IV). Reflection on their own practice and collaboratively with others is vital to address direction towards shared goals and missions. They also model continuous learning and reflection engaging with experts to become experts themselves through professional learning (Domain III).

Schoolwide policies and programs. Teacher leaders engage in schoolwide policies and programs, thus expanding their influence from the classroom to beyond the walls of the school to promote student success (Danielson, 2006). Effective development of teacher leaders to perform within schoolwide policies and programs connects to Domains II, V, and VII of the TLMS (TLEC, 2011). Domain II focuses on how research is studied, shared, and used for student and practical outcome improvement. For teacher leaders to access and implement meaningful changes, action research and other research are necessary. Leaders must gain those skills and confidence in leading others in research for the improvement of the entire school and greater community. Domain V promotes the use of assessments and data for schoolwide improvement, which can be developed by teacher leaders gaining skills and knowledge about formative and summative assessment design, both within the content of action research and from experts. Teacher leaders practice skills in data analysis and interpretation through the learned process of action research. Teacher leaders serve their school as a whole and change policies with research-

based evidence. Awareness of educational policies is important as well as navigation of the political sphere to advocate for their students and school as those policies have implications on school, classroom, and student learning.

Communications and community relations. Teacher leaders are defined by their ability to work beyond the classroom (Danielson, 2006). This includes improving the community through open communications and listening to the voice and needs of the school and greater community. Domains I, III, VI, and VII of the TLMS (TLEC, 2011) detail the requirements for teacher leaders to improve outreach and collaboration with diverse community members who work together towards a common goal and to be advocates for learning and their students respectively. Domain I focuses on the schoolwide need for teacher leaders to foster a collaborative culture of support towards student and educator learning that is assumed to be developed through CoP by creating inclusive environments focused on addressing specific school issues. CoP require collaboration and sharing of culture to increase student achievement (Wenger et al., 2002). Teacher leaders should interact and generate relationships with all stakeholders (e.g., parents, policymakers) to improve their school and students' learning. These collaborative and communication skills can be strengthened through interaction among CoP and through taking advantage of leading and communicating within them, engaging with experts about policy, learning about the community context, and taking time for the process of reflection to guide next steps within community outreach. Benefits can extend beyond their school community to foster a healthy culture of learning as teacher leaders embody advocacy for students and honor in their profession as described in Domain VII. Awareness of educational policies paired with how and when they are developed greatly

impact classroom and school practices. Teacher leaders navigate this political sphere to advocate for their students and share their experience and expertise with lawmakers.

Policy Diffusion

Policies impact daily aspects of education practices, student learning and assessment, and educational training (Stone, 2012). Policy diffusion introduces the idea of how policies spread from one institution to others and how they evolve and are integrated into the state, district, and school policy (Shipan & Volden, 2012). In sum, policy diffusion is “defined as one government’s policy choices being influenced by the choices of other governments” (Shipan & Volden, 2012, p. 1). This conceptual framework helps me understand more about requirements for graduate TLPs in Kentucky. Insights into change agencies, such as state governments, that implement new policies to increase the effectiveness provide a holistic perspective on governmental bodies’ interconnectedness. Policy diffusion describes the sharing and competing of governments (e.g., among states) that lead to changes in policy, program design, allocation of funds, and overall impact on the current educational system. After the formation of the Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium, the group created the model standards for teacher leadership (TLEC, 2011). Policy diffusion describes how model standards gained influence and were adopted by state education departments’ policies. Within this policy, there are shared and borrowed policies that describe activities, content, graduation requirements, and internship requirements upon which a degree award is contingent. Policy diffusion can extend to public universities and describe how program design, requirements, content, strategies, and curriculum are adapted and changed to improve learning (Shipan & Volden, 2012). This framework

allows me to gain insight into how policy is influenced at multiple levels and shared across the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

Summary

Through the reviewed literature about teacher leadership concepts, roles, development, and preparation, I gained insights into the complexities of developing effective leaders. Main topics, such as policy, not only play a significant role by influencing formal positions and preparation programs, but also play a role in an interconnected system of policy diffusion. Within the context of teacher leadership policies, schools and districts are responsible for defining teacher leadership in their schools and for creating an environment conducive to growing teacher leaders. This chapter revealed that candidates within formal TLPs require a partnership between their formal preparation and an accepting educational environment that allows them to practice learned strategies and engage in collaboration. The literature reaffirmed the previous research on the ambiguity of both the definition and conceptualization of teacher leadership, identifying that potential challenges in the program develop due to the lack of a universal definition.

Educational policy is reflected in how educational institutions function and are regulated. Because regulations drive changes in practice, I learned it is essential to gain insight into how policies are created, formed, and presented as they impact formal practices and structures within higher education graduate programs. Policies influence practice through regulation, sharing ideas, and interpretation. The change in regulations for all Kentucky programs leading to the teacher leader certification surfaces the question of stability in the current and proposed regulation for the basis of the study. If the studied

policy does change, however unlikely, before the completion of this study, it creates a complication for answering how Kentucky teacher leader EPSB-approved programs design their learning through the lens of the *Layered Framework for, Models of, and Development within Teacher Leadership* conceptual framework. If the desired outcomes identified in the regulations change, it would then impact how programs develop and prepare their teacher leader candidates.

Through the research and literature investigation, I gained a stronger understanding of development and learning. Teacher leadership cannot be contained only to the traditional structures supplied by the higher education program. In order to foster an effective teacher leader, their work or practicum environment should also be providing growth through health-centric, cultural, and structural conditions (Snoek et al., 2017). Insight on the proper development of an effective teacher leader and learned components rely on the practicing environment surfaced. It was surmised that only with a healthy and supportive working environment can candidates grow and learn within a program that provides high-quality teacher leadership learning and development. When developing a formal proposal to explore how current TLPs in Kentucky cultivate effective leaders, it was needed to investigate how programs ensure teaching environments play a role in their development. Implications for this review of literature drove the research focus and what questions were investigated in the selected teacher leader programs in Kentucky.

The literature review exposed limitations in current research on a universal definition and roles of teacher leadership. Ambiguity continues to surround teacher leadership as the roles of teacher leadership are reflected differently in practice (Berg & Zoellick, 2019). This surfaced challenges when working with questionnaire design and

data analysis. Lacking program and definition uniformity created issues, as it was difficult to argue for how TLPs develop effective teacher leaders with a myriad of programmatic teacher leadership definitions. The developed operationalized definition of teacher leadership and the aligned conceptual framework were in place to provide the study direction and alleviate ambiguity in teacher leadership interpretation. The lack of a universal teacher leader definition was considered when selecting a study design. Thus, it was necessary to select TLPs within the same state as they were bound by the same teacher leader regulations. This provided a common thread to identify how the formal TLPs work to meet these specified outcomes.

Chapter 2 provided support and structure to Chapter 3 where procedures and study methodology are discussed. The identified potential challenges that surfaced through a comprehensive literature review created a clearer understanding of the study's design and needs. Learnings in Chapter 2 guided the study's questions and design described in detail in Chapter 3. The research provided Chapter 3 and later Chapters 4 and 5 with a holistic and focused approach to teacher leadership preparation to incorporate into the study proposal and design, analysis of the data, and interpretation of the presented results respectively.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This study explored how teacher leaders in Kentucky are formally prepared through graduate programs approved by the EPSB. The study design was framed by policy diffusion (Shipan & Volden, 2008) and my conceptual framework, *Layered Framework for, Models of, and Development within Teacher Leadership*, which were informed by the work of Danielson (2006) and the Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium (2011).

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine how teacher leadership preparation programs in Kentucky reflected the expectations for formal preparation of teacher leaders able to perform their roles experientially, cognitively, and collaboratively. This study relies on a variety of tools to gather data (e.g., extensive document reviews, questionnaire, interviews). This study extends previous research focused on identifying themes among successful and flourishing TLPs (Danielson, 2006; Goins, 2017).

Research Questions

Four research questions guided this study of formal teacher leadership development that sought answers to the overarching inquiry, *How are teacher leaders formally prepared in Kentucky?*

1. How are frameworks (i.e., supporting structures, concepts, research) used at selected institutions for designing and delivering the program?
2. How do Kentucky teacher leadership programs at selected institutions align instructional strategies to support teacher leader development with the Teacher Leader Model Standards?

3. What role do professional learning communities or communities of practice play in supporting teacher leader development within the selected institutions' programs?
4. How do Kentucky teacher leadership programs at selected institutions evaluate candidates' success in addressing their program goals?

Collectively, these questions focused on the design and practices of purposefully selected programs in Kentucky to prepare teacher leaders. Learning how these programs were designed to adhere to state policy and university requirements and to reflect research-informed practices may provide implications for improving teacher leader development not only at Kentucky institutions, but also elsewhere.

Research Design

This study utilized a qualitative, descriptive case study design to explore similarities and differences among selected EPSB-approved TLPs in Kentucky. Case study methodology provides researchers with a structure for in-depth description and analysis through multiple data sources (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2003). This specific design aligned with the goal of exploring the needs identified in the research questions because case study research promotes an in-depth exploration and analysis of a single phenomenon with defined boundaries, such as a program or department to be studied within a time bound context (Yin, 2003).

The goal of this case study was to capture current practices and strategies used in select TLPs in Kentucky through conducting document reviews, administering questionnaires, and conducting interviews. To conceptualize the processes needed to conduct this study, the illustration in Figure 3.1 below was developed through

descriptions provided by Creswell (2007). This sequence guides the research process in which I conducted a logical and comprehensive study about developing teacher leadership.



Figure 3.1. Visual of study design process.

First, data collection occurred after careful selection of potential study sites, establishing a bound time, and gaining access and approval to conduct the case study, described in detail by Yin (2003). Data collection for this multi-site case study was conducted between March 2020 and August 2020. Second, data collected during this study were compiled and uploaded into Dedoose for coding and analyzing purposes (Tracy, 2013). Maintaining a record of all phases of the case study assured my final report provides clarity and evidences results of the qualitative data analysis (Creswell, 2007).

Research Sites

The initial search for potential study sites for this research began on the national level. A systematic design method of funneling selection criteria from a broad to a narrow lens helped me develop the optimum field placement for the case study. On the grand scale, I began the process with considering all systems that develop teacher leaders in the United States of America (U.S.). Because universities provide pathways for teacher leadership certificates, the study's potential research setting was narrowed to formal higher education programs within the USA (EPSB, 2018; Perrone & Tucker, 2019). However, because education in the USA is regulated by each individual state, focusing

within the context of one state for this case study would provide a shared foundation of standard regulations, definitions, and overall minimum requirements for accredited teacher leadership programs.

Kentucky was selected due to accessibility to potential study sites, the timing of significant policy change (EPSB, 2018), and the number of EPSB-approved programs that offer a certification in teacher leadership. A focus on accredited TLPs is preferred to ensure a degree of uniformity in program requirements and teacher professional development. Kentucky's approved TLPs must conform to standard requirements established by EPSB; thus, an assumption of uniformity in curricula, standards, and evaluation of TLPs surfaced. For this study, only accredited TLPs in Kentucky serve as research settings.

As of 2018, Kentucky had 21 accredited TLPs institutions that served as the population from which the case study sample was selected (EPSB, 2018). Comprehensive universities with a small number of graduate programs were then the highest producers of teacher leadership degrees in Kentucky, thus providing a rational justification for selected study sites containing comprehensive universities. All university names, which are pseudonyms for the study sites to protect the confidentiality of information collected from each the sites, are coded with names of famous Kentucky thoroughbreds or Kentucky Derby winners. Originally, the proposed five study sites included Seabiscuit University, Smarty Jones University, Man o' War University, Secretariat University, and Winning Colors University, but expanded to also include Genuine Risk University, Sir Barton University, Nyquist University, Seattle Slew University, and Citation University. The addition of more study sites occurred once the data collection process began, and I

learned what the data were revealing. After beginning the data collection process in March 2020, it became readily apparent that faculty members of the program, not just program leaders, would be key participants in this study as they work directly with carrying out the assignments and requirements of the teacher leadership programs. Thus, I began the process for an Institutional Review Board (IRB) modification and received approval for this modification and later modification to interview Teacher Leader Review Committee members for even more data sources.

Along with reaching more participants, the modification also opened up more institutions to be considered. I invited a wider group to the study, providing opportunity for a clearer picture of Kentucky teacher leader EPSC-approved graduate programs. I learned that was needed to best answer my study's question.

Program Institution Demographics

To maintain program anonymity, program demographics are shared in aggregate. Higher education institution data were pulled from the public database of the Council for Postsecondary Education (2020). Of the 10 selected programs' institutions, five were 4-year public institutions and the other five were private institutions. The 2020–2021 academic year graduate enrollment ranged from 235 to 14621 students, with a mean of about 3541 and a median of 1874. The locations of the 10 institutions spanned the Commonwealth and were distributed somewhat evenly throughout the physical landscape. According to the federal Office of Management's definition of *rural*, six institutions reside in rural or nonmetro counties and four in metro counties. Among the counties that are home to the TLP institutions, five are located in Appalachia as defined by the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC, 2020).

Study Participants

Given the availability of high-producing graduate teacher leadership programs in Kentucky, the aim was to interview willing individuals from the 10 selected institutions in late March 2020 through August 2020 that met one or more of the following evolved criteria: program coordinator, program designer, department chair, or faculty member. In addition to site selection, participation in data collection (i.e., questionnaire and interview) was limited to individuals engaged directly with the teacher leadership program (e.g., department chair, program coordinator, program director) at the selected universities. Based on information gleaned from open-access websites at the selected universities, each program had an identified program leader. I used predetermined criteria of role descriptors to identify the program leader while exploring the program websites. For this study, I defined *teacher leadership program leaders* as individuals with the responsibility, authority, and accountability over the structure, curriculum, enrollment, endorsement, content, and changes of the selected TLPs. Although the titles for the program leaders varied, a common thread was the program leaders' education or experience within K-12 or higher education.

Further, I assumed each institution had a chair, administrator, faculty member, or coordinator leading the efforts for program design and development. These individuals were responsible for understanding the mandated regulations. More information about the program leaders and their direct engagement in the design of the TLPs was gathered following access to EPSB's database granted through the IRB process.

Data Sources

To increase construct validity and reliability within my study, data collection principles were followed. The principles outlined by Yin (2011) include multi-sourced evidence, a database from the case study, and chain of evidence. To follow these guidelines within this study, I included multiple levels of data sources detailed in the following illustration in Figure 3.2 to lead to later triangulation of the phenomenon. To illustrate this, a database emerged from the formal gathering of extracted data within a case study (Yin, 2011). Linking the research questions to specific data and to specific conclusions supports the chain of evidence. This qualitative case-study approach allowed me to examine Kentucky's high volume TLPs between the bounded time from March 2020 to August 2020.

Document review. Initially, I reviewed existing documents to create a contextualization of background information on selected TLPs in Kentucky and to examine their public story. Through this process, I gained information pertaining to the structure and requirements of each of the five original, then later the ten, unique programs that constituted the sample. Documents reviewed included public websites, course catalogs, and pamphlets about the program's history, philosophy, application, program design, cost, time involved, mission statement, and certification requirements.

Understanding how each program runs provided a more holistic picture of the structure and thus crafted more direct questions for the interviews. The gathered

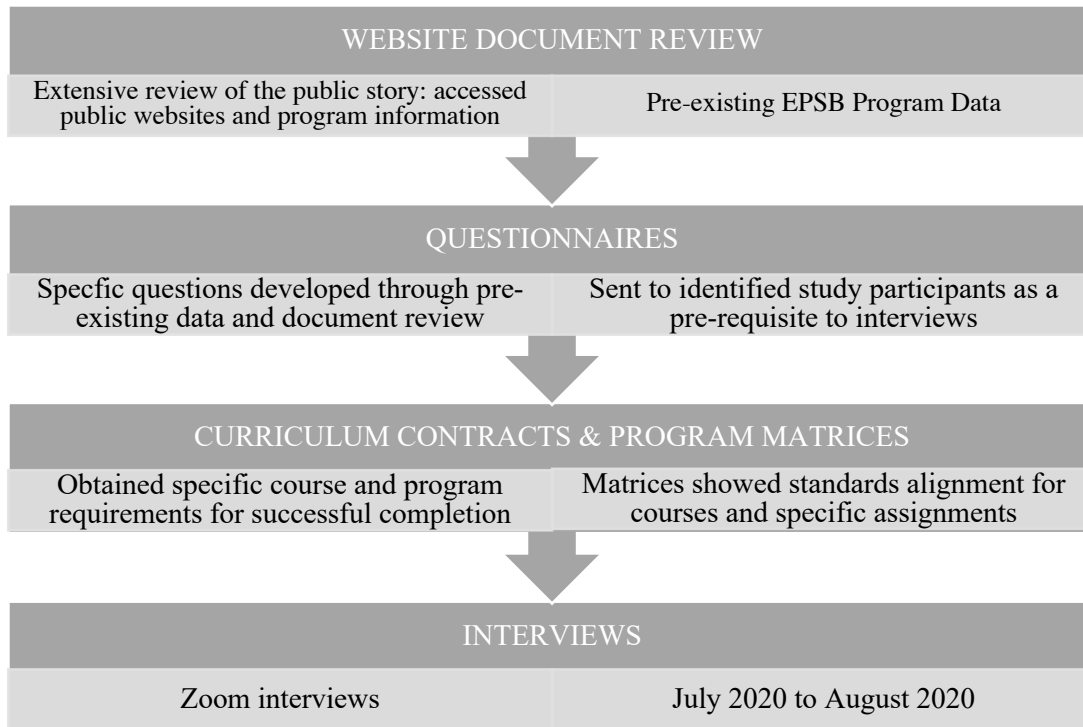


Figure 3.2 This figure provides the flow of data gathered from study sources.

information also provides content for categorizing and coding program requirements (e.g., program hours, certifications, project and graduation requirements) as themes emerged. This document review was compared with later collected data to provide a framework for analyzing similarities and differences among EPSB-approved teacher leadership graduate programs in Kentucky.

To begin the data collection process, diverse documents were collected and then determined to be beneficial in identifying defining factors of the selected TLPs.

Documents, both public and internal, include brochures, syllabi, coordinator, faculty, and department chair correspondence, program agreements, official website pages, class or cohort sizes, program requirements, the application process, and course pathways. I examined proximity to the programs, extensiveness, accessibility, and a foundational understanding of how the programs are both commonly and uniquely structured. All institutions that were later deemed to be the highest-producing graduates from teacher

leader graduate programs participated in this data collection, as I was able to access and research this publicly available information.

After IRB approval, a request to the EPSB database for pre-existing institutional demographic and teacher leader certification data was submitted. Specifically, historical data on the enrollment and teacher leader certification on the 10 selected higher education institution programs was collected. My questions concerning how Kentucky TLPs prepare teacher leaders from EPSB include the following:

1. The number of candidates total and by year that have been approved in teacher leadership by the EPSB.

Questionnaire. Initially, selected participants were contacted by email to establish purpose and familiarity with potential study participants. Once relationships were initiated, I sent a Qualtrics questionnaire with embedded consent form (see Appendix C) to collect necessary demographic information about the participant's position and program to ensure that the identified individual was the best person to participate in the study due to their expertise and proximity to the design and decision-making of their institution's teacher leadership program. Within the questionnaire, I embedded open-ended and forced-response questions to suggest an individual who was not initially included. The questionnaire provided baseline demographic information and ensured credibility of the study by inviting the most appropriate individuals to participate.

Site visits. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the site visits were no longer possible. To gather the needed information, I performed an extensive web search to understand the campus, institution environment, and physical location within Kentucky.

Interviews. Apart from the document review and questionnaires, I used semi-structured interviews (see Appendix D) to produce verbatim transcripts as another data-collection point and to uphold validity (Hatch, 2002). I worked with participants to ensure a meaningful sample of interviews. TLP-identified individuals scheduled a meeting time on Zoom due to the necessity to limit any in-person contact. Interviews were scheduled via email correspondence. Interviews respected the participants' time and ranged from one hour to one and a half hours. Interview questions were emailed out one week before the scheduled interview to allow each participant time to review and prepare meaningful responses. Because of the selected purposive sample (Cohen et al., 2011; Gerring, 2012; Goertz & Mahoney, 2012), the final number of participants for the interviews is limited, although I sought a high response and participation rate. I worked to ensure the interviews were convenient and engaging for the participants. I anticipated that participants would be willing to engage with the study presumably because the required regulation changes provided a gateway to larger conversations. Teacher leadership program coordinators, faculty members, and department chairs were perceived to be more open to this conversation, as it benefitted their design and review of their program through crafting responses to relevant programmatic questions.

However, due to the national and global climate that unfolded during the onset of the first study invitations in mid-March 2020, I believe the response rate was significantly negatively impacted. To accommodate this situation, I extended the data collection period for many more months than originally determined necessary. Based on my experiences at the postsecondary institution during this time period, I recognized similar feelings of devastation. This was mirrored as faculty and program leaders' priorities shifted to health

and safety concerns. They quickly reimagined remote instruction for students and programs, focused on economic devastation for their communities, and toiled with budget and possible program existence concerns. The limited accessibility to regular office support (including office phone access)—coupled with limited clarity and direction brought with the uncertain times—also impacted my original study design and research plans.

Data Collection Strategies

After reviewing data from the EPSB database in addition to each program's website, I created a Qualtrics form to administer my questionnaire. Qualtrics is a secure online system designed for collecting research data and is also readily available for all researchers at my higher education institution. This system is user-friendly and compatible with smart mobile devices as well as any other Internet-capable device. Through the purposive sampling (Cohen et al., 2011; Gerring, 2012; Goertz & Mahoney, 2012), I contacted TLP leaders within the sampled Kentucky programs first via their email address, located within online sources through each program's public website, and provided an overview of the study and an invitation to participate in the study.

After reading, understanding, and signing the study's consent form, the participants volunteered information on their expertise, policy, and designs of their programs, specifically pertaining to the current and proposed changes with the 16 KAR 1:016 (see Appendix E). Participants were selected due to their vast and accurate knowledge of their program, as indicated by their position, title, or expertise.

With hopes to strengthen the rate of return and decrease non-response errors, I utilized various response increasing methods (Dillman, 2007; Dillman, Smyth, &

Christian, 2014). Measurement errors occur when responses are incorrect, inaccurate, or are not useable when compared to other respondents' data (Dillman, 2007). Potential for errors was lessened by ensuring each participant was properly equipped with programmatic knowledge and experience before being invited to participate in the study. This was paired with careful questionnaire design, substantial response time, and email reminders.

I recognized that completion of a questionnaire, similar to a survey, takes motivation due to the time and effort involved as well as cognitive capabilities to properly understand and answer the questions (Dillman, 2007). Thus, study validity can be enhanced by reducing measure error through carefully designed questions in both the questionnaire and the interview guidelines. Some promising practices for design included using succinct questions, meaningful questions for the population and study, familiar language, and logical question organization (Dillman et al., 2014). Because the questionnaire led to the interview, it did not require in-depth details and time-consuming responses, thus limiting respondent fatigue or discouraging non-completion.

To support healthy and functional communication between the researcher and the participants, I considered the when, how, and frequency issues concerning contact (Dillman et al., 2014). Programs leaders are busy keeping up with the demands of their jobs and responsibilities to their staff and students. Thus, following the strategy to understand the best time to introduce the questionnaire and interview, I sent invites early in the morning as individuals were first looking at their emails and a to-do list for the day.

To provide sufficient time for the study participants to respond, but also to maintain urgency in the request, I provided one week for consent form submission and

four weeks for the study questionnaire completion with select multiple potential dates added for a follow-up interview. That information was embedded within the questionnaire. A manual email reminder was sent every two weeks directly to the preferred email address of those not responding. The reminder emails were short and to-the-point in order to respect the potential participants' time. Member checking occurred in February 2021 when interview participants were provided a draft of my commentary written after analyzing their comments. This process allowed the participants to review gathered data and written material for intention and accuracy (Creswell, 2007; Stake, 1995). This provided a check for my interpretations and clarity of the collected data.

Protection of Human Participants

Confidentiality of the program leaders who completed questionnaires and participated in interviews was maintained and only shared with those individuals identified on the IRB application as approved personnel. However, the study participants understood that their site and identity could be guessed by an individual with in-depth knowledge of TLPs in Kentucky. To further maintain security of the participants' identities and work locations, they were assigned a code that I used to identify their responses; the codes are kept separate from the research data on a password-protected laptop. In addition to protecting identifying information, I stored all interview transcripts, questionnaire results, and written correspondence in a password-protected computer and an online storage system.

All interviews were conducted at the convenience of each participant, whether it was a site visit or a Zoom interview. My contact information was provided to all

participants as well as contact information for my institution's IRB to answer any additional questions.

Data Storage Logistics

Following the guidance of Creswell (2007) on storage, organization, usability, and security of collected qualitative data, I developed a system to maintain the integrity and confidentiality of the study participants and the institutions where they worked. Once data was de-identified, I entered it into a password-protected qualitative data analysis platform called Dedoose. This online platform is able to create a data collection matrix as a visual way to view, sort, and connect the data (Creswell, 2007).

Materials were collected via methods that most appropriately fit the study design and type of data collected. For the document review, screenshots, URL links, and other publicly available documents were secured within a university-provided Google Drive folder. De-identified datasets on the individual level on Kentucky TLPs were secured only within the email message sent from EPSB and on my password-protected personal laptop (Creswell, 2007). Questionnaire data were stored within Qualtrics which was provided as a student at the University of Kentucky and as a backup in my personal password-protected laptop. During the Zoom-conducted interviews, confidentiality and security of the qualitative data were carefully maintained. The interview room was a private area without outside audible access. These precautions allowed the participant to feel comfortable in their responses and to maintain the integrity of the research.

Data Analysis

Systematic analysis of collected data provided context for emerging themes and conclusions (Tracy, 2013) and was crafted through the selection of an appropriate

analytical approach. Thus, document analysis was conducted as well as open coding analysis towards axial and selective codes. The document analysis identified commonalities and differences among the publicly shared programs designs, requirements, and benefits of the given program.

The coding process included review of questionnaire responses, interview transcripts, document review materials, and my memos. An Excel spreadsheet was created to document data and create a key to group information together. These potentially interesting data included recurring themes, messages, and tones about participants' descriptions of their programs and how teacher leaders were developed as early analysis of the data is critical to the holistic study interpretation (Yin, 1994). I often highlighted the same comments with different colors when participants' comments were relevant to multiple themes. I considered how programs pursued development experientially, cognitively, and collaboratively, and I noted how information and quotes fit within the conceptual framework. Delving deeper into the coding process, I created a codebook via Dedoose. There, sources mixed with quotes and materialized into themes and grouped narratives.

Data were grouped under the guided questions presented in the study and organized based on the study's lens of the *Layered Framework for, Models of, and Development within Teacher Leadership* conceptual framework. These categorizations produced a visual display that made emerging themes more easily identifiable. This coding framework was ideal for this study approach because it provided direct examples from the data to create a coded system to link to research questions and propositions (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Additional Data Analysis Required

To answer fully the overarching research question, I applied attention and care throughout the analytical approach. The research questions drove the research methodology and informed the data collection and analysis processes. I knew that reaching saturation within a systematic analysis of data was necessary to ensure a complete picture of reported themes and corresponding conclusions (Tracy, 2013). However, it became evident at the conclusion of my initial analyses of data collection that I lacked sufficient information to present a fully informed response: Additional data were needed to report how teacher leaders are prepared in Kentucky.

This chapter served as a template as I followed coding processes (Yin, 1994) to understand meaningful insights from questionnaire responses, interview transcripts, document-review materials, and researcher memos. With this information uploaded into Dedoose, I was able to craft a holistic picture of teacher leader preparation and interpret more fully how EPSB-approved graduate programs in Kentucky formally develop teacher leader candidates.

Data Saturation

I knew it was important to reach data saturation in my qualitative study because failure to do so could negatively impact the quality of the research (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Indicators that suggested I reached saturation included (a) ability to replicate the study with the information given, (b) inability to gain new additional knowledge, and (c) ability to create new codes dwindled. Smaller studies reach saturation quicker than larger studies. Since study designs lack universality, there is not one sole method to define saturation. Although exhaustion of the resources occurred, I could not assume that also

signified that data saturation had been attained. The appropriate depth of the data was needed (Burmeister & Aitken, 2012). Hence, I knew I reached data saturation when there was “no new data, no new themes, no new coding, and ability to replicate the study” (Fusch & Ness, 2015; Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006, p. 1410).

While conducting this study, I gathered rich, or what Dibley (2011) calls quality, data by triangulating data and examining different levels as well as perspectives of a phenomenon (e.g., how each program was developed). For example, when searching TLPs’ public stories, I used multiple keywords and many combinations of those keywords pulled from the literature to ensure I gathered all relevant, publicly available information. By using program primary, secondary, and tertiary websites and following explorative practices, I uncovered various perspectives (e.g., press releases, quotes from program leaders and candidates, flyers marketing to potential teacher leader candidates). Reviewing EPSB proposals for program approval, program contracts, and course catalogs added depth to the program overviews and strategies implemented for teacher leader development. These data sources, paired with responses from questionnaires and commentary from interviews with key program personnel, created thick, or increased quantity (Dibley, 2011), data that I coded and analyzed to reveal trends and themes that aligned with my research questions.

Additional data saturation was achieved by interviewing individuals not traditionally considered as key informants (Bernard, 2012). This depth of knowledge may not have been achieved if I had remained focused on the top five candidate-producing programs and only interviewed the program leaders as first proposed. After beginning the data collection process in March 2020, it became clear to me that program instructors, not

just program leaders, needed to be key participants in this study because they work directly with candidates and review the assignments determined essential to the success of the teacher leadership programs. Thus, I modified my IRB to allow me to include more study participants. That modification also added more institutions to the sample. The result of that IRB modification was creation of a clearer understanding about Kentucky's teacher leader graduate program. Acknowledging and being aware of my personal perspectives—as a graduate of an EPSB-approved Kentucky teacher leadership program not included in the study—required me to remain careful to avoid research bias. I also had to recognize when the dataset was truly saturated (Fusch & Ness, 2015). As a qualitative researcher, I fully realized that I am the data collection instrument and cannot wholly separate myself from the research (Jackson, 1990).

Role of the Researcher

As the researcher, I planned and conducted all aspects of data gathering and analysis processes of this study. The case study design focused on a unique situation (Creswell, 2007), specifically the change of foundational standards for a TLP in an exploratory way (Yin, 2003) with a focus on context and discovery (Laws & McLeod, 2004). I sought to acquire an in-depth understanding and draw meaningful information from the empirical investigation within the context of everyday practice (Laws & McLeod, 2004; Yin, 1994). I perceived these characteristics would support a case study that was timely (i.e., soon after recent adoption of new national standards for teacher leaders) and provided practicality by narrowing the focus on educational institutions within Kentucky with the highest numbers of teacher leadership graduates (Perrone & Tucker, 2019).

I realized that qualitative research requires the researcher to be the primary instrument (Creswell, 2007; Hatch, 2002). Following the constructivist perspective embedded in this case study design, I was aware that reality is full of complexities imagined, lived, and constructed within individuals (Ponterotto, 2005). It was my responsibility to gather, absorb, and analyze those experiences objectively and then interpret them carefully while seeking answers to the study's guiding questions. I was also aware of potential biases I may have held through recently completing a Kentucky-based program that EPSB-approved as a teacher leader. To assure that my prior experiences would not influence this study, I intentionally omitted that institution as a data-collection site and did not involve any faculty from that institution in data analysis. Like all tools and instruments, I knew it was important for my research lens to be objective. To achieve reliability and validity in these study findings, I committed to making a concerted effort to avoid having my experiences influence my work.

Potential Limitations

Although the outlined case study design was limited to specifically selected cases, the purpose was to explore and discover (Yin, 2003) but not produce a generalizable theory on how teacher leaders are formally developed in Kentucky. Thus, the purposive sample and selection size were appropriate (Cohen et al., 2011; Gerring, 2012; Goertz & Mahoney, 2012). Because this research is a case study of 10 unique comprehensive universities in Kentucky, generalizability of study findings is limited. Because a case study is difficult to recreate due to its uniqueness of time and place, replication is another potential limitation (Creswell, 2007). Further, an in-depth and inclusive case study requires time and effort to meet key personnel and review documents provided by each

institution and coordinator. Unfortunately, external conditions created some research challenges.

Contextual Limitation

An unforeseen limitation that occurred during the data-collection cycle was the global pandemic due to mass COVID-19 outbreak. This crisis both directly and indirectly impacted the data collection process. The first invitations to the study were unfortunately disrupted during early March of 2020, a time when the nation shifted focus and daily routine to combat the spread of the virus. As a researcher, I am aware that outside forces can impact study response rates, willingness to engage or participate, or even dramatically change the data-collection landscape. In response to this major disruption, I extended the length of data collection, pivoted to include reaching out to individuals on their publicly available telephone, and made sure to include all faculty affiliated with the institutions' TLPs. It was important for me to understand situations that influenced participation by potential study participants (e.g., caring for a loved one who was ill, working from home with children needing attention, pivoting from delivering face-to-face instruction to virtual engagement, experiencing limited time and resources). Fortunately, saturation of analysis was achieved by collecting public stories, program leaders and faculty commentary in public documents, and historic chronicles from EPSB. Although I did not have the opportunity to interview as many individuals as planned due to their unavailability and inaccessibility, I was able to access data from unanticipated sources that enriched the study.

Summary

Throughout the data analysis and interpretation processes, I performed multiple checks for researcher bias that included crafting and administering interview questions modeled after available resources (Lash et al., 2014), keeping objective records, reviewing the university's guidelines, and acknowledging limitations in the research and process. The interview questions were developed and followed as a guide in advance of the interview process to be consistent in data gathering and enhance validity (Hatch, 2002). I also implemented member checking to allow participants to review a draft of Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 via email and provide feedback to assure accuracy of research interpretations (Creswell, 2007; Stake, 1995). Although a case study supports re-creation challenges because it is time-bound to a unique moment and event (Yin, 2003), this study is in-depth and inclusive of providing comprehensive data and findings. Overall, this case study design fits well with the purpose of the study and aligns with the *how* question being investigated.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

Within this chapter is a story of data collecting and coding, findings, Aha! moments, and themes. As a researcher guided by the constructivist paradigm, I was the gatherer, instrument, and narrator of the participating TLP voices. Case study accounts, both written and spoken, from the top 10 EPSB-approved teacher leadership graduate producing institutions in Kentucky fashioned a meaningful story.

Ultimately, three distinct data collection arenas were established during the process. These included (a) an investigation of the public story, (b) an assessment of program curriculum contracts and matrices, and (c) the incorporation of commentary by TLP leadership members and Teacher Leadership Review Committee members via questionnaires and Zoom-based interviews. Foundational in weaving together unique program experiences and realities, these data responded to the study's research queries. The *Layered Framework for, Models of, and Development within Teacher Leadership* (Danielson, 2006; TLEC, 2011) conceptual framework served as the lens through which findings were identified. Themes emerged concerning (a) program frameworks, (b) program alignment with the TLMS, (c) function of PLCs, and (d) program evaluation and reflection about the TLMS.

The chapter commences with revisiting how data were analyzed and mirrors the flow of the research questions outlined in Chapter 1. Finding exploration begins with investigating program modality and design. Inquiry of curriculum, program directives, and adherence to policy extends the journey. The study analysis concludes with TLPs' evaluation of successful graduates and reflective practices.

Re-Establishing the Study's Research Questions

To restate, this qualitative study explored EPSB-approved TLPs to understand how Kentucky teacher leaders are developed through the lens of the TLMS—focusing on 10 purposefully selected Kentucky graduate TLPs. The participating TLPs were selected based on the highest volume of program graduates. An extensive document review and analysis of the selected program's public story provided important information about the programs' frameworks and design. Accomplished through line-by-line coding of websites, course catalogs, and articles published by and about the program, saturation was reached. An opportunity existed for the TLP leaders and faculty to share their logistics, framework, evolution, and TLMS evaluation concerning 1. 16 KAR 1:016.

Throughout six months, participants were provided a Qualtrics questionnaire on a rolling basis as I learned of valuable potential voices to the study. Program coordinators, program chairs, department heads, and faculty members ($N = 56$) from all selected programs ($n = 10$) and institutions were invited to participate in the study. Later, a Zoom interview was scheduled for those that qualified and indicated they would like to participate. Study invitations were sent three times over a six-week period with a follow-up phone call to potential study participants' publicly listed office phone numbers. In several instances, individuals were willing to participate in an interview; however, they later self-identified that they were not the best individual to answer the interview questions and withdrew their agreement to interview. After completing the questionnaire, I reached out to participants to set up the interviews, provide the interview guide, and copy the interview consent form. Occurring only via Zoom, interviews followed necessary state guidelines for social distancing due to COVID-19. Somewhat

surprisingly, contextual limitations for participant contact and involvement paved the road to richer evidence as I turned to existing programmatic documents that exposed narratives that may have otherwise remained concealed.

Member checking provided an opportunity for participants to confirm or correct their spoken intentions after the information was transcribed, coded, analyzed, and interpreted. During data collection, I meticulously recorded who was invited, when they were invited, how many reminder emails each participant received, and the invitation-notification spacing following my IRB protocol. Intermittent researcher memos aided during and after the interviews to code and analyze data within Dedoose. Gleaned insights, emerging themes, surfacing thoughts, and connections to literature were reflected in my research memos. Reading the interview transcript while listening to the audio provided me with insights related to verbal inflections to avoid losing value cues to uncover the participants' true stories.

In response to information from data and participant situations, I broadened my document-analysis search. After hearing an interviewee's mention of program curriculum contracts and TLMS matrices, my website searches led to documents that provided extensive information about the program's structure, requirements, and commitment. These data added a third layer to the data-collection cycle as I searched for publicly available TLP curriculum contracts and matrices. Listening and responding to the data and TLP voices allowed me to pivot and expand what data guided me to answering the overarching research question, *How are teacher leaders formally prepared in Kentucky?* These resources informed answers more explicitly to the following guiding questions:

1. How are frameworks (i.e., supporting structures, concepts, research) used at selected institutions to design and deliver the program?
2. How do Kentucky teacher leadership programs at selected institutions align instructional strategies to support teacher leader development with the Teacher Leader Model Standards?
3. What role do professional learning communities or communities of practice play in supporting teacher leader development within the selected institutions' programs?
4. How do Kentucky teacher leadership programs at selected institutions evaluate candidates' success in addressing their program goals?

After all data were collected, I analyzed (a) the public story, (b) the documented curriculum story, and (c) the program leader perspective to ensure a complete and comprehensive picture of the selected Kentucky EPSB-approved TLPs. Reflecting collective strategies, this process was involved and delved into the rich data to cultivate case study findings.

Historical Context of the Kentucky Teacher Leadership Program Policy

Taking time to piece the historical story together, I understood more clearly the context in which the Kentucky-approved TLPs were operating. Figure 4.1 was crafted first from scribbles on a blank sheet on paper as I feverishly took notes during conversations with an active member of the Kentucky Teacher Leadership Review Committee. The timeline was developed through retrieval and review of EPSB documents, agendas, and meeting minutes. As displayed, the account unfolded with a

partnership between EPSB and the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) as interest in developing TLP guidelines evolved.

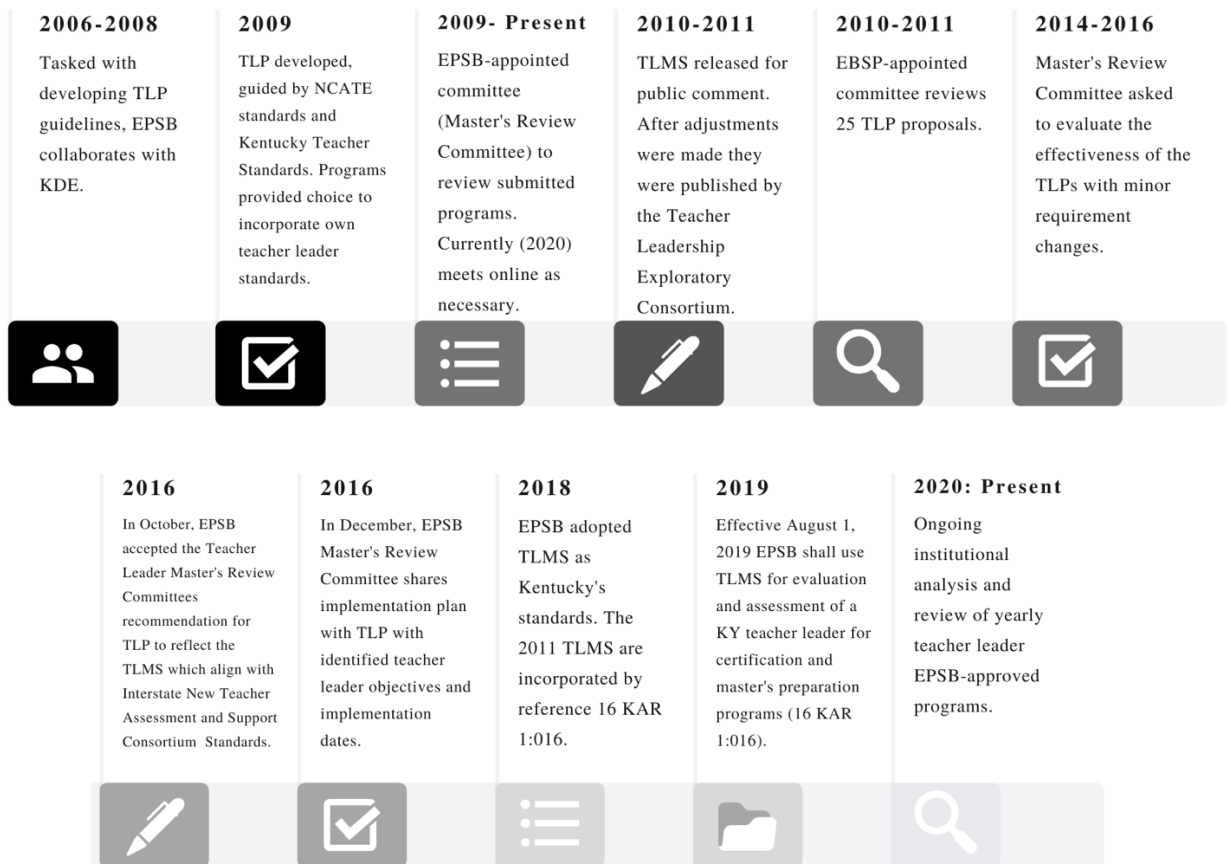


Figure 4.1 Visual representation of historical timeline of Kentucky teacher leadership program development and policy

To capture the entire picture of the TLMS policy adoption and how teacher leader candidates are currently formally developed in KY EPSB-approved TLPs, I realized I must expose the certification's inception. From EPSB minute meetings, agendas, and legislation, a skeleton of the process materialized. However, I was still missing the *why* and valuable discussions and considerations behind the scenes. Speaking with a longtime EPSB member and leader of the Teacher Leadership Master's Review Committee provided the needed commentary and exposed process details valuable to reaching saturation for this portion of the case study.

In 2009, through shared policy and research, Kentucky established a TLP guided by Kentucky Teacher and National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) standards. However, programs were encouraged to incorporate additional program models to develop their teacher leadership candidates further. The Teacher Leader Master's Review Committee was formed to review and approve proposed Kentucky master's programs for certification and continued oversight for evaluating and determining effectiveness. As of 2020, it meets on an as-needed basis virtually.

Starting in 2009, Kentucky higher education institutions began submitting teacher leader graduate and fifth-year program proposals (EPSB, 2009). During the early years of Kentucky teacher leadership certification, the Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium met, developed, and released standards specific to teacher leadership called the TLMS (TLEC, 2011). The EPSB-appointed committee continues to review programs, which increased to 25 teacher leader proposals from 2010–2011, leading to the subsequent review of program effectiveness and suggestions of minor program requirement changes for certification. This information was shared by a critical member of the EPSB Teacher Leadership Master's Review Committee, further sharing that in October of 2016, EPSB accepted the Teacher Leader Master's Review Committee's recommendation for the TLPs to align their programs with the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC) Standards (CCSSO, 2013). The EPSB April 10, 2017 record states:

During the October 2016 meeting the Board accepted the recommendations from the Teacher Leader Master's Review Committee. The committee recommended that the Teacher Leader programs reflect the Teacher Leader Model Standards, which align with InTASC Standards. These standards identify the knowledge, skills, and competencies that teachers need to assume leadership roles in their schools, districts, and the profession.

Subsequently, in December 2016, the implementation plan was shared with Kentucky TLPs, including the needed objectives and implementation dates. Commentary on this adoption was expressed by a member and leader of the Teacher Leader Master's Review Committee. During the interview, she stated, "I think the Teacher Leader Model Standards, one of the things that they've really done is opened up teachers beyond their classroom and into their community." In 2018, the official documentation of the state's adoption and program incorporation of the TLMS was referenced in 16 KAR 1:016 (16 KAR 1:016 Standards for Certified Teacher Leader). Within the legislation, the effective date was set as August 1, 2019 for this standard to be integrated and guiding for all EPSB-approved teacher leadership programs.

This study was imagined during the fall of 2018 and was timely in how data collection aligned with the first year of required implementation of the TLMS (TLEC, 2011). I assumed websites and other public-facing documents would have been updated at this point. I also assumed that teacher leadership program leaders and faculty would be familiar with the TLMS and how they guided candidate development and program evaluation of effectiveness.

Coding Expedition

All raw data from the multiple levels (public story, curriculum story, and participant narrative) and sources described were loaded into Dedoose. This platform assured each data piece was given full attention, and line-by-line coding and memo-making occurred. I listened directly to what the data were saying. Plain text, participant quotes, and paraphrasing became open codes. Dedoose allowed me to give weight to codes depending on the intensity, with higher numbers representing a substantial value or

conviction. Codes and comments were also provided color coordination for streamlined analysis.

Codes and memos transformed into a tangled, interconnected web as I absorbed each line. A challenge in this process was narrowing the public story's scope for the programs as websites for the 10 investigated programs were lengthy and sometimes layered when looking for information to answer specific study questions. To respond to this challenge, I downloaded program websites and reviewed them holistically, pulling out and highlighting materials sparking my interest and relating to the study's questions. Depth of the public story was ensured without diverging from the focus of the dissertation.

Following the coding and memos based on the programs' websites was coding of data collected from program curriculum contracts, program matrices, questionnaires, and participant interviews. By reviewing all the collected documents, questionnaire results, and interview transcripts line by line, I categorized the data into segments using the participants' words and phrases. This process naturally pulled data together across the multiple data sources for each program under investigation and sources across all 10 programs. Codes emerged based on properties, characteristics, or unique features (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). This process revealed 437 open codes pulled directly from what the data sources were saying. This fluid process resulted in categories and sub-categories shifting and modifying to create a more appropriate map for understanding how approved teacher leader graduate program formally develop candidates in Kentucky.

Axial Coding

Born from open codes, axial codes allowed for deeper connections. Themes were formed. They helped to increase understanding of what the data reveal in alignment with the study's specific research questions and beyond. The codes interacted within the analysis, making connections and narrowing the focus. Many pieces of the puzzle clustered together, forming a glimpse of the holistic picture.

Codes tumbled out of documents and arranged themselves, revealing exciting trends and stories. Again, opportunity for deeper investigation stemmed from the study's contextual challenges. The sample was widened to the top 10 graduate-producing institutions. I feared I would have overlooked the behind-the-scenes happenings in our Kentucky graduate TLPs. Depth from institutional documentation was obtained where interview participation was limited.

Selective Coding

Guided closely by my research questions, I sought to utilize selective coding. Within my semi-selective coding process, data were categorized within the study's questions. Data were further organized based on the *Layered Framework for, Models of, and Development within Teacher Leadership* conceptual framework. A reappraisal for the conceptual framework is offered in Figure 4.2. Directly connecting examples from the data to create a coded system allowed linkage to research questions a process detailed by Miles and Huberman (1994).

I described this process as semi-selective coding. Since I generated selective codes based directly on the developed conceptual model, I believe the *semi-* prefix

encompasses my approach. This helped to organize the tangled codes and preserve the focus on how teacher leaders are formally developed.

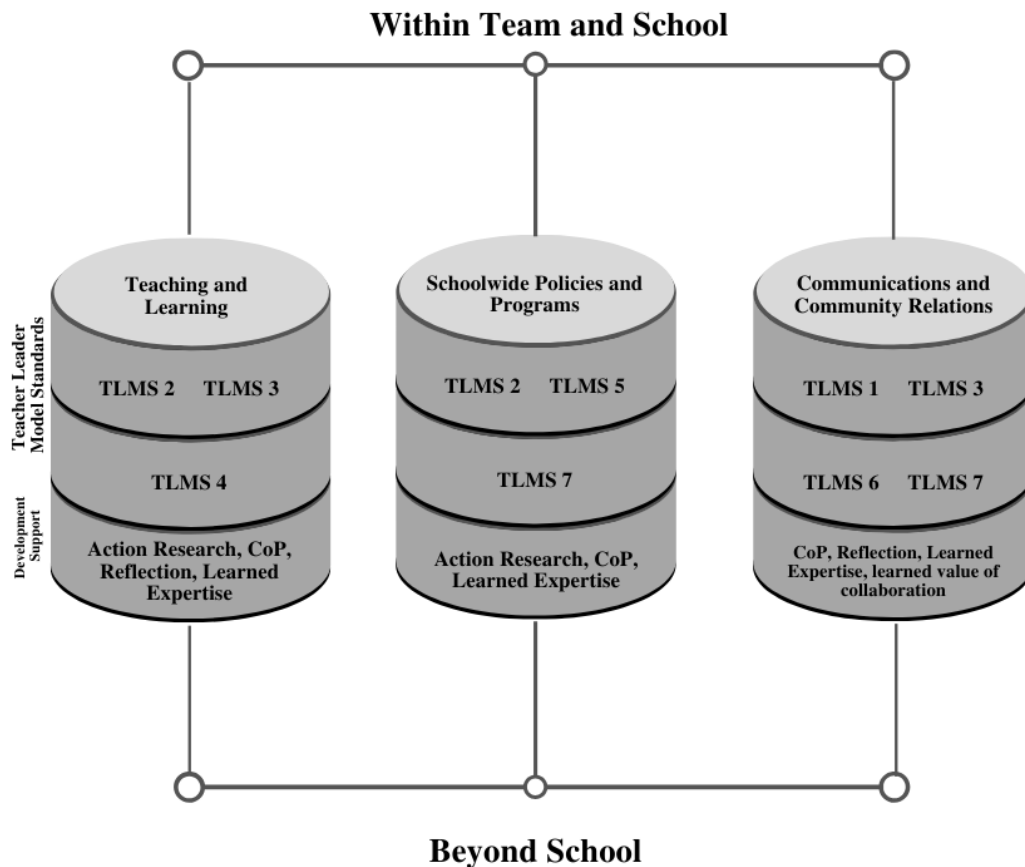


Figure 4.2 Visual representation of developed conceptual framework of Layered Framework for, Models of, and Development within Teacher Leadership incorporating Danielson’s (2006) Framework and the TLMS (TLEC, 2011).

The themes originated from the three data collection fields (i.e., public story, curriculum story, participant narrative). The data arranged themselves in such ways that gave me a clearer understanding of how teacher leaders are formally developed both within and beyond their graduate program’s intention. Categories merged living under umbrella themes influenced by specific question elements and embedded within the conceptual framework.

During this process, I combined multiple categories to form themes to answer questions and create interpretations to contribute to the teacher leadership research and

practice field. The interrelationships uncovered here are further elucidated in Chapter 5, where the narrative is established through the program's interrelationships, data interpretations, and conclusions to the findings presented in this chapter.

Data Sources

Study data emerged from (a) investigation of the public story (program websites), (b) assessment of program curriculum contracts and matrices, and (c) incorporation of commentary from study qualifying TLPs. As mentioned earlier, a disrupting pandemic plagued the world during the year of data collection for this study, which negatively impacted study participation. As a qualitative researcher, I understood that there can be events beyond my control that ultimately shape research findings. Such is the nature of qualitative research. Fortunately, relying more heavily on pre-existing documents actually strengthened the depth and breadth of my gathered data. Table 4.1 displays the top 10 graduate-producing teacher leadership programs EPSB approved in Kentucky, with pseudonyms used to ensure confidentiality of study participants who were interviewed.

Table 4.1

Teacher Leader Programs Study Data Sources Overview

Program Institution	Public Story	Curriculum Contract	Teacher Leader Core Course Descriptions	Questionnaire Engagement	Interview
Citation University	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Genuine Risk University	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Man o' War University	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Nyquist University	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Seabiscuit University	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Email Correspondence only
Seattle Slew University	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Secretariat University	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Sir Barton University	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Smarty Jones University	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Winning Colors University	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

As a continuation of the case study participant selection process explained in Chapter 3, Table 4.2 displays information requested from EPSB. The table breaks down programs with the highest number of degrees produced in the past five years.

Table 4.2

Kentucky EPSB-approved Teacher Leader Programs Study Data Sources

Year	Total TL Master's Degrees Reported to EPSB from Top 10 Approved TLPs in KY*	Total TL Master's Degrees Reported to EPSB from All Other Institutions** <i>n</i> = 10	Total Degrees Reported
2014-2015	338	67	405
2015-2016	697	61	758
2016-2017	890	88	978
2017-2018	834	103	937
2018-2019	740	124	864
Total	3,499	443	3,942

*excluding Research I Institutions

**including Research I institutions

Teacher Leadership Definition

About halfway through my program investigation, I re-realized that the term *teacher leadership* lacks a universally accepted definition. I noted the wording of each program's definition and where it was found, how it was phrased, and how it was connected within program objectives and assignments. I also considered the extent to which each program's definition of teacher leadership was aligned with the TLMS. I realized that I could not fully understand the TLPs' formal development strategies if I had not taken the time to analyze and understand each program's operationalization of teacher leadership. Thus, I knew I must add this section to the findings before sharing the major study findings. For comparison, teacher leadership was operationally defined as *teachers collaborating through collective skills, promising effective practices, and professional learning to influence and promote effective school and student improvement aligned with the Teacher Leader Model Standards (TLEC, 2011)* for this study.

Each TLP definition or program outcome was added to the data and then coded.

An interviewee shared specifically about the importance of structural leadership when prompted to share their program’s definition:

By structural leadership [I mean] bringing teachers and administrators together to identify and discuss a particular problem or issue with that school. But [it] also means bringing the teachers and administrators together to have a collaborative solution to whatever that particular problem is. That may be at a grade level, it may be at a subject level, or it may be in a school level.

As I reviewed each statement, I color-coded segments of the quote that I perceived were a critical indicator of teacher leadership. Each identified section of the program definitions was grouped under common characteristics and displayed in Table 4.3. Each panel box holds partial quotes and paraphrases from the definitions for dissection and group assignment.

Table 4.3

Teacher Leader Definition by Program and Theme

Program Institution	Data and Research	Diverse Learning Needs	Improving Teaching and Learning	Collaboration
Citation University		Support all children to learn	Improve continuously	Commit to continuous improvement through reflective and collaborative action Support professional learning communities
Genuine Risk University			Create a classroom climate in which your students can learn through knowledge, skills, and dispositions	

Table 4.3 (continued)

Man o' War University	Gather and analyze information and data from multiple sources	Identify and address students' learning needs effectively	Think critically about how to improve teaching and learning	Work cooperatively with others
Nyquist University		Foster an educational culture		
Seabiscuit University		Work with all stakeholders to ensure success for every learner		Collaborate at ground level to strengthen professional practice
Seattle Slew University	Analyze their school Promote action research in classrooms		Become an advocate for the needs of a particular grade level, school, or district	Help connect teachers and administrators
Secretariat University	Research and continuous data collection and analysis	Foster an educational culture Embrace diversity	Improve continuously	Work cooperatively with others
Sir Barton University	Gather school- and/or district-specific data and resources Inform instruction and learning by research		Create a classroom climate in which your students can learn through knowledge, skills, and dispositions Improve continuously Improve educational processes and policy	Support professional learning communities
Smarty Jones University			Increase student learning and achievement	Exhibit practical problem solving
Winning Colors University		Overcome student barriers to learning Develop equitable practices to meet the needs of diverse learners	Facilitate learning for all students Improve teaching and learning practices Lead schools to overcome student barriers Close the achievement gap	Support professional learning communities

Table 4.3

Teacher Leader Definition by Program and Theme (additional columns)

Program Institution	Community	Teacher Leader and Peer Growth	Leadership and Change
Citation University	Reflect a community where adults within the organization become learners	Reflect	Practice inquiry
	Make instructional decisions within the school community		Provide practical experience
Genuine Risk University	Foster an educational culture and classroom climate	Support others to grow with them as a result of their leadership	Empower teacher leaders
		Empower teacher leaders and continuous learning	
		Become caring teachers	
		Showcase program experience	
Man o' War University	Work with others within and beyond the school to help all students achieve their fullest potential		
Nyquist University		Empower continuous learning	Practice inquiry
		Become caring teachers	
Seabiscuit University	Work with stakeholders		Lead in educational environments
			Create powerful, effective change agents in classrooms, schools, and districts
Seattle Slew University			Hold instructional leader role

Table 4.3 (continued)

Secretariat University	Foster an educational culture and classroom climate		
	Improve educational climate in and beyond school		
	Promote civic engagement		
Sir Barton University	Improve educational climate in and beyond school	Embed professional growth and continuous learning in job	Hold professional knowledge and leadership skills
		Empower continuous learning	Empower teacher leaders Transform positively for systemic change and leadership
Smarty Jones University			Process by which teachers, individually or collectively influence their colleagues
			Empower teacher leaders
Winning Colors University			

TLMS review. Prior to discussing the program definitions, it is important to review the seven domains that frame the TLMS. For simple reference, I associated a single word with each TLMS domain as follows: Domain I—Collaboration, Domain II—Research, Domain III—Improvement, Domain IV—Instruction, Domain V—Assessment, Domain VI—Community, Domain VII—Advocacy. The following sections intentionally have reversed headings because the first word forecasts the section theme.

Collaboration (Domain I). Questions such as how educational groups function and promote a positive culture are encompassed in TLMS Domain I. Focusing on how the teacher leader core courses develop candidates to guide, create, and maintain a

collective culture for learning provides insight on how a productive workplace and learning environment are developed. The school culture should focus on student achievement through inclusion, trust, and facilitation skills—not merely student achievement. A schoolwide collaborative culture must be built and maintained by the teacher leaders.

Research (Domain II). A school culture that emphasizes research techniques, skill building, and application is vital to developing effective teacher leaders. The ability to seek and use relevant research to improve professional practices is essential to implementing student-centered instructional strategies and achieving learning goals. Research-based approaches guide the teacher leader, who can facilitate findings with colleagues and the greater community. It is important to note that this domain addresses the need for teacher leaders to model classroom data collection and analysis as well as implement research-recommended strategies to support improved learning within and beyond the classroom. Thus, action research principles are essential to the development of teacher leaders in Kentucky.

Improvement (Domain III). Teachers center on continuous improvement within their classrooms to ensure high levels of student learning, which requires teacher leaders to remain cognizant of rapidly changing learning theories and emerging technologies. The third domain focuses on the interconnection of teachers' continuous learning in their content domain and awareness of current events and emerging trends, products, and skills needed to ensure their classrooms are advanced, relevant learning environments. Sustaining professional learning is a skill necessary for teacher leaders and should be developed within their formal training.

Instruction (Domain IV). Achieving a shared vision of student learning is partly achieved through effective instruction. Teacher leaders must continuously strive to be competent in research-informed instructional practice and possess a deep understanding and appreciation for learning. Following a coaching approach, teacher leaders engage in continuous growth and reflection to improve instructional strategies and practices. Their dedication to assuring their own improvement and providing support for their colleagues defines this domain and continuously works towards student achievement.

Assessment (Domain V). Guided by assessment data, teacher leaders work collaboratively to implement recommended strategies and regularly collect diverse data to ensure adequate student learning. Teacher leaders must know how to gather and analyze relevant data. They must also implement new strategies informed by data. Results of both formative and summative assessments are used by teacher leaders to recommend needed changes within their schools. Teacher leaders work in harmony with colleagues for data analysis and interpretation.

Community (Domain VI). The interconnection between student learning and outside influences such as culture, community, and family create unique opportunities for teacher leaders to craft collaborative structures. Engagement with community leaders includes building and maintaining successful relationships that are founded upon listening to diverse perspectives and fostering a sense of shared culture and community. The development of community collaboration by teacher leaders provides opportunities for their discovery of insights, ideas, and inspirations that converge to meet the shared goals of student success.

Advocacy (Domain VII). Without an active role in understanding and awareness of current educational policies at all governmental levels, teacher leaders are limited in the extent to which they can advocate for student needs. Teacher leaders follow policies and regulations specific to their practices to ensure effective teaching and student learning. They are versed in legislative language to converse with school leaders, stakeholders, legislators, and board members on the students' behalf. To fully master this domain, teacher leaders must develop skills to disseminate learned information, utilize research to influence policies, effectively communicate to targeted audiences both within and beyond schools, and support PLCs centered on school improvement goals.

Teacher leader definitions in alignment with TLMS. Figure 4.3 highlights specific aspects of the findings in alignment with the TLMS domains. I was able to identify connections between the programmatic teacher leadership definition and the one operationalized for this study. Focus on collaboration, specific leadership, and professional growth-producing skills to improve student achievement through the TLMS lens positively is evident in Figure 4.3. These definition tenets are reflected in later presentations of findings concerning specific developmental structures and strategies. The corresponding TLMS descriptors are linked to comments that appeared in documents or made by study participants.

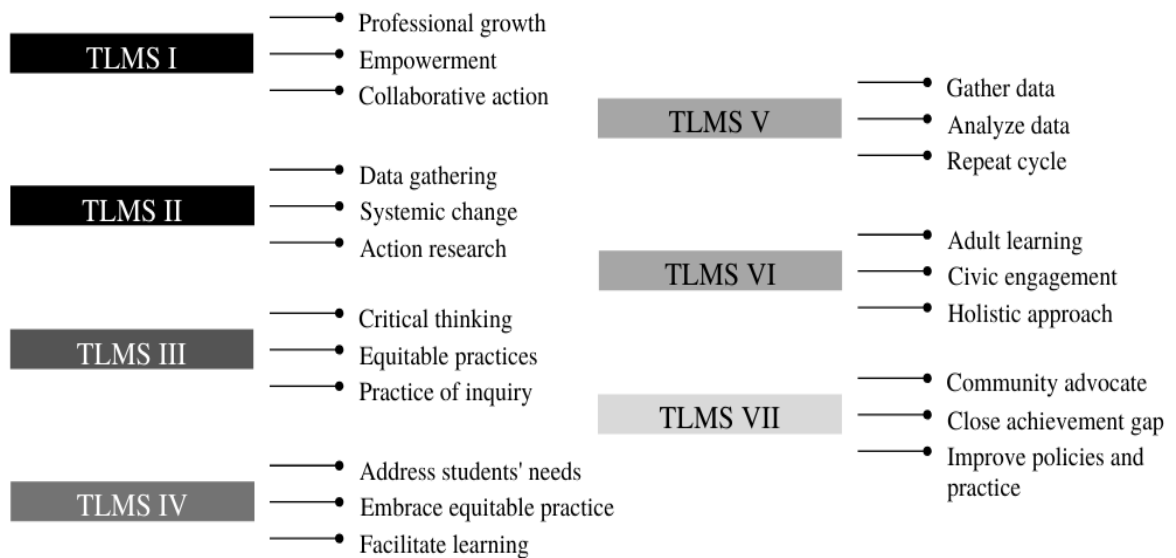


Figure 4.3 Visual representation of TLP's Teacher Leader definition themes in alignment with

Institution Frameworks for Program Design and Delivery

To answer the question about *how teacher leaders are formally prepared in Kentucky*, I first needed to establish a foundation and then determine common program frameworks for design and delivery, such as supporting structures, concepts, and guidelines used at the selected institutions. For this investigation of the public story, I assumed the mindset of a prospective candidate exploring potential graduate programs for Kentucky teacher leadership certification and professional development. Precisely, the following section presents findings about how the programs' frameworks, design, and delivery influence the formal development of teacher leaders in Kentucky.

Attention to website information and the public story is key to recruiting candidates and creating community within a graduate program. Although this observation was not one of my considerations when developing this study, I believe it adds transparency and greater understanding about what potential Kentucky TLP candidates experienced. Many programs' websites were not updated to the most current year, and

program leaders and faculty were not listed within the programs' websites. In some cases, such as Citation University, I was able to identify a change of the TLP from one unit within their college of education to another within the past five years from the start of my 2020 study. Thus, this process of gathering information and representing each program required careful recording and organization, gathering web-based contact information for key personnel, and concise investigative skills to locate the most accurate available information.

This intriguing process of data searching started with an open code review of publicly available documents and information. While conducting a line-by-line review, I considered, crafted, and recorded codes using the language of the sources. Those codes were grouped to form axial codes based on a shared theme or common thread informed by the content. Those axial codes were then funneled through the conceptual framework lens. Paired with consideration for the study's questions, five realizations of each TLP's framework, design, and delivery materialized to my delight:

1. Course delivery design was influenced by external factors and student voice.
2. Program contextual framework evolution occurs as a reflective process.
3. Teacher leader development supports were evident within a carefully designed program approach.
4. Multiple endorsement pathways within each teacher leadership preparation program were available, thus providing a holistic candidate learning approach.
5. Program faculty and staff commitment to teacher leader candidates' development was apparent.

Transparency in the coding process is displayed in the coding stages in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4

Emergent Themes of Program Characteristics for Program Design and Delivery

Selective Code	Axial Code	Open Code
Course delivery design influenced by external factors and student's voice	Matriculation to an online learning environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enjoy comfort of own home and own schedule • Feature online programs • Experience typical of most teacher leader KY programs • Hold synchronous meetings • Compete in teacher leader marketplace • Design for educators who seek career advancement and professional enrichment in a convenient, online environment
	Supporting a diverse population of candidates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serve people from all over the nation and world • Enter program with different teaching experiences
	Flexibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet demands of working professionals • Complete courses in different orders • Offer test optional or flexible program options (e.g., no GRE required for some programs, waived for master's graduates) • Study anytime from anywhere • Offer flexibility, convenience, and academic rigor to help you succeed and meet your goals
Program contextual framework evolution as a reflective process	Curriculum design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlight faculty's real-world experience in their fields • Provide job-embedded professional development • Apply to current situations • Focus on coursework to help instruction • Embed TLMS or other principles • Select curriculum that is dynamic, challenging, and relevant
	Program competencies and standards alignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Align specific matrix for standards with courses and assignments (both program and course specific) • Performance • Identify course syllabi and standards addressed • Share purpose of assignment

Table 4.4 (continued)

Program contextual framework evolution as a reflective process (continued)	Application logistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open enrollment • Reflect on candidate profile • Agree to statement of commitment/code of ethics • Require test score • Validate teaching certificate
Evidence of teacher leader development within a carefully designed program approach	Health-centric factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support from advisor • Monitor between candidates and advisor • Check-in at program midpoint • Focus on individualized program and course offerings • Model after cohort or semi-cohort
	School culture factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Influence from district • Recommend from word of mouth in professional conversation • Offer PLCs
	Structural factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize Learning Management Systems (e.g., Canvas, Moodle, iLearn, Livetext) • Consider course length • Engage synchronously • Participate in online activities, discussions, webinars, group activities
Multiple endorsement pathways within the design of teacher leadership graduate programs	Candidate’s choice in areas of interest to deepen knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer dual certifications • Design with the individual in mind • Provide diverse graduate path options (endorsement, master’s program, fifth year)
	Career opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move great teachers out of the classroom • Increase salary • Contribute more • Choose what best aligns with career goals
	Rank change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Earn master’s degree and Rank 2 • Enroll to simply get rank change

Table 4.4 (continued)

Program faculty and staff are committed to the development of teacher leader candidates	Acknowledgment of a changing teaching landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment of TLP instructors regularly going out in the schools • Change in school environment and needs as it is not like 12, 15, 20 years ago • Follow TLMS • Engage in multiple revisions of the TLP over the years
	Consideration for faculty's and instructor's P-12 teaching experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include faculty members with great historical knowledge • Serve as a mentor or a university supervisor for a student-teacher • Observe in the field fairly regularly • Share practical experience

Course Delivery Design Influences

Of the selected teacher leader EPSB-approved programs, a striking commonality in their designs was the modality in which the programs are delivered (Table 4.5). I was astounded: Most programs were delivered totally online, while two were hybrid (i.e., online with face-to-face components and class meetings via Zoom). This trend in online delivery occurred before the 2020 shift to online learning due to the global pandemic. Kentucky TLPs were responding to learning needs for working professionals in the twenty-first century almost universally. Several program leaders who were study participants reported that this change was made to compete within the teacher leader marketplace (Seattle Slew University) and to support the demands of the working professionals in the education field (Genuine Risk University). Fascinated, I dug deeper to uncover the influence that candidates had over the program design. Program leaders cited assumptions about the appeal for candidates to learn in the comfort of their own homes, complete programs on their own schedules, and align with their workplace

requirements and career goals. The online programs consisted of a variety of modalities, including synchronous and asynchronous learning.

Table 4.5

Teacher Leader Program Modality, Core Course Focus, and Exit Assignment

Institution	Modality	Teacher Core Course Content	Exit Assignment
Citation University	Online	Teacher leadership foundations Teacher leadership research Teacher leadership within and beyond school Teacher leader capstone (showcase)	Showcase project, Professional growth Plan revision, Leadership reflection
Genuine Risk University	Online	Teacher leadership empowerment Educational assessment Teacher leadership research Action research practicum Technology for teacher leaders Supervision skills	Action research report
Man o' War University	Online	Teacher leadership foundations Technology for teacher leaders Today's learner context Leadership curriculum and educational assessment Teacher leader capstone (research development course)	Capstone research project
Nyquist University	Multiple Delivery Options (including online)	Graduate studies level set Teacher leadership research (action research) Instructional Strategies (teacher leader focus) Educational assessment Today's learner context Teacher leadership curriculum and skills Technology for teacher leaders Educational change agents	Capstone experience-portfolio, exit interview
Seabiscuit University	Online	Teacher leadership skills Educational change agents Leadership curriculum Teacher leadership research Teacher leader capstone	Capstone: action research report
Seattle Slew University	Mostly Online Classes	Leadership skills Today's learner context Teacher leadership research Developmental analysis of learning PLCs (collaboration) Leadership curriculum	Portfolio

Table 4.5 (continued)

Secretariat University	Online	Graduate studies level set (teacher leader orientation) Teacher leadership within and beyond school Teacher leadership research Today's learner context Leadership curriculum and instruction Teacher leadership research (action research; multiclass)	Successful completion and presentation of action research project
Sir Barton University	Online	Teacher leadership skills Classroom management and motivation Educational assessment Teacher leadership research	Research Presentation, TLMS self-assessment, TLMS benchmark on assessment reports
Smarty Jones University	Online	Teacher leadership research Reading content instruction Teacher coaching and mentoring PLCs (teacher leader focus)	Teacher leader Professional portfolio
Winning Colors University	Online	Teacher leadership foundations Leadership curriculum Instructional strategies Educational assessment Teacher leadership research and capstone (action research)	Action research report

Figure 4.4 will later delve into the core courses findings originating from data culminating in Table 4.5. TLPs boasted their vast and diverse enrollment of candidates resulting from the remote learning programming. Serving candidates with varied skills, teaching experience, and needs added richness to student voice and program features. One program leader from Genuine Risk University shared their thoughts about change to online delivery. They highlighted that a global perspective was created from diverse classes and cohorts, and a wider reach of classmates was attained from open rolling enrollment.

Other program personnel marveled at the reach of their program. For example, one asserted, "We serve people from all over the nation and, in fact, over the world. We've had candidates from China [and] Belize." Nyquist University offers a 1-credit hour

course specifically designed for candidates to pursue achievement of "a global classroom environment." During their program, candidates create a *toolbox* of skills and resources and complete a clinical placement in a setting with "exposure to ethnic, cultural, or socioeconomic perspective different than their own and provide a reflection of their experience." According to a Seattle Slew University study participant, "Within the context of each candidate's working situation, diversity among students exists. Therefore, by default, the candidates are continually engaged in working with students of various backgrounds, ethnicities, abilities, etc. at each classroom, school." Secretariat University has a course that is globally focused and includes "research, theory, policy, and practice in multicultural and diversity education; recognizing race, class, gender, learning, and linguistic diversity within home, schools, and community settings; developing and demonstrating culturally relevant and responsive approaches to meeting the needs of students."

Flexibility was a common theme rooted in the examined programs, evidenced by a focus on anticipating the candidates' needs and incorporating candidates' reflections. Data gathered suggest that program designers understood and supported working professionals' demands, allowed courses to be taken in different sequences, and sometimes provided flexible program options related to test admission scores. Understanding the multi-level learning benefits of using the candidates' workplace settings was similar to what I experienced while engaged with my own TLP. For example, below is a statement appearing in the curriculum contract used by Seattle Slew University:

Many of the assignments in the core courses require candidates to address issues and concerns and interests in their own classrooms, content area, school, and/or

district. These assignments are designed to allow candidates opportunities for teacher leadership at various levels within their current working situations and in future capacities, as opportunities are presented.

A study participant at Genuine Risk University shared during the interview that,

They wanted whatever task that we have our candidates to do to be something that was reflective of their current practice. It needed to be something that was complementary of their work, their current workload as teachers versus something that was in addition to or supplemental.

According to an interviewee from Seattle Slew University, they are “trying to form teacher leaders, but also be adaptable, flexible enough to fit the student interests.”

Reflective Process Influences

Curriculum design was influenced by faculty and guided by the TLMS and other corresponding principles. Study participants emphasized that faculty with real-world experience in their fields aided in creating and maintaining program integrity. For example, the website for Seabiscuit University stated at its inception, “We see this as job-embedded professional development” and “We want [our candidates’] coursework to help them teach.” These comments were similar to other researched programs. A study participant from Genuine Risk University described the process for focusing on harmonization between program tasks and candidates’ work.

It was not surprising for me to later learn that many program leaders and faculty were practitioners rather than full-time university personnel. Specifically, an instructor at Genuine Risk University proudly proclaimed, “To my knowledge, all of our instructors are practitioners.” I assumed that not only do the program instructors and course designers understand the challenges and nature of the K-12 school environment, but they also know how important it is to embody a student-centered approach. Seattle Slew

University's program reflects on this balance, further revealing the thought and consideration in the program and course frameworks.

Assignments within each course may address the impact or potential impact on P-12 student learning. Candidates each have unique working situations which demand a degree of freedom to choose the direction a particular course requirement may take. Support is given for individual candidates to choose and pursue their own questions and answers as they relate to P-12 learning.

Winning Colors University painted a public picture surrounding how the program is structured, offering two instructional components:

The first component, Professional Education, provides advanced-level pedagogy, leadership, and content related to Kentucky Teacher Standards and applicable to all P-12 teachers working in a wide gamut of developmental levels and content areas. The second component, Specialization, directs the candidate into an individual program in content, pedagogy, and/or areas of professional growth concurrent with the goals of each candidate.

According to Secretariat University's public story, their program focuses on who the graduate students are and why they need their specific curriculum structure. Within a student-centered statement, potential candidates are asked to confirm they can secure a meaningful field placement. It is foundational to their tasks in the program, demonstrating the interweaving of professional practice and teacher leader development.

Realizing the Teacher as Leader program is designed for practicing teachers, if I am currently not employed as a teacher or become unemployed while a student in this program, it is my responsibility to locate field placements at which to complete all course assignments and program requirements. I understand it is not my professors' responsibility to locate field placements for me or change course learning outcomes to fit my current state of employment. If I am unable to locate appropriate field placements, I realize I may not be permitted to enroll in leadership core courses until I locate an appropriate placement.

Somewhat surprised by these assertions, I read on about the firm stance this program took towards field placement. The program stressed that if candidates did not have an excellent environment in which to complete required field placements and assignments,

their enrollment in courses might be denied. When I applied for my own teacher leader graduate program, I found myself in a position where I would need to secure an elementary school setting. With the help of the program director in locating a potential site where I could complete field-based assignments, and after a meeting with the school principal and other school leaders, I made that school my home base. Those experiences led to later employment at that school.

Within EPSB's TLP proposal, institutions were asked how the program supported job-embedded professional experiences. Analysis of the publicly found or shared documents submitted by the selected institutions revealed practica and assignments aligning with course responsibilities. Such was the goal of Seattle Slew University as assignments and core content asked candidates to grow as leaders in their current professional spheres by navigating situations, addressing issues, concerns, and interests in their classrooms. University personnel relied on authentic work opportunities to support leadership growth and matched this with critical assessment of candidate performance to demonstrate standard mastery. Built into the course syllabi were often the standards addressed and the assignment purpose.

Application and program enrollment information were not things I thought to be information-rich sources for this study. However, I discovered that these elements could set the tone for a program. Methods for supporting the candidate and reflecting on the candidate's needs resulted in some programs turning to open enrollment. Specific focus on the candidate profile included their admission test scores and teaching certificate status.

Citation University uses Lambert's (2003) book, *Leadership Capacity for Lasting School Improvement*, as the framework to guide program foci and candidates' development of teacher leadership skills and dispositions. These include adult development, professional dialogue, collaboration, organizational change, and advocacy. Personnel at Winning Colors University designed their program to empower teachers to effectively implement classroom management and differentiated instruction to address student learning needs. According to the Citation University website, "As leaders, teachers can influence curriculum goals and school policies, and work with colleagues to bring about positive change for student learning. This degree provides practical applications that graduates will be able to apply within their current classrooms." Much of this framework aligns with the TLMS.

Core courses relationship. To clarify the information gathered from the 10 selected programs, I created a graphic design that presented both similar and distinct features. I began the process by first identifying the core program courses at all 10 programs. This process provided a window through which I could see more clearly the organization, content foci, and candidate experiences at each program.

With my interest piqued, I searched websites and course catalogs again to ensure I uncovered program course requirements accurately, paying specific attention to the program's ease of accessibility and transparency that I may have missed when conducting my initial review. Although a few websites required more navigation than previously, I successfully obtained program guides, course descriptions, and even sample syllabi for several courses. Understanding the connection and frequency among the core

course content and the necessary domain mastery provides insight into how teacher leader candidates are formally developed at each institution.

Recording the titles and context of each core course followed the identification process. To reduce vulnerability in program identification, I did not reveal specific course names in Table 4.5. Instead, this table displays courses identified under a general concept designed to encapsulate the course subject. Patterns emerged based on specific course foci. Because I knew I needed to highlight each course focus, Table 4.5 also reflects the count of specific courses within the sample TLPs. These findings are essential to uncovering answers to the overarching question about how teacher leaders are formally developed at the selected programs.

The relationship of the core courses within the TLMS is arranged within *Teaching and Learning*, *Schoolwide Policies and Programs*, and *Communications and Community relations*. The core course findings overlay with the conceptual framework bringing the formal development picture into more precise focus. It is not surprising that a focus on building teacher leader skills specific to supporting all domains and the three teacher leader engagement areas intersected. Both practica and PLCs shared domains and areas as they are tools for other domain development. A narrowed focus on the specific development embedded in the course and program will be described in a subsequent section. Visually, Figure 4.4 presented below showcases the collective configuration of TLP core courses within the study's conceptual framework born out of Table 4.6.

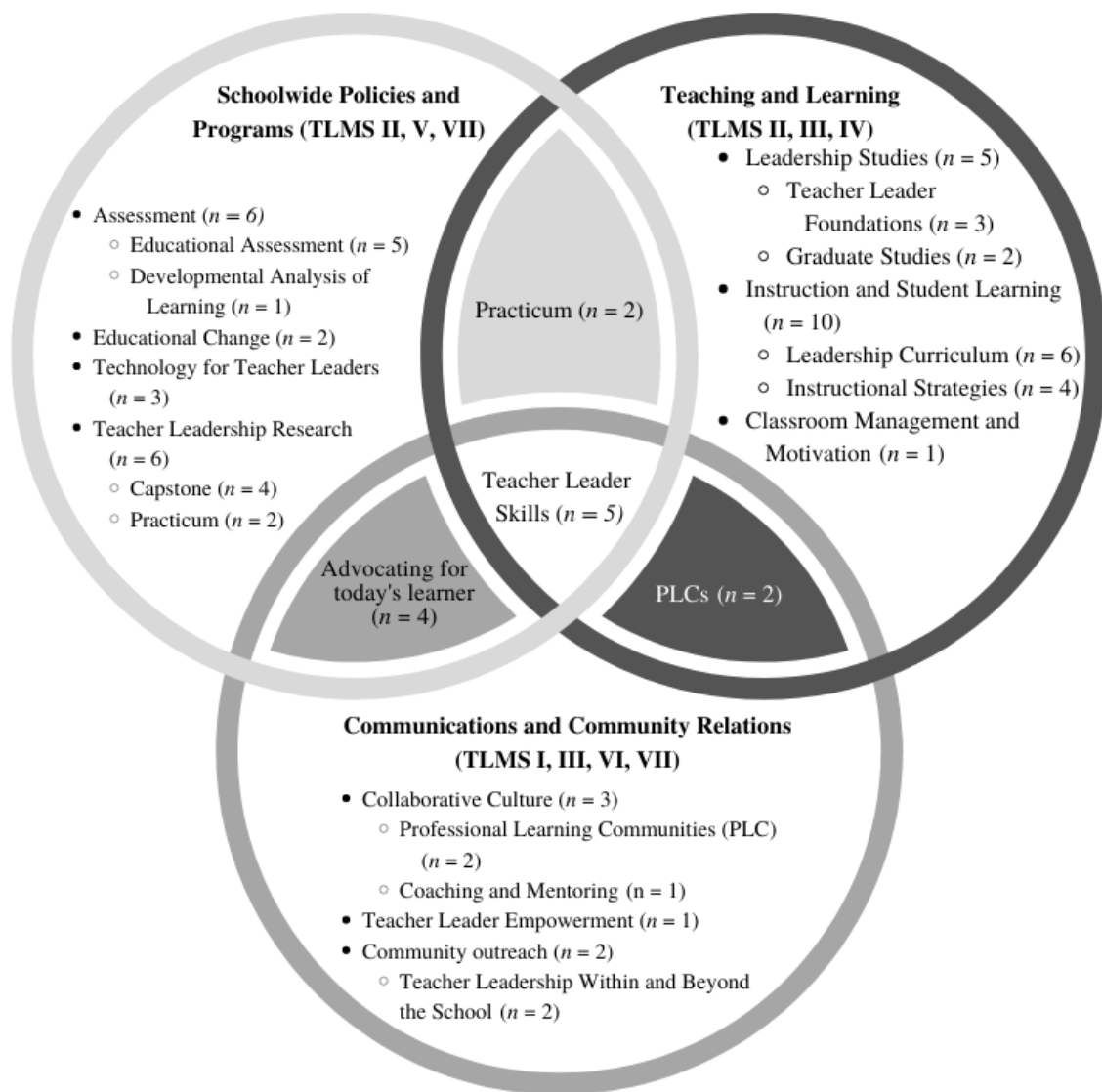


Figure 4.4 Visual representation of developed conceptual framework of Layered Framework for, Models of, and Development within Teacher Leadership with corresponding core teacher leadership course themes.

Teacher Leadership Development Influences

Factors impacting the development of teacher leaders were presented in the literature review in Chapter 2. As I am the instrument through which these findings were uncovered, my interest was heightened when programs focused on health, culture, and structural supports. Whether explicit or implicit supports, they are knitted into the program’s fabric.

Health-centric. A mutually beneficial relationship is developed by teacher leaders through their creating, maintaining, and thriving within a healthy school culture. Authors often note that health and culture are significantly intertwined with teacher leadership (Crowther et al., 2009; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009; Killion et al., 2016; Valdez et al., 2015). Findings in this research suggest that advisor support, advisor and instructor feedback, mid-program check-ins, cohort or semi-cohort models, and individualized program or course foci are categorized as health-centric supports built into the teacher leadership programs investigated. For example, Seabiscuit University boasts that a personal advisor remains coupled with a teacher leader candidate from application through graduation and offers free career service assistance. Winning Colors University requires candidates to consult often with their advisor to create an "optimal sequence of course work" in their journey towards achieving both personal and professional goals. The website content for Smarty Jones University asserts that candidates "will be assigned a Student Success Coordinator by the Department of Graduate Student Success and an Academic Advisor once [individuals] are admitted to the program." To ensure that candidates at Sir Barton University are well served, candidates are assigned an advisor who guides them in completing the educational goals for the degree, similar to Smarty Jones University.

A unique feature at Smarty Jones University, however, is implementation of a comprehensive mentoring approach in which all candidates receive additional, ongoing support through a school-based mentor. This individual is a school administrator, curriculum coach, department head, or a teacher leader at the candidate's place of employment. These mentors assist the candidates with various leadership experiences

such as writing curricular and learning materials, gathering and analyzing data, and making presentations. Personnel at Smarty Jones University assert this is a high-impact practice for teacher leadership development.

The most surprising of these supports was that eight programs opted to have some manner of formal midpoint check to ensure candidates progress as needed within the program (see Table 4.6). As a candidate and graduate from a similar program that did not have a formal midpoint check and based on the individual and self-driven nature of graduate programs, this verification of progress stood out to me. This midpoint assessment is to ensure a candidate progresses into program candidacy or a grade check to determine how many credits a candidate would take the following semester. For example, Citation University's program includes a midpoint assessment that "occurs through the first leadership project....Candidate performance on that project is a strong indicator of satisfactory progress in the program."

Personnel working at Sir Barton University review candidate performance after completion of 12 hours in approved graduate coursework. They can apply for candidacy provided they meet program requirements (i.e., maintain a Grade Point Average (GPA) of at least a 3.0, submit a professional growth plan based on the Kentucky Framework for Teaching, receive no ineffective rating on TLMS assessment, pass professional dispositions inventory assessed by graduate education faculty, and receive approval by the Graduate Teacher Education Committee within the TLP). Candidates at Winning Colors University must pass a midpoint assessment requirement:

To ensure master's candidates are proficient on Advanced Level Teacher Standards, it is recommended that a majority of the Critical Performances associated with the . . . courses be completed prior to the Specialization Component. Students must achieve an average of 3.0 on all Critical Performances

and an average score of 3 on dispositions even though a candidate's program of studies does not include the courses. Additional course work may be required based on the assessment results.

The website for the teacher preparation program at Smarty Jones University asserts:

“There are two instructor disposition surveys required when you reach your mid-point.

This will help us determine how you are doing at this point in your program.”

Program advisors support candidates by guiding candidates' coursework and elective choices, while instructors focus on assignment feedback. Citation University asserts on its website that course instructors guide and provide feedback to teacher leader candidates specifically on designing a program-required project. Advisors at Seattle Slew University focus on moving candidates forward to program completion according to an interviewed faculty member.

Once a student has completed all coursework and completed all critical performances and passed those at an appropriate level, then . . . they contact their advisor, who sends them a link to the [required electronic] portfolio. [Candidates] then upload all the required documents. Once they've uploaded all their required documents, they send that back to the advisor who then evaluates it. If [the portfolio content] has met evaluation [requirements], then [candidates] pass. They are able to complete the program as well as apply for graduation.

Echoing earlier findings on the general flexibility for teacher leader candidates, the individualized program foci and course offerings create a health-centric focus for teacher leader development and support.

Public stories posted on university websites boasted that coursework can be taken in any order, which is highly visible on the main pages of the program coursework websites. Many programs have built-in endorsements or electives to focus on specific interests candidates have while meeting “the demands of working professionals in the education field,” according to the Nyquist University website. Candidates can work with

their advisors to craft an experience that best fits their professional growth goals and desired skill-building.

Interestingly, there were multiple instances of programs having a Statement of Commitment, guiding principles, or a Code of Ethics (e.g., Citation University, Sir Barton University, Secretariat University, Smarty Jones University, Seabiscuit University, Nyquist University, Man o' War University). For Sir Barton University, the candidate must "review and sign a declaration to uphold the Professional Code of Ethics for Kentucky School Personnel" and commit to uphold the Model Code of Ethics for Educators. Many other programs have teacher leader candidates sign the code of ethics for the first stage of the program—the enrollment stage—as seen in Table 4.6. Seabiscuit University requires teacher leader candidates to agree to and uphold the Professional Code of Ethics for Kentucky School Certified Personnel (16 KAR 1:020), sign a Character Fitness Declaration, and have a colleague or an administrator complete the Professional Dispositions inventory on their behalf. I was not aware of these ethical considerations being a major aspect of TLPs or their enrollment requirements. These quickly became another focus of my investigation.

Although not directly discussed in the materials examined, it is valuable to share that the cohort model or semi-cohort model was used in these TLPs. A cohort is defined as a group of colleagues that begins the program together and remains together through graduation (Barnett, Basom, Yerkes, & Norris, 2000). Cohorts offer support and motivation towards program completion and mastery. An interviewee from Genuine Risk University, however, shared this somewhat unique cohort design:

Even though you have a core cohort group, you're liable to have people who are finishing up the program and some that are just entering the program, even though there may be a core group that you actually take all of your courses with.

Table 4.6

Teacher Leader Development Program Components

Program Institution	Midpoint Assessment	Code of Ethics	Cohorts	TLMS Alignment
Citation University	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Genuine Risk University	Yes	Yes	Rolling admission	Yes
Man o' War University	Yes	Yes	Yes	No information available
Nyquist University	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Seabiscuit University	Endorsement only	Yes	Endorsement only	Yes
Seattle Slew University	Yes	No	No information available	Yes
Secretariat University	No	Yes	Yes	No information available
Sir Barton University	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Smarty Jones University	Yes	Yes	No information available	Yes
Winning Colors University	Yes	No	No information available	No information available

School culture impacts. One support for teacher leaders presented within the literature review for this dissertation is a healthy school culture. Although universities and programs do not have direct influences over the candidate's school culture, it is important to discuss. Some interviewees indicated that district and school leaders

influenced enrollment in their TLPs. Further, candidates in the TLPs investigated may have been encouraged to enroll for specific career advancement to address a leadership need within their school or district. For example, an interviewee working at Genuine Risk University asserted that “districts had people in mind they wanted to hire, and they needed to get them into [teacher leader] programs so they could hire them under Option 6 [Kentucky employment code] for different positions.” Hence, some candidates within these 10 programs may have enrolled because they were already tapped or being considered for specific positions.

Program recommendations within a professional conversation also suggest there exists a relationship between school culture and teacher leader's growth. I had not considered there could be a school culture influence that pushed candidates to enroll in the programs, perhaps because the literature focuses on their support while either in a program or already working on teacher leader skillsets.

PLCs within schools were also mentioned as opportunities for teacher leadership development. Based on my literature reviews, questionnaires, and interviews, I was surprised about the limited focus directly on teacher leadership within PLCs. Further discussion on this topic appears later in Chapter 4.

Structural supports. Structural supports for teacher leader development include having systems in place to support learning, specifically for remote instruction. This includes Learning Management Systems (e.g., Canvas, Moodle) and synchronous components (e.g., online activities, discussions, webinars, group activities). The program at Smarty Jones University offers an extensive TLP handbook that includes diverse resources, a general information guide for the candidate, and processes that must be

addressed (e.g., admission, enrollment, implementation). The length of the program was highlighted with a few programs. For example, the length of the Man o' War University program is twenty months, and candidates complete a course every seven and a half weeks. An employee at Smarty Jones University stated, "Our programs are designed to accommodate working adults, and a lot depends on how quickly [candidates] choose to pursue the program." On average, the TLP candidates in this study complete their certification requirement within eighteen months. Nyquist University offers an aggressive approach for candidates that allows them to complete their TLP in one year.

In addition to the program length, program design contributes to the types of experiences candidates have. The program websites highlighted synchronous components, online activities, discussions (both synchronous and asynchronous), webinars, and group activities. The public story posted on the Nyquist University website tells prospective and current candidates that "wherever you are, you're on campus." Like many of the researched programs, Citation University combines the classroom experience with the "convenience of distance learning." The design focuses on promising learning practices for engagement, motivation, and deep learning. Each program, and even courses within the program, express variability in design supports. The Sir Barton University website asserts that "all initial applicants will be provided with information at the beginning of their first semester on how to access [the university's] email, Canvas, library resources, and the Graduate Teacher Education Handbook."

Multiple Endorsements Influences

While investigating the programs' public stories via websites and flyers, it was interesting to learn that some TLPs included opportunities to earn specific endorsements,

such as Gifted Education or Learning and Behavioral Disorders. Other universities chose to have the teacher leaders serve as the only endorsement linked to the master's program. These diverse program designs highlight the versatility among Kentucky institutions and the choices available for experienced teachers to enhance their professionalism in a variety of ways. Inserting some form of teacher leadership development within all 10 master's programs, even if the candidates did not select it as a certification, emerged as a common theme.

Findings from program investigation revealed multiple endorsements within and across the educational disciplines, which mirrors the original proposal requirements by the EPSB for teacher leader certification. Groupings formed from a high-level view of each program, funneling to specific commonalities and traits. Table 4.7 and corresponding Figure 4.3 display the array of endorsements available within the formal teacher leadership programs investigated. I perceived this was a critical finding and marveled at the intricacy of the endorsements across the programs. Following is a comment made by an EPSB committee member during an interview:

One of the requirements in the programs early on was about identifying these multiple pathways for teachers within this program...where the person could choose to get an endorsement, if they wanted [it]. They could enhance their existing content knowledge. Maybe they were an elementary teacher and needed more science depth. Maybe it's the high school English teacher who wants to get more advanced English study than what their initial bachelor's degree did for them. A variety of pathways were built into these programs to give teachers options.

I believe this statement encompasses what I had uncovered during this research; opportunities for multiple endorsements and learning pathways are embedded within a teacher leadership graduate program. The study participant from Genuine Risk University clarified some of my thinking:

What we try to do—even though we have a core teacher leader program—is create a teacher leader. We know that teachers [in] our program come from various grades and subjects and [have different] interests. We try to provide a very broad set of possible specializations [so they] can pick what matters most to [them, such as] a specialization for literacy . . . for math and so forth.

A representative from Smarty Jones University stated that its program provides various pathways to increase a candidate's knowledge and service within and beyond the school. The "menu of areas of specialization" provides a broad opportunity for teachers to select a specific curricular focus as well as leadership development that prepares them for diverse positions, such as curriculum coach, department head or team lead, instructional coach or mentor, or multiple other positions. A split pathway in Sir Barton University's TLP pathway provided a focus for educational policy and one for cultural competency. The educational policy path "helps students gain a thorough understanding of the political structure of the educational system at the state and national levels" while the cultural competency focuses on helping "educators effectively lead diverse student populations."

Table 4.7

Categorization of Teacher Leader Endorsements or Concentrations

Institution	Program	Multiple Endorsements
Citation University	Teacher leader master's with selected focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advanced Pedagogy • Interdisciplinary Early Childhood Education • Advanced Learning and Behavior
Genuine Risk University	Teacher leader master's with endorsements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum Emphasis • Gifted Education Endorsement • ESL Endorsement • Environmental Education Endorsement • Content Specialization • Interdisciplinary Early Childhood Education • Information Technology

Table 4.7 (continued)

Man o' War University	Teacher leader master's with a selected focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English as a Second Language (ESL) (P-12) • Gifted Education (P-12) • Instructional Computer technology (P-12) • MSD Certification (P-12 & LEB already certified)
Nyquist University	Teacher leader master's with endorsement or concentration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher Leader Endorsement (P-12) • Cultural Competency • Educational Policy • ESL P-12 • Gifted Education P-12 • MA in Special Education-Teacher Leader
Seabiscuit University	13–15-hour <i>endorsement only</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elementary Education (embedded Teacher leader core) • Gifted Education (embedded Teacher leader core) • School Media Librarian (embedded Teacher leader core) • Middle Grade Education (embedded Teacher leader core) • Literacy (embedded Teacher leader core) • Secondary Education (embedded Teacher leader core) • Special Education (embedded Teacher leader core)
Seattle Slew University	Teacher leader master's with concentrations/endorsements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher Leader Alternative • Biology • English • Gifted Education • IECE • Interdisciplinary P-5 • Literacy Specialist • Mathematics • School Community Leader • Social Studies • Special Education

Table 4.7 (continued)

Secretariat University	Teacher leader master's with a selected focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interdisciplinary Early Childhood Education • Learning and Behavior Disorders (P-12) • Moderate and Severe Disabilities (P-12) • Gifted Education (P-12) • Reading (P-12) • Environmental Education (P-12) • Instructional Computer Technology (P-12) • ESL- focus within the teacher leader master's • Autism/Applied Behavior Analysis • Elementary Mathematics Specialist • STEM: Computer science • Liberal Arts/Social Sciences concentration: Communication • Liberal Arts/Social Sciences: English • Curriculum and Instruction- focus within the teacher leader master's
Sir Barton University	Teacher leader master's with a selected focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instruction and Assessment
Smarty Jones University	Teacher leader master's program and other masters with teacher leader core courses for endorsement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business and Marketing • English • Health and Physical Education • Interdisciplinary • Mathematics • Social Studies • ESL
Winning Colors University	Teacher leader master's with selected endorsement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gifted Education and Talent Development • Interdisciplinary Early Childhood Education, Birth to Primary for Teacher Leaders • Elementary Education for Teacher Leaders • Middle Grades Education for Teacher Leaders • Secondary Education for Teacher Leaders • Special Education: Learning and Behavioral Disorders • Special Education: Moderate and Severe Disabilities

Endorsements offered by the institution as a specialization are categorized by (a) education by grade, (b) education by subject, (c) student-supported education, and (d) beyond the classroom. The descriptors for each of the four categories in Figure 4.5 indicate clearly that the focus within the TLPs remains on the student and their academic

growth. Creating Figure 4.5 revealed the value TLPs place on providing candidates with a variety of professional growth opportunities and potential career paths. A quote produced by an EPSB committee member during an interview about changes to the master's programs in Kentucky emphasized the importance of having TLP support and specialized preparation of teachers for diverse career paths.

Folks that [complete] the teacher leadership programs . . . also saw and learned about other opportunities [they have] as a teacher [and] how they could provide leadership to their schools and to their districts. [They learn strategies and skills about] providing some professional development opportunities for other teachers or helping to alleviate some of the responsibilities that their school principals had in terms of helping with some of the curriculum things.

It also provided some avenues for teachers who maybe wanted to [change] into a path to leadership in terms of [becoming] a school principal, or a supervisor . . . or something like that. At the same time, [the teachers participating in the TLPs] still wanted to deal with the realities of their own individual classroom needs. [Participating in a TLP gave them the opportunity to] start down that path in terms of maybe taking some coursework to say, "That is a role that I could see myself doing down the road" or "No, that's not for me. I want to stay as a teacher in my classroom."

My personal experience completing a Kentucky TLP aligns with this finding as exploration in multiple specific certificates was encouraged to support my peers and me in knowledge of leadership skills within our twenty-first century context. The endorsement scope covered specific needs to address a holistic approach to candidates' learning needs.

Figure 4.5 offers a visual representation of multiple endorsements and pathways within the top 10 graduate-producing KY EPSB-approved teacher leader graduate programs. Interestingly, the top paired endorsements connected with Kentucky TLPs were Gifted Education and Talent Development ($n = 7$), Literacy and English ($n = 6$), ESL ($n = 5$), and Early Childhood Education ($n = 5$). Combined science, technology,

engineering, and mathematics (STEM) concentrations counted for 13 instances (e.g., mathematics, environmental education, information technology, biology). Endorsement areas with only one specific instance included four education subjects (health and physical education, school media library, STEM: computer science, biology) and foci beyond the classroom (advanced pedagogy, cultural competency). Further, even business and marketing are paired with teacher leadership, which was a somewhat surprising revelation.

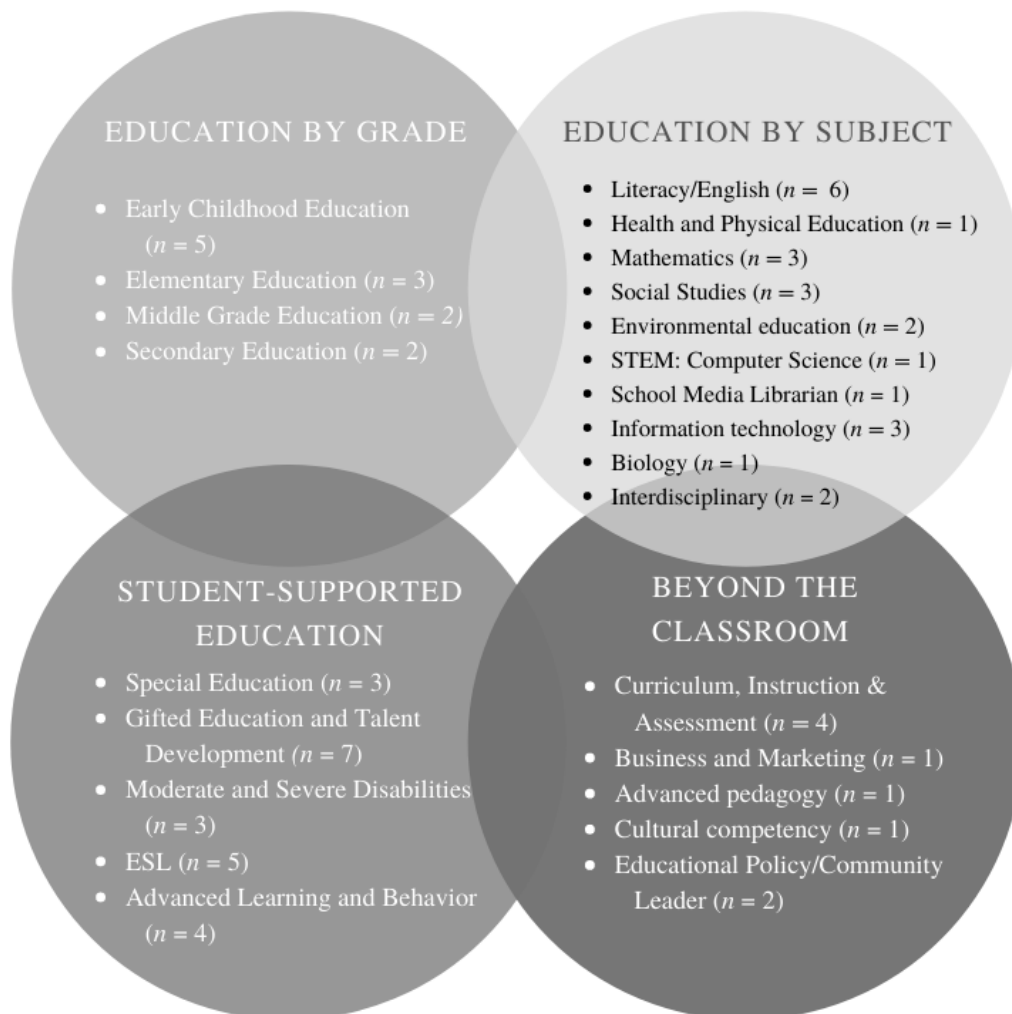


Figure 4.5 Visual representation of multiple endorsements and pathways within top 10 graduate-producing KY EPSB-approved teacher leader graduate programs

According to the curriculum contract used by Nyquist University, “Candidates in the program are able to develop additional expertise in their content area.” This quote reverberates through many of the other programs explored. A document within Seattle Slew University’s proposal submitted to EPSB included this statement: “Program options allow candidates to choose areas of interest to deepen their content knowledge, thus having the potential to impact student learning.” Another statement in the proposal asserted, “There are several options within the Teacher Leader program for candidates to complete endorsements that lead to more career options.” This finding was expanded upon by an interview participant from the program.

Then we have three of our specializations, biology, English, and math, that we've created, such that when you complete it, you'll actually be dual credit ready for high school [i.e., able to teach in two curricular fields]. You have to have 18 hours in a core content. For example, with math, what we did is we have a 12-hour core and an 18-hour core content such that when you complete it, you'll be able to be dual certified to teach math at the high school for college credit, so there's some variation.

In addition to earning a graduate degree and moving to a higher salary level, graduates of the TLPs have several new career opportunities. They may serve as team leaders or department chairs or transfer into positions outside the classroom, such as an instructional coach, teacher mentor, and/or data coach. They gain opportunities to contribute to their school, district, or community more widely. A university leader candidly asserted that some candidates enroll in the program simply to earn a higher salary.

A member of the Seabiscuit University program leadership asserted in a 2011 press release that they envision their program would allow individuals to choose the degree path that best aligns with their professional and career goals. In addition, they

boast that all of their online Master of Arts in Education degrees can include Teacher Leader Endorsement preparation. Similarly, Nyquist University's public story revealed examples of career pathways developed through participation in their TLP as quoted:

- Leading Response to Intervention (RTI) teams within their schools
- Introducing new models for curriculum and instruction for their schools
- Serving on School-Based Decision-Making Councils
- Serving on district technology advisor boards
- Serving on assessment advisory boards to provide current research on student assessment (e.g., assessment of learning, formative and summative assessment procedures, and student self-assessment)
- Assisting in the development of professional development opportunities for their schools based on their knowledge of current research, including student achievement, community building, and resource allocation
- Working as curriculum coaches, assessment coordinators, director of federal programs, coordinator for extended school services, and professional development liaisons

Faculty and Staff Commitment to Candidate's Development Influences

Interview participants took pride in the proactive and reactive natures of their programs. They shared the continuous involvement of their instructors, who regularly interact with K-12 schools and acknowledge the changing landscape of teaching. One participant stated that the teaching profession has changed significantly over the past 12 years, and thus the programs underwent multiple iterations and revisions. That assertion was validated by a faculty member at Seattle Slew University. Their TLP teams consisted of a variety of individuals with diverse historical knowledge, schooling, and experience. Some faculty members had been in their university positions so long that they could

identify graduates by merely scanning awards and recognitions across the Commonwealth.

A study participant from Genuine Risk University asserted, “We have a faculty member who has been with us for 45 years. If an educator has been through our program and they're still working, she knows them.” Faculty members serve as mentors or university supervisors for the required student-teacher practicum or for general and regular field engagement. Sir Barton University showcases their faculty as leaders in the field who empower candidates in their careers and society. Similarly, a representative from Smarty Jones University asserted that there is constant collaboration among faculty and instructors because many remain practitioners in schools and districts. This ensures candidates are provided professional development that integrates both theory and practice. The practical experience of those leading and teaching the TLP candidates was noted.

Program Alignment with the Teacher Leader Model Standards

During a program faculty interview, the study participant made a comment about having to realign their university’s TLP to align with the TLMS: “We tried as best we could to stay faithful to the Commonwealth's request to follow the objectives of the Teacher Leader Program.” Unlike the state-created standards used in 2010 when TLPs were initially developed, EPSB required all existing approved programs to be revised to reflect alignment with the national TLMS by the beginning of the Fall 2019 semester. The TLMS domains are designed to support influential teacher leaders within the P-12 educational sphere. The designed preparation programs had to focus on specific practices,

skills, content, and supports described in the national standards. Hence, the findings in this study are viewed through the conceptual framework lenses of the TLMS.

The selective codes I created tie the open and axial codes directly to impacts within and beyond the classroom in the three areas of teacher leadership identified by Danielson (2006). The addition of the TLMS creates a layered framework. Thus, *Layered Framework for, Models of, and Development within Teacher Leadership* guided the selective code. However, this process still allowed me to identify findings outside of the prescribed framework. Once I had completed my initial review and coding of data collected from the 10 programs, I found myself somewhat overwhelmed with data and open codes. The open codes were often taken verbatim from the data source. The following tables (Table 4.8, Table 4.9, Table 4.10) were extensively developed from document and interview transcript analysis. Line-by-line coding occurred with specific care for each program's required core course descriptions, syllabi, and critical assignments as they aligned with standards on available curriculum and content matrices.

Within the context of the study's conceptual framework and the subsequent coding process, it should be noted that each teacher leader development strategy was not isolated; for example, one strategy addressed multiple standards. Instead, I positioned each program's assignments, approaches, and program guidelines in a meaningful way to provide insight into TLMS alignment. Figure 4.6 visually provides the axial codes within the three main conceptual framework groupings from the coding process. Thus, Figure 4.6 provides a condensed visual for the development structures Kentucky EPSB-approved TLPs have in place as gathered by the public story, program curriculum contracts, matrices, and questionnaire and interview commentary.

TEACHING AND LEARNING (TLMS II, III, IV)	SCHOOLWIDE POLICIES AND PROGRAMS (TLMS II, V, VII)	COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS (TLMS I, III, VI, VII)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dispositions, knowledge, skills, and efficacy for improved teaching and learning • Professional Growth • Projects around teaching and learning development • Shared responsibility for school improvement • Instruction differentiation and intervention strategies • School improvement focus and skill development with use of technology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership research agents and practice to intend real change • Assignments and tools directly related to analysis • Assignments and tools directly related to assessment • Action research as a teacher leader development tool 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community involvement to develop teacher leader skills • Collaboration, mentorship, and co-teaching to develop candidate as a teacher leader • Healthy school climate creation and maintenance

Figure 4.6 Visual representation of developed conceptual framework of Layered Framework for, Models of, and Development within Teacher Leadership with TLMS alignment and development strategy emerged themes

The following three sections display study findings about TLMS program development support and strategies within the context of the three identified spaces teacher leaders as defined by Danielson (2006). Within the emerging groupings (axial codes), I discovered a pattern of supporting theory, research, practice, or reflection among the explored TLPs. This structural approach for categorizing the findings became a template to understand and analyze the qualitative data. Table 4.8, Table 4.9, and Table 4.10 were produced by creating a matrix where the teacher leader axial codes intersected with developmental structures (e.g., theory, research, practice, reflection).

Teaching and Learning Development

Subsumed within many TLPs was a universal awareness centering on P-12 students' achievements, within the development of candidates, that served as a reminder that motivation for teaching and learning was for student improvement in academic and learned life skills. Thus, when I examined the programs' development strategies, I was acutely aware of a student-centered focus. Table 4.8 displays TLMS alignment of Domains II, III, and IV with the teaching and learning development strategies with direct quotes or paraphrases from the data.

Table 4.8

Teaching and Learning Emerged Themes

Axial Code	Theory	Research	Practice	Reflection
Understand dispositions, knowledge, skills, and efficacy required for teacher leadership for improved teaching and learning	Uncover teacher leader motivations		Build skills for betterment of their own classrooms	Plan for the future Reflect on diversity representation
	Follow code of Ethics		Gain problem-solving and critical thinking skills to advance student achievement	Acknowledge students and school responsibility
			Focus on writing skills development (e.g., conceptual writing assignments)	Complete a portfolio
Focus on professional growth and Professional Growth Plans	Impact P-12 student learning with theories and practices	Model best practices for leadership, service, and research	Engage in clinicals	
	Read professional literature	Review district improvement plans and other available resources	Build skills to enhance professional growth of colleagues	Reflect continuously on own development as a teacher leader
	Enhance teacher leader subject matter, pedagogical, and		Engage in clinical experiences with a classroom/teacher partner	Write reflection papers on Professional Growth Plan
			Engage in mentor process by working with	Complete self-assessment of

Table 4.8 (continued)

Focus on professional growth and Professional Growth Plans (continued)	curricular content knowledge		a school and professor mentor Implement a content knowledge enhancement collaboration plan	Kentucky Framework for Teaching Complete teacher leader candidate assessments Engage in candidate continuous assessment
Focus on projects and strategies around teaching and learning development		Conduct applied educational research Follow current research-based practice Implement emergent technology advances Follow KY Core Academic standards	Enhance P-12 student learning via research projects Implement current research-based curriculum Implement supportive practices Develop a Curriculum Improvement Plan for their school or school district Engage in clinical experiences Complete assignments that allow various levels of teacher leadership opportunities Create curriculum writing assignments	Present findings to faculty and peers Reflect on field experience
Focus on shared responsibility for school improvement	Practices that are collective and effective Effective school and student improvement		Build capacity within their schools and districts Shadow an instructional supervisor	
Differentiate instruction and intervention strategies	Gain knowledge in intervention strategies and best practices for all students	Learn research-based strategies for implementing integrated and	Implement clinical practices to differentiate instruction and intervention strategies	Reflect on clinical Develop case study portfolio

Table 4.8 (continued)

	Principles of the <i>Universal Design for Learning Guidelines</i>	differentiated curricula	Design instruction aligned with state and national standards to actively engage and motivate P-12 learners	
	Explore multiple means of student engagement, multiple means of representation, and multiple means of action and expression to advance learning	Research best practices and models of instructional design to meet the needs of all learners in a school setting	Interview a district level instructional supervisor on job-related responsibilities	
School improvements -focus and skill development with use of technology	Addresses principles and instructional practices that motivate and engage P-12 students	Research on an engaging, compassionate, coherent, and rigorous new instructional model	Explore and create positive, productive learning environments that integrate technology with dynamic leadership	Reflect on clinical
	Theoretical knowledge and skill necessary to participate in co-teaching with, coaching, and/or mentoring of first- and second-year teachers	Assignments within each course may address the impact or potential impact on P-12 student learning	Clinical implementation	Think critically about how to improve teaching and learning
			Shadow a district technology coordinator	
			Assist teachers in the development of a cycle of reflective practice and using technology to improve pedagogy	
			Make curriculum improvement plan for their school or school district reflective of emerging technology advances	
			Focus on preparing students across all grade levels in the areas of career development, college readiness, and life skills	
			Experience classroom field work with the district technology coordinator and review and analyze a district's technology plan	

Dispositions, knowledge, skills, and efficacy for improved teaching and learning. Skill-building focused on development of the candidates' classroom practices, mentoring, writing, problem-solving, and co-teaching themes surfaced. Teacher leader candidates were encouraged to practice and hone skills through active clinical observations and collaboration with colleagues. Continuous reflection on their dispositions was achieved through adherence to the code of ethics and the exploration of teacher leader motivation and working towards mastery of TLMS Domain II and Domain IV.

Professional growth. Professional growth materialized as a two-fold strategy to meet TLMS Domain III. TLPs worked to enhance their candidates' professional growth and provided development of skills and knowledge to enhance those of their colleagues and schools. Continuous reflection on each candidate's growth was achieved through evaluation of multiple self-assessments. Unsurprisingly, formal Professional Growth Plans were also a popular tool to measure and foster candidate growth. They were also a popular tool to measure and foster learning progress.

Projects and strategies for teaching and learning development. A focus on research and corresponding practice strengthened the development of candidates' teachings and learning developments (TLMS Domain IV). Programs offered knowledge development about applied educational research, research-based practice, emerging technology advances, and Kentucky Core Academic standards. These offerings connected to the practices in which teacher leader candidates implemented research through projects, curricula founded in current research, supportive practices, Curriculum

Improvement Plans, and clinical and leadership experiences. Reflection on these learning steps occurred through written assignments and presentations.

Focus on shared responsibility for school improvement. Findings also alluded to the need for shared responsibility for school improvement, built in part by teacher leaders—including tasks such as shadowing an instructional supervisor and working collectively. TLMS Domain III and Domain IV are addressed through opportunities for candidates to use colleagues' collective skills to “ensure instructional practices are aligned to a shared vision, mission, and goal” (TLEC, 2011, p. 17). This consideration was further discussed for developing a healthy school climate. For example, Smarty Jones University seeks to support candidates to proficiency in developing a supportive learning environment through creating a shared vision and environment of respect and rapport, all while instituting a learning culture. An awakening for me occurred when the following words were spoken during an interview: “student achievement’s got to be one of the primary motivations of the teacher leader.” I understood more fully that the effort, careful design, professional learning, and motivation centered on the candidates and their success. This theme ran through accompanying findings of this case study.

Instruction and intervention strategies. Findings concerning program development of candidates to focus on each learner’s needs were also evident within the data (i.e., a significant focus on literature and research on diverse learners was found). Specific tools for the development of skills within TLMS Domain IV focused on clinical experience with a specific implementation of learnings, designing instruction adhering to actively engage each P-12 learner, and interviewing local instructional leadership positions to understand responsibilities.

School improvement and skill development with technology. Technology use and design were perceived in programmatic activities. These included shadowing a district technology coordinator, using technology to improve pedagogy, embedding emerging technology into curriculum improvement plans, and focusing on the candidates and their career and life skills needed. Guided by the domains within the TLMS, technology becomes a supporting strategy to encourage learning and to more accurately identify and respond to students' learning needs.

Schoolwide Policies and Programs Development

Schoolwide policies and programs were addressed within the development of Kentucky EPSB-approved TLPs. Specifically, development is related to helping candidates master TLMS Domains II, V, and VII within and beyond the classroom and school. Table 4.9 displays the emerging themes embedded within TLP strategies implemented for candidate development within schoolwide policies and programs with direct quotes or paraphrases from the data. While creating this table, I focused on those common strategies specific to the development of the teacher leader candidate's research, assessment, and analysis development. Forms of action research or capstone research projects became the connective tissue for the code.

Table 4.9

Schoolwide Policies and Programs Emerged Themes

Axial Code	Theory	Research	Practice	Reflection
Intend real change through leadership research, agents, and practices	Review of educational evaluation reports and papers	Understand basic statistics	Create original action research project	Share information with stakeholders
		Follow research methods	Design and implement program evaluations that inform instruction and assessment	
	Create a literature review	Interpret findings	Observe	
		Understand legal and ethical implications		
Contextualize key K-12 issues				
Develop assignments and tools directly related to analysis	Analyze to foster educational culture	Provide knowledge necessary to analyze own school	Engage in field experience	Analyze and interpret own school
			Review cumulative folders of all students to determine primary needs of learners	Make analytical decisions based on learning
			Collect own data	Report out data
			Use multiple data sources	Reflect on analysis practice
			Collect continuously	Inform instruction and learning
			Implement analysis clinically	
			Engage in practical problem solving	
Develop assignments and tools directly related to assessment		Use technology as a tool in research	Write policy paper with a focus on assessment	Develop a policy paper focused on assessment
			Design assessment project	Create an assessment design project

Table 4.9 (continued)

Develop assignments and tools directly related to assessment (continued)	Gain knowledge on different types of assessment and corresponding alignment	Engage in field experience	Engage in field experience
	Learn software for assessment and research	Collaborate with school and district Focus on RTI with assessment to drive support for diverse learners	Collaborate with school and district Focus on RTI with assessment to drive support for diverse learners
		Design classroom assessments	Design classroom assessments
		Implement technology in classroom assessments	Implement technology in classroom assessments
		Use technology for bellringers, exit slips, etc.	Use technology for bellringers, exit slips, etc.
		Use social media, YouTube, smartphones, texting for formative/summative assessments	Use software for assessment and research Use social media, YouTube, smartphones, texting for formative/summative assessments
Use action research as a teacher leader development tool	Explore action research methods	Internalize action research process	Focus on field experience and colleague collaboration
		Understand IRB process	Carry out action research project focusing on classroom, school, or district issues
		Develop project with support from existing research	Disseminate action research findings Publish in journal or conference
			Pursue own questions and answers for P-12 learning
			Gain skills for design of, conducting, and interpreting research to enhance classroom and school through data

Leadership research agents and practice to intend real change. Staying true to the teacher leadership definition tied throughout this dissertation, it was not surprising for my focus to reveal meaningful development and work towards real change. Rost (1991) highlighted the importance of intending real changes, and this was reflected within my operationalized definition of teacher leadership: *Teachers collaborate through collective skills, promising effective practices, and professional learning to influence and promote effective school and student improvement as aligned with the TLMS (TLEC, 2011).*

To encourage real change in candidates, programs such as Smarty Jones University provided development of research skills, such as statistics, methods, findings, reporting, and ethical implications, all relating specifically to P-12 and higher education. Programs also provided candidates theory paired with practice in courses, such as reviewing education evaluation reports and papers. The theory of assessment, followed by self-exploration and practice, rounded out research skill development with a focus on stakeholders and sharing information to improve teaching and learning relationships. A leader from Genuine Risk University stated:

The primary purpose [of these activities] . . . is to help develop within those teachers the idea that they can promote change in their schools and in their classrooms by taking leadership roles and doing action research [which] is a really good way to do that and document that process.

Assignments and tools directly related to analysis. As quoted by the Man O' War University program website, "Teacher Leaders judiciously gather and analyze information and data from multiple sources." Thus, it was not surprising for this theme to materialize across many of the explored programs. Development of teacher leader candidates' analysis mindsets and skillsets was mostly strategized through the candidates' direct experiences in practice and reflection. I reviewed the programmatic material that

asked candidates to use real data and their settings as a place to inquire, collect data, and implement findings. Seattle Slew University's program leader stated in an interview:

[What] we're primarily hoping for is that we can provide our students the knowledge that is necessary to analyze their school. [Through] analyzing their school, they can then identify a problem, a potential solution, and engage their school towards executing whatever plans they have . . . When we think teacher leadership, we're thinking about analysis. We're thinking about community collaboration, we're thinking about practical problem-solving.

Data were gathered from multiple data sources, but it was carefully processed and shared with others. Thus, this activity created a more meaningful and lasting learning experience for the candidates and a positive impact on their school environment. This focus on analysis skill development aligns with TLMS Domain II and pairs well with TLMS Domain V's focus on school assessment and data-informed implementation.

Assignments and tools directly related to assessment. Like the assignments and tools addressing analysis support, the assessment also has a heavy presence in the practice and reflection structures. The programs stimulate assessment projects and conversations to help candidates acquire advanced knowledge to access and develop schoolwide programs and policies. As heralded by Nyquist University, teacher leaders should use assessment as a driving force to reach increased student achievement. Use of technology was ever-present in how teacher leaders were encouraged to practice and reflect on assessment, including “formative and summative assessment practices, assessment of learning vs. assessment for learning, student self-assessment, and group assessment processes” (Nyquist University). These activities further address strategies towards mastering TLMS Domain V. The assessment data that candidates were asked to examine both locally within their classrooms and schools and at state and national levels

provided multiple opportunities for them to develop classroom assessment approaches conducive to promising practices and emerging research.

Action research as a teacher leader development tool. As mentioned earlier, action research seemed to be a strategy that ties Danielson's (2006) three teacher leader development areas together and most, if not all, of the TLMS. Citation University asserts that the leadership projects are positioned to directly benefit the school, district, and community in which the teacher leader candidates work. Along with this same notion, the study participant from Genuine Risk University stated,

The whole purpose of that is to take an instructional practice or an assessment practice or a social emotional interaction within the classroom and analyze [its] effectiveness, make decisions about whether that's something you would continue to do, you would modify within process and you're doing that with support from the existing research or knowledge base. It's not just an "I think" or "I believe," or "this has been my experience." This is what I have documented, reported, and presented.

I noticed that learning truly occurs within each candidate's own needs and experiences. Programs work to provide theory-of-action research and guide candidates in projects that develop their leadership skills while also being mindful of developing their skills and addressing their needs.

TLMS Domain II was further addressed in specific core courses. Nyquist University describes one of their courses as follows:

This course engages candidates in assessment, research, and methodologies needed in order to create better educational research consumers among practitioners. Candidates will complete a reflective research analysis of local, state, and national student achievement data as relevant to their current or future content emphasis area. Further, candidates will development an action research project based on student achievement data to be implemented in a P-12 classroom from which findings are analyzed and change in the candidates' abilities to lead their classroom as a result is discussed. Candidates will also present the outcomes of their action research project to the Teacher as Leader Capstone Experience Committee as part of Teacher as Leader program exit requirements.

Many investigated programs had multiple courses specific to learning about, designing, carrying out, and reporting findings and implications about their action research. Not only was action research used as an exit requirement, but it also was integrated into reflection, advocacy, and critical review within and beyond their classroom and schools.

Communications and Community Relations Development

The study’s conceptual framework aligns TLMS Domains I, III, VI, and VII with the defined development area for teacher leaders' extended reach of communications and community relations described by Danielson (2006). Informal and formal structures were identified by the TLP that supported the development in this capacity. Specifically, these included how community involvement was utilized for teacher leader development, the acts of co-teaching and mentorship as part of the candidate's growth and creating and maintaining a healthy school climate. Table 4.10 includes direct quotes or paraphrases.

Table 4.10

Communications and Community Relations Emerged Themes

Axial Code	Theory	Research	Practice	Reflection
Develop teacher leader skills through community involvement	Collaborate with community	Research and collaborate on projects that became a district-wide supported program	Implement PLCs	Create portfolio that demonstrates in-depth collaboration with peers, colleagues, administrators, community organization, and partners
	Agree to code of ethics and professional standards appropriate to their specific field	Use technology as a tool for communication and classroom management	Participate in School-Based Decision-Making Councils	Include collaborative barriers, benefits, role in portfolio
			Collaborate with school principal or district on leader projects	Share philosophy of teaching statement
			Hone skills to serve in leadership roles among peers and district	
			Bring parents into projects	
			Establish school and community partnership	

Table 4.10 (continued)

Develop candidates as teacher leaders through collaboration, mentorship, and co-teaching	Gain theoretical knowledge necessary to co-teach with, coach, or mentor first- and second-year teachers	Understand and use technology to improve pedagogy	Gain skills necessary to co-teach, be a team leader, peer observer, or department chair, etc.	Establish a cycle of reflective practice
	Learn various theories and practices in teacher leadership (e.g., co-teaching, mentoring, and peer coaching)	Create a collaborative unit with current research-based practices	Lead local and online professional community	Present professional development for an administrative body in the school or district
	Define collaboration as a teacher leader skill	Develop a question or questions that will drive future collaborative research	Establish PLCs Design and facilitate professional development Support collaborative teams and cooperatively work with others towards the common goal of student achievement	Reflect on how teacher leader works in a team situation, responds to school problems or conflict, and makes decisions
Create and maintain a healthy school climate	Guide teacher leader to understand their critical role in creating a climate of systematic improvement through PLCs and developing teacher leaders	Read and respond to research Administer an action research project in a school setting	Work with students of various backgrounds, ethnicities, abilities, etc. Work with a teacher partner to develop and implement a content knowledge enhancement collaboration plan	Self-assess their subject matter content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, and curricular content knowledge
	Gain understanding of how relationships among development of learning communities, school effectiveness, college readiness, and accountability can improve schools	Interpret and write an educational report	Build rapport among colleagues using classroom observations, effective listening and questioning skills Give constructive feedback and foster a collaborative working environment among all stakeholders and further engage and elicit input on local district concerns derived in part from formal and/or informal teacher observations	Improve the educational climate of each school and district to reach ultimate TLP vision Share results with school administration and community
	Learn and apply key features of adult learning and development			
	Review articles		Practice classroom field experience	

Community involvement in developing teacher leader skills. Many programs presented embedded community activity. Active involvement included assignments and course objectives supporting PLCs' candidate implementation, engaging with School-Based Decision-Making Councils, performing collaborative leadership projects with parents, and developing mentoring skills. An interview participant from Seattle Slew University shared: "When we think teacher leadership . . . We're thinking about community collaboration, we're thinking about practical problem-solving" and "the idea of collective, working together, effective practices, effective school, and student improvement." Throughout Citation University's program, candidates are encouraged to design and carry out projects addressing schoolwide, district, or community needs. Reflection occurs within the portfolio created by candidates. Specifically, TLMS VII was addressed.

Collaboration, mentorship, and co-teaching to develop candidates as teacher leaders. Working effectively in PLCs, co-teaching, and strengthening collegial and collaborative practices are required skills within a teacher leader's community relations reach. Strategies developed within the programs spanned from developing a classroom, transforming a school, and working with the broader community. These preparation programs seek to develop each candidate's ability to work in groups or teams with the ultimate goal of student success. Strategies related to co-teaching, mentorship, and collaboration fit well with the research practices focused on application. Candidates are encouraged "to then take that to their school to again, begin a conversation," according to a Seattle Slew interview participant. The theme of practicing leadership through PLCs and mentorship opportunities within the candidates' school environments was evident

across the programs examined. Cyclical reflection is integrated within the programs as teacher leader candidates present, absorb, and implement learnings into the next collaborative iteration.

Creating and maintaining a healthy school climate. *Rapport, listening, collaboration, and constructive feedback* were words that resonated throughout the program data—and provided a glimpse into how teacher leaders establish healthy school climates. These words became nodes as I analyzed study findings. According to the Smarty Jones University website, their courses ask candidates to be catalysts for lasting climates of improvement. PLCs and teacher leader development are crucial to achieving this goal. Nyquist University ensures their candidates are equipped with a "toolbox" full of skills to ensure learning for each student's unique needs. This toolbox concept was coupled with a clinical placement where ethnic, cultural, or socioeconomic perspectives are expanded and analyzed. According to a spokesperson for Seabiscuit University's program, it was stated in a press release that the program works to improve school and educational climate. Reflection on perspective-building experiences occurred both through self-assessment and analysis of the school's vision.

While conducting a secondary analysis of the data gathered, I enjoyed realizing how it revealed the ways in which the programs used the TLMS domains to develop teacher leadership. Conducting this case study allowed me to dig deep into the programmatic inner workings and objectives. The next two sections present and discuss teacher leadership development findings focused on PLCs and how teacher leader candidates demonstrate proficiency in their program development.

Function of PLCs

Within the literature reviewed for this dissertation, it was evident that PLCs emphasize teacher leadership development and its sustainability within a school setting. A guiding research intention was thus established based on this notation (i.e., focusing on how formal teacher leadership preparation programs develop their candidates within PLCs). Further, PLCs are embedded within TLMS upon which the Kentucky programs are based. Domain III focuses on the teacher leader's professional growth and role in planning and supporting professional learning for others that is varied and responsive. Domain VII specifically addresses a teacher leader's responsibility in crafting and supporting a PLC focused on school improvement goals. According to the TLMS framework, a PLC is

A collaborative process in which teachers and other education professionals commit to engaging in continuous improvement through ongoing professional learning. This process is characterized by collegial exchange in which educators work together to improve student learning by investigating problems; specifying goals for educator learning; engaging in collaborative learning through formal and informal professional learning strategies such as lesson study, examining student work, and peer coaching; reflecting on practice; and holding one another accountable for improved practice and results. (TLEC, 2011, p. 36)

According to Wenger and colleagues (2002), PLCs support achievement of student learning goals. This development engagement strategy brings diverse PLC members together to learn and grow professionally, thus providing a network for support, collaboration, accountability, and shared learning (Fullan, 2006; Wenger et al., 2002). Thus, the PLC is the basis for the founding of my third study consideration: Well-constructed, well-led, and well-utilized PLCs are among the most foundational elements for teacher leadership development. I assumed PLCs would be pervasive in TLPs' public stories (e.g., websites, quotes, flyers), curricula, course strategies, and assignments. Early

within my data collection, a pattern emerged—but not the one that I expected. I realized that PLCs were embedded within the fabric of the Kentucky EPSB-approved graduate TLPs.

Expectedly, PLCs existed formally in teacher leader core courses. While investigating the place PLCs have in developing teacher leader candidates within their formal programs, one word persisted—*siloed*. PLCs were identified as formal development strategies within select cores courses, but with the exception of Winning Colors University, it was not revealed to have a thread running throughout the program. Instead, clinicals or practica were revealed to be the connecting strategies, including action research projects.

Smarty Jones University, Nyquist University, and Sir Barton University showcased a core course focused significantly on teacher leaders' roles in PLCs. Candidates—aspiring to serve as teacher leaders—were expected to realize the role they would play in building and sustaining PLCs to create a comprehensive and lasting path to school improvement. As part of Smarty Jones University, a course on active participation within a PLC consisted of required hours in observation, leading, writing, and reflecting.

Findings demonstrated TLP candidates interact with fellow cohort members and graduate students to form a blend of different content and grade-level expertise. The PLC conversations and discussions centered on real-world challenges, practical and research-based solutions, and promising practices as they are encountered in their workplace. Nyquist University focused on possible career pathways, including the implementation of PLCs within their school districts and beyond. Winning Colors University focused on designing a TLP to develop teacher leaders' abilities to impact student learning within

and beyond their classrooms and had embedded PLCs in many of the required core teacher leader courses. Within their teacher leadership program application to EPSB, it was stated that PLCs were implemented,

In order to assure consistency and relevance in coursework, to serve as a monitoring system to assure that candidates not reaching full potential in coursework and assessment protocols are provided services (RTI) in a timely manner, and to provide a conduit for an accountability and reliability system of analyzing candidate assessments.

Winning Colors University also demonstrated how PLCs spanned across the differing class content and connected the program to the surrounding districts. This was mapped in course curriculum and in their instructional model. Smarty Jones University emphasized the role PLCs played in their candidates' development with a short but impactful objective statement, "examine school data needed to implement PLCs."

During an introductory teacher leadership course at Winning Colors University, candidates complete an assessment that influences future core course enrollment and individualized programming to meet program standards. In that survey course, they cover "foundational concepts of leadership, especially as they relate to the role of teacher leaders in P -12 settings." Both Nyquist University and Smarty Jones University implement assignments committed to building and sustaining PLCs. Candidates created action plans tailored to developing PLCs for a specific school or district improvement.

Coupled with other data, an axial code was born: PLCs are a learning strategy to provide teacher leader with a network for support, collaboration, accountability, and shared learning. A theme of programs addressing teachers' roles and their responsibilities to maintain a climate of engaged adult learners emerged via PLCs. Units, such as those

developed by Nyquist University, are framed around the collaboration of candidates using PLCs as a professional development tool.

In addition to PLCs' formal appearance in TLP candidate development, findings revealed informal aspects of learning communities. While asking an interviewee from Seattle Slew University about PLCs' programmatic presence, they shared candidates are encouraged to begin the PLC process with conversation and the act of bringing their program learning into their own schools.

We do that in our curriculum class . . . [and] in our collaboration class. Each of these critical performances and other assignments are opportunities [for aspiring teacher leaders] to take their [course learning] reflection and their examination to their schools. Some classes make it mandatory that they take it to their schools. Others like my class say things like, "These are things you could take to your schools," and we leave it up to the teacher to decide whether or not she wants to, or he wants to take the initiative to bring them to school. There are opportunities for creating communities of practice, there are opportunities for professional development and different classes emphasize that to varying degrees.

This sentiment was also of focus within alignment strategies embedded within TLMS Domains I and III, but specifically in Domain VII.

Analyzing the data revealed that the PLC role as a leadership development opportunity for teacher leader candidates within formal graduate programs consisted of (a) work within a specific outcome or assignment in a core course or (b) opportunities embedded within experiences and encouragement in a candidate's program. My assumption crafted from literature was that PLCs served as a pillar of the programs. Thus, I expected them to be central in the public story and course curriculum. For this case study, that was not the circumstance.

Program Evaluation

Just as the TLPs encouraged candidates to reflect on their professional growth, learning, and practices for continued improvement, findings evidenced program leadership mirroring reflective practices. Hence, I further explored how Kentucky TLPs evaluate candidates' success given the current certification policies. Using a broader context of investigation to identify possible connections, I sought evidence of candidates' final projects, graduation requirements, and program quality measures. The following sections present findings of program missions, candidates' final assignments or projects, and considerations for TLP quality and self-evaluation.

TLP Collective Missions

Programmatic missions, along with the program's definition of teacher leadership, stood out to me as the foundational indicators that guided course and assignment development within the programs. These missions captured the heart of the program. The mission drove the program structure, content, and even entrance requirements. They also influenced the program evaluations. This realization was based on open and axial codes described in Table 4.11. Open codes contain direct quotes or paraphrases from the data.

Empowerment, research-driven improvements, and leadership growth materialized as common goal themes that influence evaluation. This connects to TLMS Domain I. Programs focused on empowering teacher leader candidates with the hopes that teachers would bring their learning and professional development into their workplaces to influence real change and address real needs. Ultimately, this empowerment served as an ignition for implementing practices to tend to the students and the school community's needs. Although it was not explicitly addressed within the

program evaluation, my research assumption was that the candidates' final projects provided evidence of gained empowerment through demonstrating mastery.

Table 4.11

Open and Axial Codes of “TLP Missions to Influence Program Evaluations”

Axial Code	Open Code
To empower candidates to become teacher leaders and as teacher leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic tenet of the teacher leader program was to empower candidates to become teacher leaders • TLP designed to empower teachers to address real needs in classroom structure, differentiated instruction, and ultimately improve student learning • Curriculum supports teacher leaders to be advocate for students and ability to influence curriculum goals and school policies
To foster research-informed educational culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program designed to produce a culture informed by research, data collection, and analysis. • Candidates embrace themes of diversity, technology, and civic engagement • Program experiences lead to knowledge, skills and dispositions to create a classroom climate in which your students can learn • Program designed to help teacher leaders continue lifelong pursuit of professional achievement and responsible service • Research evaluation on student learning and college readiness and deliver differentiated instruction for following continuous assessment
To guide candidate to develop professional dispositions and leadership skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intent to help candidates identify and reach their professional goals related to instruction and assessment, enhanced content knowledge, and school and district leadership • Program was personalized • Ideal TLP graduate student was one who was currently employed as a classroom teacher • Candidates prepare to be leaders in their schools and districts • Pre-self-assessment of the TLMS • Signed statement of agreement to develop the outlined professional dispositions • Disposition surveys • Research-based, new-aged leadership skills for teachers to develop and promote

Creating and sustaining an educational culture built around continuous research, data, and analysis surfaced as another theme. I noticed these axial codes tied closely to TLMS Domain II and Domain V. Because I assumed that program guidelines aligned

with program missions, it seemed appropriate to assume that program evaluation simultaneously aligned with candidate leadership practices after completing the program. The evaluation of the candidates' programs was guided by their missions. Table 4.11 displays the specific strategies implemented to evaluate candidate performance related to the program's specific criteria and the TLMS for those programs utilizing the standards.

Guiding dispositions for candidate development evolved into a thread running throughout programmatic themes. A focus on motivating a candidate to be a lifelong learner with a thirst for research and knowledge ensures leadership goals are supported in practice. When discussing the creation and review of the program curriculum, a participant from Genuine Risk University shared the joy of seeing the larger picture of developing all domains within the TLMS: “You do your piece, your local piece but you don't always see what it looks like in the totality when it's pulled together.” Like other programs investigated, this particular program has a matrix of the core courses with value standards, including, but not limited to, the TLMS. The programmatic matrix displays how courses are aligned with the projects and assessments. Because this was of great interest to me, I searched for these possible program standard alignment matrices for each of the selected programs in my study.

TLP Final Projects Themes

Mastery evidence of TLMS and program objectives was expressed in exit or graduation requirements within the programs, and thus serves as a factor in TLP candidate evaluation. Coding the data revealed that candidates display mastery of standards and program outcomes via action research, cumulative portfolios, and presentations. Table 4.12 provides the open and axial code producing the selective code

shared in the previous sentence. These findings felt like a natural conclusion to the case study story because it culminates with the final displays of knowledge, skills, and personal and professional growth. The following sections examine the types of concluding assignments required of candidates for satisfactory program completion.

Table 4.12

Open and Axial codes of Selective Code “Candidates display mastery of standards and program outcomes via action research, cumulative portfolios, and presentations”

Axial Code	Open Code
Action research, portfolios, or program projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action research project and other program experiences • Completion of the action research project • Two leadership projects with passing scores are required for program completion and graduation. • Portfolios • “We decided, you know what, let's leave them in there so students can make that connection between what the objectives are for the course and what the tasks are as they're connected to the objectives, and what standards are being addressed within that.”
Presentation (given for committee or publicly)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of action research in an approved venue • Successful presentation of the action research project • Satisfactory presentation of research results
Program Benchmarks (Minimum GPA, TLMS assessment passing scores, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program completion requirements • Completion of all core courses, concentration courses, and elective or core competency courses used for the degree with a C or better • Completion course with a C or above • Earn a minimum 3.0 GPA overall and in program course work • Completion of 30 credit hours with a minimum 3.0 GPA • Completion of area of concentration with a minimum 3.0 GPA • Post-self-assessment of the TLMS • Earn all effective level on the TLMS for the Teacher Performance Assessment (TPA) (assessed by the teacher partner and school administrator) • Score benchmark on dispositions identified on the Candidate Dispositions Inventory (assessed by the teacher partner and school administrator)

Action research surfaced as a tenet in teacher leadership development as detailed within this study's literature review. Thus, it was no surprise to see a pattern of action research or final research projects as a central focus for teacher leadership core

coursework and graduation requirements. Program matrices revealed how the action research projects spanned development in multiple TLMS. Programs that specifically addressed action research as a graduation requirement were at Winning Colors, Seabiscuit, Secretariat, Man o' War, and Genuine Risk Universities.

Leadership projects within one's workplace environment provided a benefit not only to the candidate's development but also to the school, district, or community where the work was conducted. Course instructors and colleagues, principals, or school leadership teams helped guide the candidates in strengthening their leadership skills and empowerment through the selected project. Citation University required two leadership projects that were incorporated into a more extensive portfolio for review.

Portfolios were also present as a culminating showcase of teacher leadership skills centered on student learning. The Seattle Slew University portfolio consisted of reflection and examination of the activities and projects experienced as part of their TLP. The portfolios have specific guidelines for necessary components, submission, and review, including a letter to the reviewer and teacher leader core-specific assignments from the required courses. Smarty Jones University requires candidates to complete a capstone assignment consisting of a portfolio and exit interview with an oral defense. Their TLP handbook outlines how the TLMS align with the courses and significant assignments to assist in evaluation. Other universities that required a portfolio from their candidates included Citation University and Sir Barton University (with a committee exit interview).

Dissemination of findings within the context of the candidate's workplace environment was highlighted. For example, Citation University and Man o' War University have candidates complete a capstone project presentation to a panel of

educators, as a part of an educational conference or as professional development.

Candidates are encouraged to submit their work for publication in professional journals.

Genuine Risk University encourages candidates to collaborate with action research findings with colleagues.

Programs displayed varied benchmark requirements for a candidate to complete their TLP. These requirements include completing all required courses with a benchmarked GPA (common 3.0 GPA theme), completing post-self-assessment surveys, passing instructor or educational administrator rated assessments, exit interviews, and administrative tasks of applying for graduation with the school and endorsement with EPSB.

Sustaining TLP Quality

Reflection and change to improve development practice emerged within the case study. According to an interviewee from Seattle Slew University,

We've always wanted to tweak it, revise it as we have gotten feedback from students and feedback from faculty, and so although we have a Teacher Leader Program, it continues to evolve based on what we learn and based upon what we think is in the best interest of the students. I'm excited about what's about to come out.

Sustaining the program's quality served as the selective code. This was born from axial codes of *reflecting students' voices for the candidate's best interest, considering honors and graduates' accomplishments, and relying on faculty's expertise and diverse experiences.*

Table 4.13

Open and Axial Codes of Selective Code “Sustaining TLP Quality”

Axial Code	Open Code
Reflection of candidates’ voices for their best interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidates’ challenges • Conversations on how to keep great teachers in the classroom during and after teacher leadership development • Word-of-mouth program referrals • Discussion forums, open forums for students, online feedback • Course evaluations for improvement
Consideration for honors and program graduates’ accomplishments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measurement of KY school districts nominations from P-12 teachers of those who have completed their TLP • Competition in the program marketplace • Programs ranked as one of the best online colleges in the nation • Campus considered one of the most veteran-friendly • Program ranked in U.S. News & World Report among the best universities offering online education degrees • Program ranked in the top 10 in the state for online programs
Sustainability of program faculty diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidates are provided instruction by well-qualified, experienced faculty modeling “best practices,” strong collaborative efforts, and many are currently practitioners within diverse settings • Candidates are equipped with theory and practice by instructors

Formal feedback consisted of course evaluations and online discussion forums. They served as a medium for listening to candidates’ voices. Informal feedback came from their candidates' voices, concerns and challenges, word-of-mouth referrals, and general faculty awareness of candidates’ needs. Program faculty and instructors focused on how this information adjusted program practices. Materials from Citation University asserted that capstone products provided a means for evaluating the program’s impact on the candidates’ skills and competencies. They also shared that program faculty use continuous assessment through LiveText to assess candidate work and data for analysis.

According to a study participant from Genuine Risk University, referrals by program graduates helped to grow the TLP. The referrals also were used as a measure of program success.

Some of the people who've already been through our programs either recommended our program or have become mentors for people who are currently in the program. Again, that's not something we pushed. We didn't connect people with those former candidates. That happened through their own, I guess, conversation and, I guess, professional discussions within themselves about what they were doing to advance their learning and preparation.

Following graduates in their professional journey was another common practice for program quality evaluation. For example, the representative of Genuine Risk University stated,

We have just recently begun to look at the numbers of students who go through the teacher, or what candidates have been through the teacher leader program with us who are now in leadership positions, positional leadership, like assistant principals, principals, curriculum specialists, those types of things.

Many public stories consisted of highlighting candidate awards and recognitions. The interviewee continued,

If they are being recognized by their district as being high achievers, highflyers, leaders within their district . . . It's really interesting how many, for us, how many of those come back to us having been through our program and their districts are now recognizing them as leaders within the district.

Faculty review candidate data and graduate exit surveys annually, and outcomes are shared with an educator advisory committee.

Signs of Policy Diffusion

While in conversation with a key member of the EPSB Teacher Leader Committee, they shared that the development of Kentucky's policy for TLP EPSB endorsement originated in part with collaboration from other committees and organizations, including the Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium, the organization that created the TLMS. The consortium consisted of many members from across the nation, including two members from Kentucky's EPSB.

I know that when this work started, we were a partner state with the Southern Regional Educational board, SREB. They had a representative from SREB that came to Kentucky and worked with the committee . . . She did a lot of explaining about the philosophical basis of all the teacher leadership work. SREB, I think promoted the adoption of the Teacher Leader Model Standards that were published.

Policy diffusion was evident not only in the adoption of the national TLMS within Kentucky but also in program changes (e.g., design, curriculum, development practices).

One interviewee crafted an eloquent statement sharing a collaborative sentiment among Kentucky's TLPs:

Even though we're all in competition for students or candidates, obviously, because that's what keeps our wheels turning, there's still a collegiality amongst universities and colleges who prepare teachers . . . I know within the schools of education, there is a collegiality that, in the end, our core purpose is to improve the school systems within our . . . Commonwealth, within our nation, and beyond those walls if possible. We do share things.

The focus in this quote evidences the sharing of practices, strategies, assignments, policies, and learning approaches across programs. This collegiality reflects the commonalities and themes identified in the findings. For example, the transition from traditional in-person instruction to entirely online programming did not occur in a vacuum. Among the many factors, it was assumed that policy diffusion influenced this primary modality and programmatic change.

Summary

Findings from the qualitative case study shared in this chapter reveal how EPSB-approved graduate programs formally prepare teacher leaders in Kentucky. Document analysis revealed the programs' public stories. Then I dug deeper and learned about the uniqueness and connectivity of each program. This was evidenced in the programs' curriculum contracts and standard matrices. Narrative data from study participants and

perspectives provided by TLP leaders and policymakers provided thick descriptions of what is happening within and across the 10 programs, which included those with the highest number of participants and graduates. Reviews of open-access documents and program websites made data saturation possible.

Chapter 5 presents my interpretation of the findings described in this chapter. Specifically, the chapter discusses the implications of teacher leadership development in the Commonwealth related to current and potential policy and practice initiatives. A focus on how teacher leader programs collectively implement the TLMS within required core courses, practica, and exit criteria provides a broad description of teachers' development as leaders in Kentucky. In addition to my interpretations, the closing chapter provides recommendations for continued and additional practices and research for future research on teacher leader development.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

From creating the research questions, beginning the research intentions, selecting research methods, and using diverse strategies for data collection and analysis, the study report concludes with a comprehensive discussion of implications for further research and practice. In this chapter, I review key findings shared in Chapter 4 and present my interpretation of how teacher leaders are formally developed within the Kentucky EPSB-approved TLPs. This chapter concludes with the main learnings and recommendations for future research born out of the study's findings.

This qualitative study explored how teacher leaders are formally developed through TLPs in Kentucky—specifically how the programs formally prepare candidates experientially, cognitively, and collaboratively in alignment with the TLMS to ensure graduates can perform their teacher leader roles effectively. The sample included 10 EPSB-approved TLPs with the highest number of graduates during the 5-year period between 2014 and 2019 (Table 4.2). Exploring how these programs operated and prepared their candidates to serve as teacher leaders in diverse settings was the focus of the study. The overarching research question was, *How are teacher leaders formally prepared in Kentucky?*

Justification to conduct this study stemmed from the August 2019 adoption of the TLMS as the foundation for program design and expectations for graduate performance by the state agency that approves all educator programs in Kentucky. This focus was further informed by literature on how teacher leaders increased presence in K-12 education (Curtis, 2013; Duncan, 2014; Pennington, 2013), a movement that has been

building since the mid-1980s (Murphy, 2005; York-Barr & Duke, 2004). With this growing specialized workforce, teacher leader development was needed to enhance teacher participation in decision-making and leadership and to increase students' academic success. A nationally increasing trend of master-level programs offered at Comprehensive I institutions revealed that more than half of all educational leadership degrees are awarded by Comprehensive I institutions, as evidenced by their 53% increase in master's degree awards since 2000 (Perron & Tucker, 2019). Collectively, these diverse forces helped to center the case study as an investigation of how graduate programs are preparing teacher leaders (Smylie & Eckert, 2017).

The following section presents the significant findings from this exploratory case study. Each data-informed assertion is followed by research and practice recommendations for formal teacher leadership development. The recommendations reflect not only my research but also my own journey as a Kentucky teacher leader candidate and understanding of development required and leadership responsibilities.

Conceptual Framework Implications

Created by combining the TLMS and existing frameworks, the *Layered Framework for, Models of, and Development within Teacher Leadership* served as the case study's conceptual framework. This lens allowed me to investigate how current Kentucky TLPs function and produce educational leaders. Based on my findings, I suggest a modification to my original literature-based conceptual framework. Specifically, it was discovered that PLCs instead of CoP were identified as a developmental strategy within the Commonwealth of Kentucky and thus the TLPs. PLCs are more structured and driven with specific goals and tasks. They are also defined and

encouraged with specific protocol by KDE. CoP generally emerge organically from a shared concern or passion by professionals regularly coming together. Thus, that modification was made and reflected in Figure 5.1.

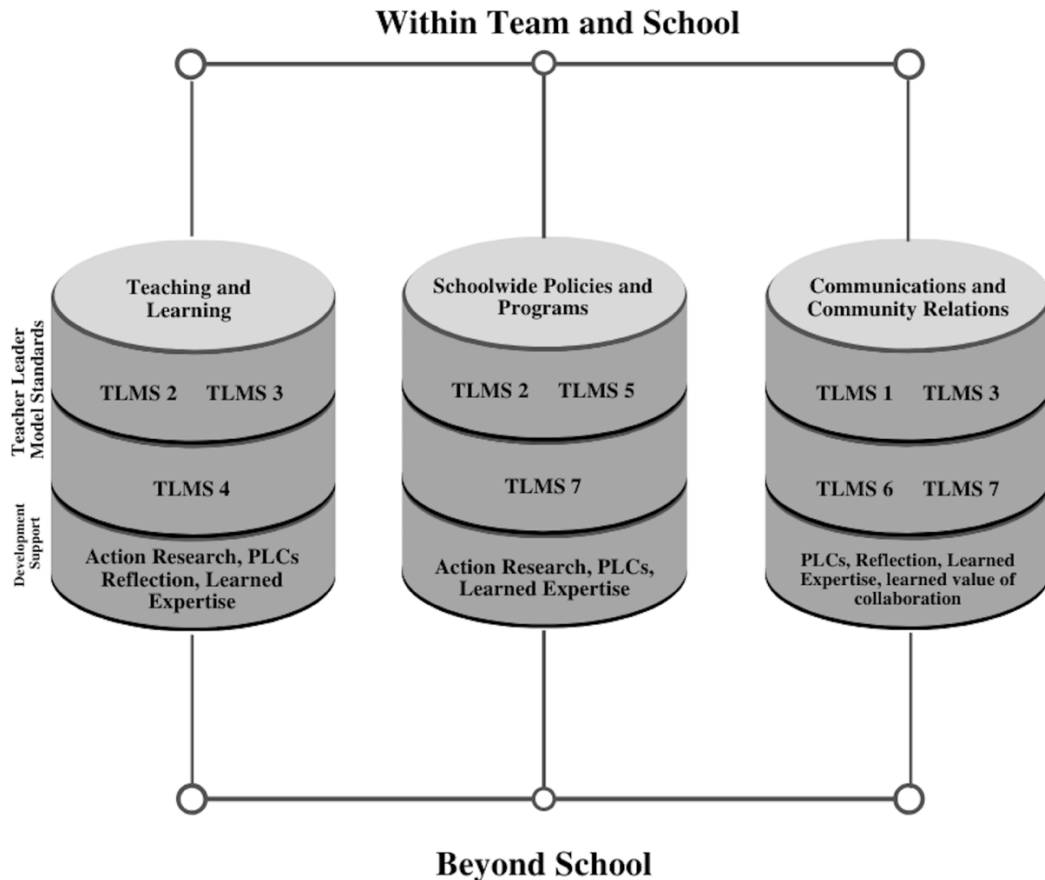


Figure 5.1 Updated visual representation of developed conceptual framework of Layered Framework for, Models of, and Development within Teacher Leadership incorporating Danielson’s (2006) Framework and the TLMS (TLEC, 2011).

It was interesting for me to realize that teachers may leave their classroom profession if the TLPs are genuinely operating as intended within the framework. This realization was a lived experience, as mentioned by an interviewee,

The unfortunate part is we're seeing a lot of really strong classroom teachers that are moving out of the classroom where they have the most direct influence on students . . . to me, that's a positive [because] that means that their training is being recognized within their district or whatever they have applied to and been employed in. That they have grown and developed their leadership skills, enough so that [others] want them taking a larger role at a different level.

Navigating how to retain trained teacher leaders within the classroom while also providing positional movement and career advancement surfaced as an area of research interest.

Considering the tremendous pressure placed on and need for P-12 teachers during the 2020 pandemic, our nation relies on highly skilled and adaptable teacher leaders to guide colleagues as they collectively work towards student success. This created a unique opportunity to gather and analyze current teacher leaders' perceptions of their formal development through TLPs. Focusing on those who graduated within the past five years from the programs examined in this study would serve as a bridge from the programmatic review of teacher leader formal development to the graduates' lived perspectives within the context of tremendous disruption of traditional schooling. I would recommend directing focus and attention to understanding graduates' perceptions of their developed resourcefulness, innovation, flexibility, and resilience to guide peers and teach students during trying and uncertain times.

Policy Diffusion Implications

Policy diffusion partially described how the TLMS were adopted at the state level. It also described how strategies were implemented at the institutional level. To reiterate, policy diffusion illustrates the influence of governmental bodies' choices based on other bodies' choices (Shipan & Volden, 2012). As many mechanisms can lead to policy diffusion, it is beneficial to discuss possible evidence of mechanisms outside of general learning from one another. These mechanisms also include competition, imitation, and coercion (Butler, Volden, Dynes, & Shor, 2015). The following sections

describe possible evidence of policy diffusion mechanisms with corresponding future study implications of policy diffusion among TLPs.

Learning

Learning from others is key for bodies that lack resources for their own extensive policy analyses (Butler et al., 2015) and can lead to positive outcomes (Shipan & Volden, 2008). Thus, institutions, such as Kentucky's TLPs, are possibly more willing to learn from each other's risks and experiments. For example, learning through policy diffusion occurred with a collective shift in ideology to an online modality (which could also be discussed under the competition mechanism). This shift had occurred prior to the start of this study and the TLMS policy change but is important to note as it points to a sharing and adoption of similar practices to impact the teacher leader candidates. Another result that can be evidenced by policy diffusion in many programs was the processes and implementations of midpoint check-ins and signed codes of ethics. These factors existed as similar aspects that appeared in the programs. To increase the learning mechanism of policy diffusion and promote the sharing of ideas, a practical recommendation addressed in more detail later is to establish and maintain an advisory board and hold TLP Zoom meetings for leadership and faculty to interact in a professional, but collegial, environment.

Socialization. Increased cross-program communication has implications for the influence of program policy choices based on those of other programs. Many of my upcoming practical recommendations focus on fashioning spaces for socialization and learning to occur across the programs, both with the programs' leadership and faculty and their candidates. A semi-formal space can serve as a platform to manipulate learning and

socialization within policy diffusion. It was evidenced that sharing was occurring across the programs as that was directly stated by an interviewee. It was also surmised by the great overlap of specializations offered among the programs within or alongside the TLPs. Learning and socializing could have occurred as programs understood the needs of the schools and the candidates. However, other mechanisms, such as imitation, competition, and coercion, could have contributed to this outcome. For example, coercion comes from the top-down directive to support multiple learning pathways for the teacher leader candidates from EPSB. Imitation and competition could have led to the overlapping specializations. Program leaders may have observed what other programs were doing and adopted elements or program leaders knew that in order to compete in the market they too must also attract candidates with a wide range of popular options. I encourage future studies to expand on this exploratory study to specifically investigate the mechanisms and influence of how the evidenced components and policies revealed in this study are shaped among Kentucky's TLPs.

Competition

Further research exploring how sharing and borrowing of information occurs even within a competition-driven system is of interest. The candidate's best interest and, ultimately, that of the P-12 students was a fundamental shared goal of the preparation programs. However, as these institutions and programs are businesses, some private and some not-for-profit, themes of competition did emerge. Thus, this promoted competition as a mechanism for policy diffusion within the policy adoption of Kentucky TLPs. As previously quoted, a study participant directly addressed the competition among neighboring programs, "Even though we're all in competition for students or

candidates...there's still a collegiality amongst universities and colleges who prepare.” The participant ended this statement with the phrase, “We do share things.” This served as a strong indicator of policy diffusion at work from both learning and with competition.

Future studies investigating the possibly unique function of collegiality among TLPs or graduate education programs in general can enhance what it means to be both in direct competition, but also direct cooperation existing under the same governing bodies with a collective mission. I echo research questions posed by Butler et al. (2015) and ask for future TLP studies “under what conditions are competitive pressures heightened” and how does that play into the sharing of ideas and policies and mentioned collegiality?

Imitation

Within policy diffusion, imitation serves as a mechanism in which other bodies adopt policies through copying policies and is a “more short-lived” and simple process (Shipan & Volden, 2008, p. 840). This is not ideal as it can result in inappropriate policies for that institution. However, though the programs explored had unique elements, as they were bound by the same regulating bodies they also shared similarities (e.g., specializations, core courses, program timeline, program modality).

Coercion

The policy diffusion mechanism coercion occurs directly and indirectly and uses pressure or encouragement to take actions favorable to common expectations (Shipan & Volden, 2008). Based on my gathered data, I did not uncover specific instances of coercive mechanisms. This aligns with the notion that horizontal coercion across localities is limited, however it can still occur. Yet, I would argue that coercion did occur from the regulation change and mandate from EPSB. In order for programs to remain

approved by state body of EPSB, they were required ensure their program was in alignment with the TLMS. This vertical diffusion had direct influence on the TLP's response to adopting the required standards. This also relates to the competition mechanism: if programs cannot provide candidates with an advanced certification in teacher leadership after successful completion of their program, that can negatively impact the program by reducing monetary streams.

In sum, the policy diffusion mechanism of learning, competition, imitation, and coercion were discussed in the context of the scope of the study. I recommend a future study that looks at the national level of TLMS adoption for teacher leader graduate programs through the lens of policy diffusion and the four mechanisms. I also encourage an extension of this study to understand the four mechanisms and their influence on the policies and components identified in this study. A more complete understanding of the adoption and process for adoption can lead to understanding the current needs and thus corresponding development for teacher leaders.

Program Design and Delivery Influence

Exploring the structure, design, delivery, and overall framework of the participating TLPs served as the foundation for one of the study's propositions. Understanding common themes of TLP structures provided insight into the relationship between a candidate and the program from application to graduation and beyond. The programs provide candidates with skills, knowledge, field-based leadership and research experiences, and endorsements that enhance their career advancement opportunities (Snoek et al., 2017). The support and guidance materials provided to candidates across 10 programs exhibited similar and differing characteristics.

Findings

Findings suggest that the selected Kentucky TLPs utilize a student-centered perspective to ensure the programs remain responsive to candidates' needs as working professionals (Danielson, 2006). Strategies used include multidiscipline or endorsement specializations evidenced in the required *EPSB Teacher Leader Program Review Worksheet* (Appendix F). In addition, programs implemented mentoring (OECD, 2009; Pelan, 2012) and multiple check-in opportunities. Information gleaned from open-access websites, program documents, and program leader insights served as the major sources of data. I developed a table with central themes from the TLP's teacher leader definition and then mapped those themes to the seven TLMS domains, aggregated the core TLP courses, and layered findings with my conceptual framework (TLEC, 2011). The variety of secondary endorsements to the teacher leader endorsement was readily evident in this visual arrangement (Table 4.7 and Figure 4.5).

The student-centered design and curriculum model suggests that programs evolve in supporting working professionals (e.g., teachers comprising most of their cohorts) (Snoek et al., 2017). Thus, a focus on candidates' workplace environments and how teacher leaders can navigate and develop through diverse experiences was a key finding that was also present in the literature (Cherkowski, 2018; Danielson, 2006; Education Professional Standards Board, 2018; TLEC, 2011). Situational factors and demands were other indicators in program design and delivery improvement.

Response to candidates' needs as working professionals. As teacher leaders provide their voices in their workplaces and ensure other voices are likewise heard (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2011), it is important for TLPs to model this as well.

Information collected from several programs suggest the importance placed on listening and responding to the needs of their potential and current TLP candidates. Such actions appear to directly impact the redesign and framework of the TLPs. One program's website specifically boasted to readers that their program was designed for the working educator with entirely online classes that provide convenient development and career advancement. Emphasis on professional reflection was likewise evident.

A shift to entirely online courses, rolling admissions, advisor or faculty midpoint check-ins, and multiple career pathways were some structural strategies that demonstrated support for student-centered philosophies within the 10 programs. Because connections between the graduate programs' curricula and teachers' authentic work helps develop the teacher leaders and transform the schools where they work (Snoek et al., 2017), the programs focused on practice and skill development using candidates' worksites or classrooms as learning laboratories. Completing action research on an authentic problem of practice in their work setting further contributed to redesign of program curricula.

Midpoint check-ins to support development and program improvement.

Structures engaged by many TLP leaders and faculty members included midpoint assessments of teacher leader candidates' progress. This purposeful gateway provided program instructors and advisors an opportunity to formally evaluate each candidate's progress and potential growth areas. The program designs also provided natural checkpoints to ensure teacher leader candidates' adequate progression through the designed curriculum.

Multidiscipline or endorsement specializations. One of the most interesting discoveries was the robust endorsement and discipline options available to support candidates' specialization needs. Because teacher leaders assume various roles and responsibilities both within P-12 schools and beyond, candidates seek multiple pathways for leadership preparation (Miller et al., 2000; TLEC, 2011; Wenner & Campbell, 2018). Data gathered through this study revealed that aspiring teacher leaders in Kentucky are being equipped with a variety of skillsets to support the collective academic success of all students. Data gathered also indicate that specific specializations and secondary endorsements are woven into many of the 10 programs investigated.

Implications and Recommendations

To continue to attract and retain aspiring teacher leaders (Boyd-Dimock & McGree, 1995) and serve their successful development, it is recommended that program leaders and faculty embed detailed student feedback surveys at various key points in candidates' program progression (e.g., entry, checkpoint, candidacy, graduation, certification). Additionally, programs must provide opportunities for different forms of reflection on candidates' professional learning (Cherkowski, 2018; Porter et al., 2003). In the spirit of serving the Commonwealth as a whole, development of a universal program-feedback survey used by all TLPs may support further comparison among programs and dissemination of promising practices. As this occurs through policy diffusion, creating a collaborative strategy for program assessment and growth may benefit both teachers and students within the Commonwealth (Shipan & Volden, 2012).

Creation of electronic handbook. Many program representatives that were interviewed during this study highlighted the need to focus on making the application and

candidacy process quick, flexible, and convenient to candidates. Thus, it is recommended programs create an interactive electronic handbook used by all TLPs in Kentucky. Several programs examined in this study have already created and distributed a program handbook publicly, thus enhancing the opportunity to create one document that can clarify a candidate's development. The proposed standard handbook could include a program overview, guidelines for application, definitions of teacher leaders in diverse settings, and program logistics. Application information could include admissions requirements, contact information for key program personnel, and opportunities for scholarships or grants. Having a common teacher leader definition and descriptions of their roles and responsibilities would help spotlight each program's desired outcomes and graduates' potential career paths. Lastly, an outline that includes the program timeline, course requirements, potential costs, university policies, curricula contracts, and programs' alignment with the TLMS would be informative. This document would need to be reviewed, updated, and published each year to ensure the most accurate information is provided. Together, this collection of information would provide both internal and external program members with straightforward expectations for teacher leader development and programmatic items.

Assurance of work-setting support. Developing teacher leaders requires support from their workplace administrators (e.g., principal, assistant principal, department chair) to ensure they receive requisite resources (Klinker et al., 2010), autonomy (Friedman, 2011), appreciation (Killion et al., 2016; Sanders, 2006), and public acknowledgment (Margolis & Doring, 2012). It is recommended that TLPs embed required coaching and mentoring from a school leader and other key personnel within the candidate's workplace

(Knight, 2018). Mentors serve as role models for aspiring leaders, while instructional coaches focus on improving outcomes through a collaborative, trusting relationship among peers (Pelan, 2012). This strategy for formal development within a candidate's work setting ensures a safe and flexible environment for aspiring teacher leaders to gain requisite skills and apply new knowledge.

Opportunity for specialization. Within the literature reviewed for this study is a common focus on encouraging multiple endorsements and pathways for aspiring teacher leaders (Miller et al., 2000; TLEC, 2011; Wenner & Campbell, 2018). Thus, understanding the range of current and emerging endorsements to complement teacher leaders' development and practice is another recommendation. Endorsements can provide insight into the current teacher leader candidates' skills and knowledge needs.

Connection between workplace culture and health. Much of the research literature reviewed for this study discussed the connection between workplace culture and health when developing teacher leaders (Crowther et al., 2009; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009; Killion et al., 2016; Valdez et al., 2015). Healthy schools and cultures led to increasing meaningful teacher leadership development. Conditions for a healthy school culture include relational trust, collective responsibility, continuous development, recognition, and autonomy (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Goddard et al., 2000; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009; Killion et al., 2016; Pink, 2011). Hence, it is recommended that, to the extent possible, Kentucky TLPs focus assignments on aspects of school leadership in which candidates can engage with school leaders and colleagues to influence healthy school cultures.

Although universities and programs do not have control over the schools and environments where candidates work, it is important that teacher leader candidates have freedom to openly share what is happening in their schools without fear of reprisal. Further, if candidates report they are working in toxic school environments, measures should be taken by program personnel to support the candidate—within reason and limitations—by providing research-based approaches through health-centric, cultural, and structural conditions (Snoek et al., 2017).

TLMS Impact on Candidate Development

Diverse coding strategies revealed how TLMS develop teacher leaders formally in Kentucky's EPSB-endorsed TLPs. Regulation 16 KAR 1:016 reveals how the seven domains serve as the framework for all teacher leader preparation programs in Kentucky. Within the 10 universities investigated in this study and even if not directly stated, program alignment with the TLMS was evident throughout data sources analyzed (e.g., curricula and courses, instructional strategies, assignments, unique program features). The study's conceptual framework includes themes within the context of schoolwide policies and programs, teaching and learning, and communications and community relations. These were discussed in detail in Chapter 4. This section presents a summary of findings, implications, and recommendations for TLMS program alignment.

Findings

Teacher leadership development activities work towards improving classroom teaching through engaging with new teaching techniques (Harris & Townsend, 2007; Wenner & Campbell, 2017). The 10 universities used TLMS as the framework for teacher leader development in Kentucky to encourage improved instruction within and

beyond the classroom and span across core courses through policies and programs, teaching and learning, and communications and community relations (Danielson, 2006). As shared in Chapter 2, it was assumed before the launch of this study that content, standards, activities, strategies, and outcomes, within the framework of each TLP, would evidence effective development of teacher leaders. Programs used the TLMS to guide the development of well-rounded teacher leaders prepared to navigate comprehensive changes and support critical decisions (Boyd-Dimock & McGree, 1995; Howey, 1988; Killion et al., 2016; Livingston, 1992). Candidates are expected to demonstrate mastery of the standards across Danielson's (2006) three teacher leadership arenas: (a) schoolwide policies and programs, (b) teaching and learning, and (c) communications and community relations.

Holistic candidate development. Candidates develop leadership knowledge and skills through strategies, activities, and practicum experiences as they implement newly learned skills and knowledge (Argyris & Schon, 1974; Kolb & Kolb, 2012). These research-informed practices focused on fostering collaboration and reflection recommendations in the literature (Gigante & Firestone, 2008; Goins, 2017; Mainous, 2012; Ries, 2003).

This case study revealed an overlap of core courses and development strategies across the 10 universities (see *Layered Framework for, Models of, and Development within Teacher Leadership*). Such reinforcing practices included final projects in the form of action research, oral presentations, portfolio creation and defense, or exit examinations. Additionally, PLCs within the candidates' schools engage aspiring teacher leaders and their colleagues in collaborative and increased communication environments

and enhance teaching efficacy by focusing on student learning needs or challenges. According to Fullan (2006), PLCs provide informal teacher leadership development.

Additionally, information technology surfaced as a vital component in the development of twenty-first century leaders. Although not explicitly addressed within the curricula of the 10 investigated programs, many technology development strategies were integrated into the required assignments or projects evidencing TLMS outcomes. Used as a supporting strategy, teacher leader candidates are prepared to use technology to build learning communities and improve student learning (TLEC, 2011) through completion of diverse assignments while enrolled in the program.

Integrated leadership development. Theory, research, practice, and reflection surfaced as four categorizing elements for organizing the programs' learning aspects. Theory was evident and discussed via core courses, literature reviews, policies, pedagogical explorations, and other strategies. Following an experiential-learning model, teachers reviewed literature, established hypotheses and research questions, gathered and analyzed data, and generalized findings to create evidence-based practices to resolve classroom problems (Kolb & Kolb, 2012). Development of teacher leaders includes structured action research (Diana, 2011) and research-evidenced teaching practices.

Across the 10 programs examined, completing an independently designed and conducted action research project was a required assignment. Action research thus supported both research and practice categories within the seven TLMS domains that guide the professional development and practice of teacher leaders (TLEC, 2011). Similarly, the literature supports action research as a component of effective teacher leadership development (Crowther et al., 2009; Gigante & Firestone, 2008; Valdez et

al., 2015). Learning to reflect about one's professional practice (i.e., in action, on action, for action) encourages formal development of teachers' leadership skills (Göker, 2016). Self-reflection builds social-emotional development for educational leadership for teachers (Bridgeland et al., 2013; Cherkowski, 2018) and thus is also embedded within action research to ensure teacher leaders grow professionally (Diana, 2011).

Development of leadership skills through diverse activities and assignments provided practical and experiential learning for the candidates. Thoughtful alignment of learning and application and careful course organization produced cycles of learning—from theories and research to implementation and reflection. Viewing the strategies displayed in Table 4.8, Table 4.9, and Table 4.10 provides aggregate evidence of formal leadership development through TLP applications.

Authentic change strategies. According to program personnel interviewed, candidates and graduates are impacting their schools in authentic ways, what Snoek and colleagues (2017) call *boundary crossing* between graduate programs and professional practice. One institution member explained,

As leaders, teachers have the ability to influence curriculum goals and school policies, and to work with colleagues to bring about positive change for student learning. This degree provides practical applications that graduates will be able to apply within their current classrooms.

Domain VII in the TLMS asserts that teacher leaders must interact with policies and regulations that impact learning from multiple levels of government in order to achieve real change both within and beyond the classroom and school. This expectation highlights the emphasis on intending real change and application while learning and reflecting on practices.

Program curricula and activities empower teacher leader candidates to take action that impacts their school in real ways. Empowering change, building content knowledge, exposing experiences, and providing long-term improvement collectively engender real change in candidates' respective environments (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; Johnson, 2006).

Implications and Recommendations

Policy diffusion theory explains how ideas are introduced and spread from one institution to the next and how they evolve (Shipan & Volden, 2012), which can be artificially constructed to enhance diffusion. For the 10 universities in this study, diffusion of effective teacher leader preparation can be accomplished by holding twice-a-year Zoom open-discussion forums for all Kentucky EPSB-endorsed TLP leaders, coordinators, and involved faculty members. Additionally, forming a Kentucky Teacher Leader Program Advisory Board would support another way to disseminate program successes. This board could also strengthen cross-institution communication and collaboration, similar to what is encouraged in the development of teacher leaders (Chesson, 2011; Chew & Andrews, 2010). Applying this practice to the TLP leaders has the potential of enhancing candidates' professional development and ultimately their students' learning. These combined efforts could result in programmatic feedback that define effective TLPs (Gigante & Firestone, 2008; Goins, 2017; Mainous, 2012; Ries, 2003).

The year 2020 brought the global COVID-19 pandemic, which required reimagined ways of teaching across the P-20 education continuum. Among those working to navigate the unprecedented and unpredictable modifications to school structures were

teacher leaders. Future research should explore how teacher leaders responded to the sweeping changes and constant uncertainty brought in 2020—beginning with examining how their TLP informed by the TLMS prepared them for the leadership responsibilities during this challenging year. Teacher leaders hold the power to create a reinvented normal.

PLCs and Candidate Development

Participation in PLCs encourages teachers to learn, grow, and develop through sharing responsibilities, creating inclusive cultures, and focusing on students' learning needs (Hord & Sommers, 2008). Thus, the third proposition for this case study considered how PLCs aid in formally developing teacher leaders. Chapter 4 established that PLCs play a role in specific outcomes or assignments in the TLPs' core courses and provide embedded leadership experiences and peripheral engagement in the candidates' workplaces. Although there was evidence of PLCs embedded within the curriculum of some investigated programs, there exists potential for creating robust, cross-program development.

Findings

The case study revealed naturally forming PLCs existed among teacher leader cohorts as well as assignment-driven opportunities for PLCs. Similarly, CoP (Wenger et al., 2002), which are formed and sustained by interested members rather than required by policy mandate like PLCs, support members' learning and potentially student success. The 10 universities examined, however, varied in their creation and use of PLCs or CoP within their TLPs. Because PLCs are part of Kentucky public schools, teacher leader candidates are often encouraged to engage actively in their schools' PLCs and seek

opportunities for engaging in communal growth. Authentic leadership opportunities within PLCs include collective engagement in identifying shared beliefs, creating vision statements, sharing resources, and engaging in professional conversations (Hord & Sommers, 2008). PLCs play a role in supporting teacher leader development within the selected institutions' programs.

Implications and Recommendations

The literature reviewed to develop the conceptual framework for this study focused on teacher leaders' roles in establishing and maintaining PLCs and CoP to improve their schools and develop their skills (Klar, 2012b). In alignment with this research, the case study explored how PLCs and CoP in the selected TLPs support teacher leader development. However, with the unexpected absence of a full and robust presence of PLCs and moreover CoP highlighted on websites, in program contracts and curricula, and in interview conversations, creating the space for cross-program CoP for TLP candidates is recommended.

For example, at the onset of the program, candidates would generate and form or join multiple CoP that include TLP candidates to learn, grow, and develop both as individuals and as professional communities through shared responsibility, inclusive culture, and focus on school learning needs (Hord & Sommers, 2008). If current PLCs did not address the professional interests or needs of candidates, they would be encouraged to establish their own space and form a CoP. This recommendation would create a network across and beyond the Commonwealth and provide an opportunity for a greater sense of community engagement and teacher leader driven professional problem-solving environments. Program faculty members or school administrators could serve as

mentors or coaches to guide the development of these CoP but allow the progress and direction to be candidate driven.

Implications for further research uncovered from this case study include the impact of developing teacher leaders via TLPs through CoP and PLCs across institutional programs within the state and cohorts. School leaders have an important role in establishing and maintaining ongoing growth and improvement as they help teachers become leaders (Barton & Stepanek, 2012). Understanding how the skills developed by participating in both PLCs and CoP comprised of teacher leader candidates and how participation influences their roles and responsibilities as teacher leaders after program completion can provide important information about how programs shape and support leadership beyond the program. This is even more timely to understand how and if PLCs and CoP utilized by active teacher leaders and teacher leader candidates positively influenced the actions taken by educators and schools took during 2020.

One unique feature from the case study stems from my idea of *PLC adjacent* strategies. Although there is little to no current research describing tangential PLC approaches, I surmise that some TLPs within the case study applied this concept. I describe *PLC adjacent* as programs, structures, and activities that encourage teacher leader candidates to learn in professional environments and from their peers. Somewhat interesting is the finding that PLCs are not the primary or identified focus in core courses or significant assignments within the 10 programs investigated. Understanding what approach TLPs use to influence teacher leader development and behavior can reflect future program considerations and modifications.

Program Evaluation of Candidate Success

The fourth guiding question for the case study—how TLPs evaluate candidates' success according to the TLMS—expanded to encompass the main features of quality control and program graduation requirements. This study assumed teachers enroll in leadership programs to gain skills and knowledge, experiences and strategies, and a degree and salary increase among other personal and professional benefits (Snoek et al., 2017). Curricular content, program standards, learning activities, and instructional strategies within a TLP define the quality of leadership development aspiring teacher leaders gain (Snoek et al., 2017). These components of such programs also intend to indirectly increase student achievement (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009). Evaluation of these program components and program outcomes was considered within this case study. The realizations, implications, and recommendations from interpreting findings for this exploratory study are offered in this section.

Findings

Awareness of TLP keystone assignments assisted in understanding desired outcomes of both candidate and program evaluation. Findings revealed a common theme of several distinctive assignments or tasks: Individual and group projects, capstone activities, presentations, and portfolios are among various approaches used by programs to demonstrate candidate mastery. Whether presentations of findings from candidate-conducted action research or demonstrations of learning achievement via a candidate-created portfolio, the TLPs' graduation requirements allowed aspiring teacher leaders to showcase their gained knowledge, skills, and professional growth. Further, the exit project did not stand alone as evidence of candidate accomplishment. It was accompanied

by performing sufficiently on required courses, earning required graduate hours, completing self-assessments, mentor evaluations, and other program-specific criteria. Through formal and informal processes, programs performed self-evaluations of candidate accomplishments, including results from end-of-semester surveys, tracking graduate career progression, and accolades by outsiders. After exiting the program, connecting graduates' successes expresses the intent to enact meaningful change in their candidate's professional life.

Implications and Recommendations

Literature asserts that higher education TLPs require clear goals and outcomes (Mainous, 2012). Thus, an effective TLP exhibits clear change processes (Mainous, 2012; Ries, 2003; Velchansky, 2011) and shared vision (Goins, 2017; Mainous, 2012; Velchansky, 2011) in teacher leaders' respective educational settings. Goals and outcomes to “align with the skills, knowledge, and dispositions needed by emerging conceptions of teacher leaders” meet policy and evaluation requirements for state certification (Mainous, 2012, p. 4).

Many TLPs shared through interviews, websites, or program requirements that teacher leader candidates present their action research results or project findings with professional colleagues, school administrators, or in other educational spaces. That is, the programs relied on candidates' or graduates' work to showcase publicly that programs' goals are achieved. Thus, a collective showcase for candidates of Kentucky's TLPs to share their projects and action research broadly is recommended. This showcase can be virtual to accommodate the online program modality. Whether recently graduated or preparing to graduate, presenters can invite colleagues or administrators to their remote

showcase presentation, along with current TLP candidates. Colleagues and administrators can view the emerging teacher leaders in their element, giving them authority in their teacher leader role in their workplace to achieve real change (Rost, 1991). This showcase can also serve as an informal interview as the teacher leader development enhances career advancement, accordingly, attracting and retaining qualified educators (Boyd-Dimock & McGree, 1995).

TLP candidates can learn from their projects and peers. A public display of candidate learning and mastery of the TLMS provides depth to the evaluation and fosters teacher leaders' community. Pairing this with the earlier suggestion of inter-institutional CoP lay the foundation for increased communication, community, and sharing of ideas and policies among Kentucky's TLPs (Shipan & Volden, 2008).

Many programs used action research implementation to help develop and evaluate candidates in alignment with the TLMS. Likewise, the use of action research for development existed in the literature (Cherkowski, 2018; Diana, 2011; Tillotson et al., 2004; TLEC, 2011). Action research served as an evaluation for many capstone or final graduate program projects. Thus, understanding factors that shape how candidates interact with and establish their action research projects provides insight into P-12 needs and can further evaluate if the TLPs are meeting the current needs of the schools and students. This research can have implications on the impact of the programs' effectiveness on developing teacher leaders prepared to handle the current needs of their educational workplace. It provides a real-time feedback loop ensuring program curricula, skills, and assignments mirror the challenges and issues of the modern P-12 learning environment as addressed in candidates' action research problems. This aligns with

literature supporting that teacher leaders should engage in continuous learning loops of outcomes, practices, and feedback (Argyris & Schon, 1974) and with experiential learning theory (Kolb & Kolb, 2012). Just as teacher leaders use everyday observation and feedback as ways to improve practice (Moller & Pankake, 2006), TLP leaders and faculty can engage in feedback processes.

Future of Teacher Leader Development

This study adds to the current knowledge base about teacher leader development by providing insights into the ways Kentucky EPSB-approved programs prepare teacher leaders using the TLMS as the framework. Our nation and the world were thrust into an unknown and life-disrupting global pandemic during data collection for this study. This pervasive catastrophe impacted individuals and families, everyday life, businesses and schools, and many other entities. During the spring of 2020, our nation's P-20 education system was temporarily dismantled due to the necessity of quarantining and physical distancing. Our P-12 school leaders and teachers had to significantly alter how educational services were delivered. They rose to meet these new expectations and continued to strive towards ensuring each student's opportunity to achieve academic success. This year-long transformation of public schooling provided an excellent opportunity for teacher leaders' voices to be heard, thus revealing how and to what degree their training and development prepared them for this monumental undertaking. Future research on how teachers and teacher leaders accomplished this, as well as gaps in development and training, is needed not only in the state of Kentucky, but nationally.

The need for effective teacher leader development will continue to widen the scope of pathways and opportunities to design programs that meet the development needs

of today's aspiring teacher leaders. Research is required to identify and address important but missing areas of teacher leadership development. An interviewee even hinted at the soon-to-be-widened specialization scope through additional endorsement areas.

Our teacher leader program, since its inception, has undergone two, three, maybe four revisions and we're actually undergoing a revision now. It's nothing major, but we've always wanted to tweak it, revise it as we have gotten feedback from students and feedback from faculty . . . Although we have a Teacher Leader Program, it continues to evolve based on what we learn and based upon what we think is in the best interest of the [candidates]. I'm excited about what's about to come out. Like I said, I think we're going to add a few new specializations that we're curious to see if it will attract interest, so stay tuned. Maybe this time next year we might have some new ideas.

Findings also indicated that program leaders and faculty listen to their candidates' needs and follow standard practices to support their professional development. Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic may likewise stimulate further changes to TLPs.

Researcher Reflection

Data collection for this case study began in March 2020—the same time that P-20 educational institutions had to transform. Somewhat surprisingly, the pandemic events allowed me to stretch and strengthen my flexibility and resourcefulness, subsequently eliciting a new depth to my qualitative research. I learned to expect the unexpected, both in data exploration and contextual circumstances. The unexpected global pandemic resulted in modifications to the IRB process and extensions for the data collection timeline. However, the changes widened the original sample from the top five higher education institutions in Kentucky to the top 10 institutions, which provided a more diverse data set. Relying more broadly on the publicly available documents as data sources, I discovered documents and websites I would have overlooked with my original study design.

Listening to interviewee comments and sharing in the passion for teacher leader development while conducting interviews was a highlight in conducting this study. The excitement of uncovering fundamental evidence within the document analysis paled in comparison to the stories and historical context shared by the study participants. Their words were re-energizing, and I was honored that in the midst of major change they committed time and lent their expertise to assist me. A somewhat unique feature is that I began my graduate journey as a candidate in an EPSB-approved Kentucky TLP. That experience shaped this dissertation investigation and provided insights while I navigated the data collection and analysis processes. It also provided depth to a greater understanding of maintaining and developing a program designed to prepare candidates for real-time collaboration, workplace experience, promising practices, and leadership theories. I gained a program leaders' critical eye in addition to my TLP candidate and graduate perspective.

Case Study Summary and Conclusion

During this case study, our world changed. The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted everyday routines in 2020; educational leaders and policymakers were pressed to pivot and quickly develop alternative learning forms. Teachers and teacher leaders were tasked with continuing students' quality education and developing multiple plans to respond to potential changing mandates contingent on safety needs. More than ever, I believe adequate formal preparation of teacher leaders was vital to each student's academic success. The opening words of this dissertation ring true: Leaders respond to changing organizational landscapes, engendering leadership strategies to fit current needs, situations, experiences, and perspectives (Ahmed et al., 2016; Dess & Picken, 2000).

TLPs must prepare teacher leaders to navigate successfully through educational adversity and address consequences of potential unsuccessful learning, such as those experienced during 2020. Teacher leaders are equipped with their training, experience, and passion to reinvent learning to propel colleagues and schools towards a reimagined educational system.

This case study provided a foundational exploration of how high graduate-yielding TLPs in Kentucky formally prepare teacher leaders. Data for this case study were gathered between March 2020 and August 2020, through questionnaires and interviews completed by study participants and through analyses of existing public documents.

Findings echo implications for further research specific to the design, standard alignment, use of PLCs, and program evaluation. Encouragingly, a thread that ran true throughout this entire work held student success and improvement at its core. Words shared by an interviewee reflect this focus,

Of course, their focus is on student improvement! Right now, a teacher leader could take on a project that is not directly related to student achievement but related to the culture of the school in some way. Indeed, you're right: Student achievement has got to be one of the primary motivations of the teacher leader.

Thus, directly and indirectly, at the core of a teacher leader's program, development, and motivation lies a focus on students and their educational success.

APPENDIX A

IRB APPROVAL LETTER



EXEMPTION CERTIFICATION

IRB Number: 55807

TO: Bailey Ubellacker
Educational Leadership Studies
PI phone #: 859-492-3057
PI email: bailey.ubellacker@uky.edu

FROM: Chairperson/Vice Chairperson
Nonmedical Institutional Review Board (IRB)

SUBJECT: Approval for Exemption Certification

DATE: 3/13/2020

On 3/13/2020, it was determined that your project entitled "*AN EXPLORATIVE STUDY OF KENTUCKY TEACHER LEADER GRADUATE PROGRAMS: RESPONSE TO POLICY CHANGE*" meets federal criteria to qualify as an exempt study.

Because the study has been certified as exempt, you will not be required to complete continuation or final review reports. However, it is your responsibility to notify the IRB prior to making any changes to the study. Please note that changes made to an exempt protocol may disqualify it from exempt status and may require an expedited or full review.

The Office of Research Integrity will hold your exemption application for six years. Before the end of the sixth year, you will be notified that your file will be closed and the application destroyed. If your project is still ongoing, you will need to contact the Office of Research Integrity upon receipt of that letter and follow the instructions for completing a new exemption application. It is, therefore, important that you keep your address current with the Office of Research Integrity.

For information describing investigator responsibilities after obtaining IRB approval, download and read the document "[PI Guidance to Responsibilities, Qualifications, Records and Documentation of Human Subjects Research](#)" available in the online Office of Research Integrity's [IRB Survival Handbook](#). Additional information regarding IRB review, federal regulations, and institutional policies may be found through [OR's web site](#). If you have questions, need additional information, or would like a paper copy of the above mentioned document, contact the Office of Research Integrity at 859-257-9428.

APPENDIX B

STATEMENT OF EXCERPT USE IN DISSERTATION

From: Katy Wogec <permissions@ascd.org>
Sent: Saturday, August 3, 2019 10:34:21 PM
To: Ubellacker, Bailey <bailey.ubellacker@uky.edu>
Subject: RE: Seeking Figure Use by Charlotte Danielson in Dissertation (Thread:1935399)

Dear Bailey:

In response to your request below, please consider this permission to use the excerpt(s) from the referenced publication for your personal research purposes. Should you include excerpts or cite content in a paper or some other report form, please credit the source accordingly. If your research results in use of our content in a product or publication for commercial release, please contact me again to secure further rights to do so. Thank you for your interest in ASCD and good luck with your dissertation.

Sincerely yours,

KATY WOGEC • Permissions Consultant for ASCD
1703 N. Beauregard Street • Alexandria, VA 22311-1714
P 240-478-4788



Join us:  

From: Ubellacker, Bailey <bailey.ubellacker@uky.edu>
Sent: Tuesday, July 30, 2019 8:33 AM
To: permissions@ASCD.org
Subject: Seeking Figure Use by Charlotte Danielson in Dissertation (Thread:1935399)

To whom it may concern:

I hope this email finds you well. My name is Bailey Ubellacker and I am a current Ph.D. student in Educational Leadership at the University of Kentucky. My dissertation topic specifically addresses the formal and informal development of teacher leadership through master's programs. Throughout my time in graduate school and teaching experience, I have had the opportunity to read and learn from Danielson's teachings. Her teacher leadership framework inspired my conceptual framework for my prospective dissertation. Thus, I am seeking copyright permission to display figure 2.1 *Framework for Teacher Leadership* on page 26 from *Teacher Leadership that Strengthens Professional Practice* (2006) by Charlotte Danielson in my dissertation.

Please let me know of the proper procedures or if I will need to contact Charlotte Danielson directly. I am excited about this possibility and appreciate the consideration.

All the best,

Bailey Ubellacker
bailey.ubellacker@uky.edu

APPENDIX C

QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Teacher Leadership Program Leader,

You are invited to take part in a questionnaire about your teacher leadership program and implementation of the newly effective Teacher Leader Model Standards per 1.16 KAR 1:016. This questionnaire is part of a study exploring how teacher leaders are formally prepared in Kentucky and is intended to collect data about regional graduate teacher leadership programs in the state of Kentucky.

This invitation was extended to you as you have been identified as the leader of a teacher leader program at your institution. The ideal respondent for this questionnaire is the individual who directs, coordinates, or leads the teacher leadership program with historic program information and knowledge of program requirements.

The questionnaire will take about 5-10 minutes to complete and there are no known risks from participating in the study. However, in order to participate in the study, the attached consent form must be signed and returned to myself.

Most of the questions apply directly to your specific teacher leadership program. When completing the questionnaire please refer to the current design and requirements of your graduate teacher leader program. Your responses will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law and your responses will not be identifiable by your name or institution. In addition, I will make every effort to safeguard your data once collected via Qualtrics and within additional digital data storage.

At the end of the questionnaire, you will be invited to partake in an interview as the second part of this study. You will be asked to identify dates and times in the next month for a possible interview (one hour to an hour and a half commitment). I am flexible in scheduling and will be sure the selected dates and times meet your needs.

If you have any questions about the study, please do not hesitate to reach out via email or phone below. For complaints, suggestions, or questions about your rights as a research volunteer, contact the staff in the University of Kentucky Office of Research Integrity at 859-257-9428 or toll-free at 1-866-400-9428.

Thank you for your participation as I explore teacher leadership preparation via graduate programs as partial requirements towards my dissertation.

Sincerely,

Bailey Ubellacker, ABD
Doctoral Candidate, Department of Educational Leadership Studies
Math Academic Preparation and Placement Coordinator,

Department of Transformative Learning
University of Kentucky
859-492-3057
bailey.ubellacker@uky.edu

Faculty Advisor: Tricia Browne-Ferrigno, PhD
Professor, Department of Educational Leadership Studies
University of Kentucky
tricia.ferrigno@uky.edu

Program Leadership Program Questionnaire

Program Certification

Please answer the following open-ended questions to the best of your ability about the certification of your teacher leader program.

1. What is your current position?
2. Is your program currently approved in the state of Kentucky under the new Teacher Leader Model Standards effective August 2019?
3. Approximately, how long has your program been using the Teacher Leader Model Standards (EPSB, 2018)? Please visit: <http://www.epsb.ky.gov/mod/book/view.php?id=133&chapterid=117> for reference.
4. If applicable, what member of your team lead the changes for the Teacher Leader Model Standards?
5. What are the admission requirements for an applicant to be seriously considered for enrollment in your teacher leader preparation program?
6. How is your program offered? (please select one)

Online

In person

Hybrid of in person and online learning

Other _____

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Part 1

Hello (name),

Thank you for your time this [morning, afternoon, evening] to speak with me about your graduate Teacher Leadership Program at UK and thank you for taking time to complete the questionnaire. As a leader in your [name of higher education institution] among other things I know you are incredibly busy, so I appreciate you taking time out of your day to share with me. I hope you received the questions I have prepared to help guide our conversation. Please feel free to ask questions at any time during our conversation. As we talk, our conversation may take us off script and that is completely fine. Please know that if at any time you do not wish to answer a question, or would like to end the interview, let me know. I wish to respect your time and will ensure that the interview takes no more than an hour (unless you request to continue).

Before we begin with our conversation please verbally confirm that you received the consent form via electronic mail, and you have agreed with recording this interview. Thank you and I am excited to get started. I will begin recording now.

Part 2 (* denotes a question asked when applicable)

Program Information and Requirements

1. As a follow-up to the brief questionnaire completed prior to this interview can you please state your title and describe your main responsibilities?

Policy Changes

2. What components (i.e., supporting structures, concepts, research) guide the design of your program model?
 - How is your program delivered?
 - i. Why?
3. How has your program changed in response to the Teacher Leader Model Standards policy (EPSB, 2018)? If it hasn't, why not?

*Provided only if prompting questions are needed:

- What specific activities changed?
- What specific content changed?
- How was the design of the program influenced?
- Did graduation requirements change?
- Did you model your program from other institutions?
- Did anyone reach out to you to learn about your changes?

Program Teacher Leader Development strategies

4. What instructional strategies does your program use to prepare teacher leaders for each given Teacher Model Leader Standard? Please detail the main strategy for each standard and identify if this supports within the classroom context, beyond the classroom, or both.
 - I. Domain I: Foster a Collaborative Culture to Support Educator Development and Student Learning.
 - II. Domain II: Access and Use Research to Improve Practice and Student Learning.
 - III. Domain III: Promote Professional Learning for Continuous Improvement.
 - IV. Domain IV: Facilitate Improvements in Instruction and Student Learning.
 - V. Domain V: Promote the Use of Assessments and Data for School and District Improvement.
 - VI. Domain VI: Improving Outreach and Collaboration with Families and Community.
 - VII. Domain VII: Advocate for Student Learning and the Profession.
5. How does your program foster general teacher leadership development and engagement?
 - I. Follow up question if interviewee indicates the use of communities of practice or professional learning communities into the program design and curriculum.
 - i. How are they facilitated?
 - ii. What are the outcomes?
 - iii. Why is this piece of development important to your student's learning?
 - II. Follow up if interviewee does not indicate the use of communities of practice or professional learning communities into the program design and curriculum.
 - i. Does your program utilize communities of practice or professional learning communities within your program?
 1. * How are they facilitated?
 2. *What are the outcomes?
 3. *Why is this piece of development important to your student's learning?

Program Evaluation

6. What is your program's definition of teacher leadership?
7. For the purposes of this study, I have operationalized teacher leadership as *teachers collaborating through collective skills, promising effective practices, and professional learning to influence and promote effective school and student improvement as aligned with the Teacher Leader Model Standards (TLEC, 2011)*.
 - I. Do you believe your program aligns with this definition? If so, how?
 - II. Is it different than your program's? Please describe this.
 - III. What do you believe makes your program unique in how teacher leaders are formally prepared in Kentucky?
8. How do you define program success for your teacher leader students?
 - How do you know your students are successful?

- What measurements are taken?
- What is the monitoring process?

Remaining Questions

9. Do you have any remaining questions for me or comments about your teacher leadership program?
10. Do you have any questions for me about my current and future research?

Wrap-Up

This concludes our interview session. I truly appreciate you taking time out of your day to discuss your teacher leadership program. After revisiting our conversations, may I contact you if I have further questions?

Before we go, do you have any questions for me? If you come up with some at a later time do not hesitate to ask. For reference, my email is bailey.ubellacker@uky.edu and my office phone number is (859) 218-6010.

Again, thank you so much for your time and for your participation in this interview. I hope you enjoyed it as much as I did as your insight is very valuable.

APPENDIX E

STATE MANDATED REGULATION

1. 16 KAR 1:016. Standards for Certified Teacher Leader

RELATES TO: KRS 161.020, 161.028, 161.030

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: KRS 161.020, 161.028, 161.030

NECESSITY, FUNCTION, AND CONFORMITY: KRS 161.028 requires the Education Professional Standards Board to establish standards for obtaining and maintaining educator certification. This administrative regulation establishes the standards required for certified teachers to obtain or maintain certification as a teacher leader.

Section 1. Teacher Leader Standards for Educator Preparation and Certification. Effective August 1, 2019, the Education Professional Standards Board shall use the standards established in this section in the evaluation and assessment of a teacher leader for advanced certification and for the approval of teacher leader master preparation programs.

- (1) Standard 1. Foster a Collaborative Culture to Support Educator Development and Student Learning.
 - a. The teacher leader shall be well versed in adult learning theory and shall use that knowledge to create a community of collective responsibility within his or her school; and
 - b. In promoting this collaborative culture among fellow teachers, administrators, and other school leaders, the teacher leader shall ensure improvement in educator instruction and, consequently, student learning.
- (2) Standard 2. Access and Use Research to Improve Practice and Student Learning.
 - a. The teacher leader shall keep abreast of the latest research about teaching effectiveness and student learning, and shall implement best practices if appropriate; and
 - b. He or she shall model the use of systematic inquiry as a critical component of teachers' ongoing learning and development.
- (3) Standard 3. Promote Professional Learning for Continuous Improvement.
 - a. The teacher leader shall understand that the processes of teaching and learning are constantly evolving; and
 - b. The teacher leader shall design and facilitate job-embedded professional development opportunities aligned with school improvement goals.
- (4) Standard 4. Facilitate Improvements in Instruction and Student Learning.
 - a. The teacher leader shall possess a deep understanding of teaching and learning, and model an attitude of continuous learning and

- reflective practice for colleagues; and
- b. The teacher leader shall work collaboratively with other teachers to improve instructional practices constantly.

(5) Standard 5: Promote the Use of Assessments and Data for School and District Improvement.

- a. The teacher leader shall be knowledgeable about the design of assessments, both formative and summative; and
- b. The teacher leader shall work with colleagues to analyze data and interpret results to in- form goals and to improve student learning.

(6) Standard 6: Improving Outreach and Collaboration with Families and Community

- a. The teacher leader shall understand the impact that families, cultures, and communities have on student learning; and
- b. As a result, the teacher leader shall seek to promote a sense of partnership among these different groups towards the common goal of excellent education.

(7) Standard 7: Advocate for Student Learning and the Profession.

- a. The teacher leader shall understand the landscape of education policy and shall identify key players at the local, state, and national levels; and
- b. The teacher leader shall advocate for the teaching profession and for policies that bene- fit student learning.

Section 2. The teacher leader may utilize the guidance contained within the Teacher Leader Model Standards published by the Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium.

Section 3. Incorporation by Reference.

- (1) "Teacher Leader Model Standards", 2011 is incorporated by reference.
- (2) This material may be inspected, copied, or obtained, subject to applicable copyright law, at the Education Professional Standards Board, 100 Airport Road, Frankfort, Kentucky 40601, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., or online at <http://www.epsb.ky.gov/mod/data/view.php?d=6&rid=352>.(44 Ky.R. 1453, 1956; eff. 4-6-2018

APPENDIX F

TEACHER LEADER PROGRAM REVIEW WORKSHEET

EPP Name: _____ Program Reviewed: _____	Name of Reviewer: _____ Date reviewed: _____
Teacher Leader PROGRAM REVIEW WORKSHEET	
Program Design	
1. To what degree did the program delineate the collaborative agreement(s) with P-12 school districts in the design of the program?	Meets Expectations - 3: Addresses the question with clear response. Emerging - 2: Vague response is provided. Not sufficient - 1: No addressed.
Comments:	
2. The program describes the program's plan to provide direct services to the district by the education faculty.	Meets Expectations - 3: Program describes the direct services to be provided to the partner district(s). Emerging - 2: Description of services provided is vague. Not sufficient - 1: This component is not addressed.
Comments:	
3. To what extent did the program demonstrate the collaboration with A&S faculty in the design of the program (as appropriate)?	Meets Expectations - 3: Description is clear. Emerging - 2: Description is vague. Not sufficient - 1: Not addressed.
Comments:	
4. To what extent did the program demonstrate how the program prepares candidates to interpret and analyze student achievement data?	Meets Expectations - 3: Description is clear and evidence of candidate's skills is provided. Emerging - 2: Description is included; limited evidence is provided. Not sufficient - 1: Description is vague; limited/no evidence is provided.
Comments:	
5. The program provides a description of how the program supports a candidate's job-embedded professional experiences.	Meets Expectations - 3: Description is detailed and clear. Emerging - 2: Description is provided but not detailed or clear. Not sufficient - 1: Not addressed.
Comments:	
6. The program provides multiple career pathways and opportunities for candidates.	Meets Expectations - 3: Career pathways are identified and description is detailed and clear. Emerging - 2: Description is provided but not detailed or clear. Not sufficient - 1: Not addressed.
Comments:	
7. The program utilizes mixed delivery methods.	Yes or No
Comments:	
Program Curriculum	
8. Clinical/Practicum experiences are provided where candidates are examining P-12 student achievement.	Yes or No
Comments:	
9. The program demonstrates rigorous curriculum standards that addresses differentiated instructional strategies, engaging instructional methods, enhancing content knowledge, skills to evaluate research on student learning.	Meets Expectations - 3: Collectively the assessments align with all the Teacher Leader Model Standards. Emerging - 2: Some of the TLMS are not measured by the appropriate assessments. Alignment between the TLMS and the assessments are not clear. Evidence in syllabi is inconsistent. Not sufficient - 1: The assessments do not align with TLMS; no evidence provided of the alignment in the syllabi.
Comments:	

Evidence and analysis		
<p>10. To what extent did the EPP explain each assessment used for this program?</p> <p>A) How well do the assessments and measures address the Teacher Leader Model Standards?</p>	<p>Meets Expectations - 3: Assessments demonstrate measurement of all the standards. Emerging - 2: Some standards not measured; some assessments not aligned. Not sufficient - 1: Limited standards measured; assessments not aligned.</p>	
<p>Comments:</p>		
<p>B) Does the analysis of this assessment support and validate a candidate's ability through the progressions of this program?</p>	<p>Meets Expectations - 3: Information demonstrates appropriate candidate progress toward mastery of the standards. Emerging - 2: Information is inconsistent in demonstrating candidate progression. Not sufficient - 1: Analysis of assessment data does not demonstrate candidate progression toward master of the standards.</p>	
<p>Comments:</p>		
Summary Analysis for Program		
<p>11. To what extent did the EPP holistic summary and rationale demonstrate how each candidate performance on the appropriate standards contributed to the program's overall quality?</p>	<p>Meets Expectations - 3: Summary details how candidate data informs program quality. Emerging - 2: Summary provides limited details of use of candidate data for program improvement. Not sufficient - 1: Program quality is not linked to candidate performance.</p>	
<p>Comments:</p>		
<p>12. To what extent did the EPP provide an explanation of how assessment data are/were used to improve this program?</p>	<p>Meets Expectations - 3: Narrative explanation is adequate to describe the connection between data analysis and continuous improvement. Examples are provided to demonstrate how program assessment data is used to improve the program. Emerging - 2: Vague or non-program specific examples are provided. Not sufficient - 1: Examples are not provided or includes generic references that are not specific or relevant to the program.</p>	
<p>Comments:</p>		
<p>General observations/impressions of the Program</p>		
<p>Program Decisions:</p>		
<p>Continuing Program: (1) Approval Continued (2) Conditional Approval - Rejoinder Required (3) Recommend for Closure based on valid evidence and rationale</p>		

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