2022

But are They Good Teachers? Examining Who Takes up Teacher Leadership and How Their Instruction Differs from Their Peers

Peter D. Wiens
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Jori S. Beck
Old Dominion University, jbeck@odu.edu

But are They Good Teachers? Examining Who Takes up Teacher Leadership and How Their Instruction Differs from Their Peers

Peter D. Wiens*

peter.wiens@unlv.edu

[1]University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Jori S. Beck

jbeck@odu.edu

Old Dominion University

*Corresponding author.

Word Count = 7326

Abstract

Teacher leaders function in many roles in supporting school success including instructional leadership and supporting colleagues. This study draws upon the Status of the Social Studies Survey (Fitchett & Vanfossen, 2013) to examine the responses of 6,702 US-based middle and high school social studies teachers to understand the antecedents of teacher leadership and the instructional practices of these individuals compared to their peers. Survey responses indicate that the vast majority of social studies teachers report participating in some aspect of teacher leadership. Teacher leaders tend to be less experienced and have less educational attainment while employing more research-based instructional techniques.

Keywords: Teacher Leadership, Instructional Leadership, Equity, Teaching, Instruction

But are They Good Teachers? Examining Who Takes up Teacher Leadership and How

Their Instruction Differs from Their Peers

As PreK-12 schools have become increasingly complex, the need for new models of leadership have grown. School leadership has been identified as the second most important factor in student learning after classroom instruction (Leithwood et al., 2004). Over the past twenty years, research in teacher leadership (TL) has grown considerably indicating that the benefits of TL to schools have become increasingly clear (Nguyen et al., 2020; Schott et al., 2020; Tsai, 2015; York-Barr & Duke, 2004). However, teacher leadership as an empirical field of study remains underdeveloped with multiple reviews calling for the need for increased empirical exploration (Nguyen, 2020; Schott et al., 2020; Wenner & Campbell, 2017). In this study, we sought to address this call for new directions in empirical research in TL.

In their 2020 systematic literature review on TL, Schott and colleagues found four themes in the literature: definitions of TL, antecedents of TL, outcomes of TL, and methodological quality of research in TL. There are not many studies in which researchers examine personal antecedents of TL. Among these studies examined in Schott and colleagues (2020), the focus largely rests in two areas: demographic characteristics (e.g., Aliakbari & Sadeghi, 2014; Searby et al., 2017; Szeto & Cheng, 2017) and dispositional attributes of the teachers (Cooper et al., 2016; Huang, 2016; Kılınç et al., 2015). It is likewise assumed that teacher leaders as instructional leaders are master teachers (Danielson, 2006; Nickerson et al., 2018); however, this has yet to be explored in the literature. We sought to add to the literature by conducting an examination of patterns in who becomes teacher leaders and if these individuals report different and more effective instructional practices than their counterparts through an analysis of the

Status of the Social Studies Survey (S4; Fitchett & Vanfossen, 2013), a large-scale survey of social studies teachers.

Theorizing Teacher Leadership

We ground the current study in theoretical work on TL including a clear definition of how we are conceptualizing TL in this study. The research on this topic shows vastly different approaches to defining the construct as well as a lack of clarity in definitions (e.g., York-Barr & Duke, 2004). First, we unpack the different ways TL has been theorized before providing the definition used for the current study. One recurring theme in the TL literature is formal and informal teacher leader roles (York-Barr & Duke, 2004), "[TL] is practiced through a variety of formal and informal positions, roles, and channels of communication in the daily work of schools" (p. 263). This is connected to Smulyan's (2016) concept of TL as stance. Smulyan wrote about three key perspectives within this conceptualization of TL but, of note, is that "teaching is a political act in the battle for social justice and democracy" (p. 9). Thus, some approaches to TL are explicitly political and value laden. Hunzicker (2017) conceptualized TL as a stance in the sense that it is a mindset or way of being rather than particular behaviors. Another common conceptualization of teacher leaders is that they remain in the classroom while taking on roles outside of the classroom (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001; Wenner & Campbell, 2017).

However, context is important in TL—including sociopolitical context. Torrance and Forde (2017) conveyed how the sociopolitical context in Scotland connected TL to professionalism, professional accountability, and practitioner inquiry. Local context matters as well. For example, Anderson (2002) noted that rural and small schools tended to rely on informal rather than formal TL roles. Berg (2020; Berg & Zoellick, 2019) advocated understanding how TL is defined within particular contexts to support the work of teacher leaders and, ultimately,

improve student learning. It is clear that TL means different things for different groups (Lukacs & Galluzzo, 2014; Murphy, 2005). For the purposes of the current study, we define TL in accordance with Wenner and Campbell (2017): "teachers who maintain K-12 classroom-based teaching responsibilities, while also taking on leadership responsibilities outside of the classroom" (p. 140).

Literature Review

Antecedents of Teacher Leadership

The research on what supports and inhibits TL points to the importance of multiple levels of context including political and local, building level, and individual. Working in the UK, Frost and Harris (2003) noted, "The development of teacher leadership is linked to the national reform movements of the past fifteen years or so" (p. 484). They connected this to the notion of instructional leadership and standards-driven reform. They concluded that teacher leadership is shaped by these political contexts and agendas about teacher performance and teacher professionalism. Along the same lines, Davis and Leon (2009) identified the district context as an important factor mediating teacher leadership in their framework.

Wenner and Campbell (2017), in their highly cited literature review of research on TL, identified four factors that support TL: (a) external training and support, (b) support from administration, (c) climate and structural factors, and (d) clearly-defined job responsibilities and recognition. While all of these were important, administrative support appeared to be most critical to facilitating TL—in particular, providing teacher leaders with autonomy and recognition. Wenner and Campbell also found that, in 15% of their articles, authors addressed changing relationships with colleagues. Unfortunately, these changes were most often negative and teacher leaders often faced resentment from colleagues. It is important that these social

networks support teacher leaders, too. Davis and Leon (2009) have cautioned, "administrators must be mindful of the distinction between cultural indoctrination and integration. It is one thing to impose on teachers the tasks and responsibilities of leadership and quite another to develop teacher leadership organically, from the bottom up" (p. 268). In their framework for teacher leadership, Davis and Leon (2009) identified emotional intelligence as an antecedent of TL. They further identified mediating variables including principals' beliefs, social context, organizational cultures, and work tasks which parallel Wenner and Campbell's (2017) work. In their germinal synthesis of research on TL, York-Barr and Duke (2004) identified school culture, roles and relationships, and structures as factors influencing TL and noted that these three categories are interrelated rather than discrete. Collective efficacy has also been identified as critical for TL (Angelle & Teague, 2014). However, it is not clear whether collective efficacy precedes TL or vice versa. Thus, more research is needed on this construct. Hunzicker (2017) also identified overly rigid or overly loose school cultures as problematic for TL as well as unsupportive principals and colleagues. When principals used inclusive approaches, teachers have been shown to be invested in school-wide reforms (Johnson et al., 2014).

The individual teacher is also a mitigating factor in developing TL. Davis and Leon (2009) noted, "The extent to which teachers are able to exercise leadership will be affected to some extent by the way they construct their professional role, what they perceive the role boundaries to be, and what they see as being contained within those boundaries" (p. 487). They also identified organizational culture, social capital, and personal capacity—including authority, knowledge, situational understanding, and interpersonal skills—as affecting the extent to which teachers can exercise TL. Hunzicker (2017) identified several individual-level factors that influence the progression from teacher to teacher leader: knowledge and skills, dispositions,

motivation to support students and colleagues, taking action, and age and years of teaching experience. They may also decline teacher leader positions because of self-doubt.

Openness of Teacher Leadership to Gender/Racial Differences

Wenner and Campbell (2017) have identified issues of diversity within TL as an important area of future research and we would like to reiterate this call here. However, what we learned in another study (Authors, forthcoming) is that the existing pool of teachers influences who is available to become a teacher leader. Putman and colleagues (2016) calculated that, in order to achieve a teaching force that mirrors the student population, it would require approximately one million white teachers to leave the profession and be replaced by about 300,000 Black teachers and 600,000 Latinx teachers. Four key points within a teacher's career have been identified as notable to recruit and retain teachers: college attendance and successful completion, the decision to pursue a teacher education pathway in college, being hired as a teacher of record, and deciding to stay in teaching on a recurring basis. For the purposes of this literature review, we will focus on the latter two points.

Putman and colleagues (2016) reported that Black and Latinx teachers were hired for teaching positions at lower rates than white teachers. This discrepancy could be due to poor recruitment, candidates of color being lured into other professions, or low passing rates on licensing tests for aspiring teachers of color due to cultural bias in these exams. D'Amico and colleagues (2017) studied the applications for teaching positions within one district focused on diversifying its teaching ranks. They found that, even with an intentional focus on diversity in hiring, Black applicants were less likely than their white peers to receive a job offer. This is despite the fact that Black candidates were 23% more likely to hold advanced degrees and have two years of out-of-district teaching experience. Moreover, Black applicants were more likely to

be hired in schools with large populations of children in poverty or schools identified as struggling--thus confirming Putman and colleagues' (2016) findings as well. These job offers disproportionately came from the district's Black principals as well as from principals of schools with large populations of Black students. A similar phenomenon played out in Noonan and Bristol's (2020) study of one district in the Northeastern United States. Specifically, durable and parochial social networks within the district prioritized the hiring of predominantly white alumni. Much like D'Amico and colleagues' (2017) study, these hiring discrepancies played out despite a professed focus on the importance of diversity.

Additionally, teachers of color are retained at lower rates than their white counterparts (Putman et al., 2016). Putman and colleagues attributed this turnover to the fact that teachers of color tend to work in schools with higher poverty rates in urban settings. While teachers of color stay in these schools longer than their white counterparts, these environments are more challenging and teachers of color do exit these schools. Hiring and retention are also interconnected. For example, Bristol (2018) found that Loners, or Black men hired at a school where they were the sole Black man on the faculty, felt that their white colleagues had greater influence within their schools, believed that being Black caused their colleagues to fear them, and reported a greater desire to leave their schools. This was in contrast to Groupers—or Black men at schools who had four or more Black men on the faculty. Thus, hiring decisions can affect retention of teachers of color as well. What is less clear is the degree to which teachers of color find themselves in TL positions. This study seeks to address this gap in the literature.

Teacher Leaders as Instructional Leaders

The focus on instructional leadership among leadership theorists has evolved over time, "the pendulum has swung back and forth over the past several decades favoring different

leadership models at different points in time" (Hallinger, 2010, p. 68). However, a meta-analysis by Robinson (2007) identified five leadership dimensions that showed positive effects on student learning. One of these dimensions is "planning, coordinating and evaluation teaching and the curriculum" (p. 8). Other researchers have found that principal effects on student outcomes is often mediated by teachers (Marzano et al., 2005; Robinson, 2007; Robinson et al., 2008) indicating the necessity of principals working with teachers to improve student learning. At its heart, effective school leadership must have an instructional or learning centered focus (Hallinger, 2010).

Definitions and conceptualizations of instructional leadership vary. Portin and colleagues (2013) defined instructional leadership as "learning-focused leadership" (p. 224). Smith and colleagues (2016) defined it as "an influential, non-supervisory process focused on improving instructional practice, with student learning as the paramount goal" (p. 267). Neumerski (2012) argued that instructional leadership should not be the domain of principals or administrators only, but sought to integrate the research on traditional instructional leadership which is typically centered on the principal. She called for greater integration of these bodies of work to generate a better understanding of quality instruction. Instructional coaching, including literacy coaching, has been tied to student achievement.

An assumed prerequisite of instructional leadership is that a teacher must be an expert teacher. As the Teacher Leader Model Standards (Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium, 2011) convey, "The teacher leader understands the evolving nature of teaching and learning, established and emerging technologies, and the school community" (p. 16). Teacher leaders must have a deep understanding of their content, curriculum design, instructional practice, and an understanding of education as a "societal enterprise" (Handler, 2010, p. 34). One of many roles

that a teacher leader has is as a resource provider and instructional supporter of their colleagues (Harrison & Killion, 2007; York-Barr & Duke, 2004). The prerequisite of these behaviors is, among others, a skillful mastery of instruction. However, there is little empirical evidence that teacher leaders actually have these instructional skills relative to their peers.

Like the research on teacher leadership generally, the work on instructional leadership is often deeply contextualized. In Beirut, Ghamrawi (2010) studied the role of subject leadership in establishing and fostering TL in their departments. Findings included how these subject leaders created subcultures of collaboration and distributed leadership, establishing bartered leadership structures, and walking the talk of a shared system of teacher monitoring and evaluation. Ghamrawi also highlighted the "mammoth volume of tasks subject leaders are carrying out" (p. 307). Thus, like teacher leadership research generally, context is important to consider in this role including national and local. Lotter and colleagues (2019) studied 20 secondary science and math teacher leaders enrolled in their three-year TL professional development program. They identified patterns in their TL that were contextualized to their instruction in rural, high-poverty schools such as strong teacher-student relationships, supporting new academic opportunities for students, encouraging student success, and building community connections. In contrast, Portin and colleagues (2013) situated their work on TL in urban high schools specifically. They identified unique expertise in these individuals including content expertise, pedagogical coaching skill, ability to build relational trust, and the ability to connect the classroom with district- and school-determined learning improvement efforts. Neumerski (2012) noted that urban, suburban, and rural contexts likely affect the work of instructional leaders, but cautioned against seeing these contexts as completely different. Thus, context is an important factor to consider without using it to further separate schools.

Teacher Leadership towards Effective Social Studies Instruction

Any discussion of teacher leaders as instructional leaders, or specialists, needs to be firmly rooted in a vision of effective teaching. Expert teachers are able to help students to engage in material in what Vygotsky (1978) called the zone of proximal development. In order to accomplish this, teachers create learner-centered environments to help students build on prior knowledge and make connections to new content (Bransford et al., 2000; Estes et al., 2011). In a meta-analysis of research in classroom instruction, Marano et al. (2001) found that techniques that engaged students in making meaning of the content had the highest student achievement.

From the perspective of teaching social studies, it is important that teachers' instruction should align with the goals of social studies education which, according to Russell III and colleagues (2014), includes preparing responsible citizens, developing awareness of contemporary issues, developing healthy self-concepts, developing problem solving skills, and creating global citizens. Teachers should not overly focus on knowledge acquisition, but instead should spend instructional time promoting strategies focused on developing skills and deep understandings. Or, as van Hover and Hicks (2017) put it,

> Best practice research…elucidates a vision of inquiry-based discipline-specific literacy work in which students learn the knowledge, understandings, and tools that allow them to make sense of the world, past, present and future. (p. 274)

Social studies researchers have called for a move away from traditional teaching techniques of drilling and memorization (Cuban, 1991) to a broader range of instructional practices (Russell III, 2010). The C3 Framework (NCSS, 2013)—a set of standards for social studies education—illustrates that effective social studies instruction should consist of four dimensions: developing questions, applying disciplinary tools and concepts, evaluating sources and using evidence, and

communicating conclusions and taking informed action. Researchers have demonstrated the benefits of different instructional approaches including group work and cooperative learning (Larson, 2017; Nagel, 2008), role play/simulations (Bard, 2018; Hartshorne et al., 2019; Piper & Neufeld-Kaiser, 2018), integrating primary sources (Hoyer, 2020; Morowski & McCormick, 2017; Patterson et al, 2017), and engaging in writing (Dingler, 2017; Graham et al., 2020; Wissinger & De La Paz, 2020). Teachers who employ these strategies have students who learn more in their classes. The literature has not addressed whether or not teacher leaders employ these strategies more frequently than do their colleagues.

Current Study

With this study, we sought to address the gap in the TL literature by answering the following research questions:

1. Among social studies teachers, are there characteristics that predict the amount of TL positions a person might hold?

2. Do social studies teacher leaders teach in ways that are different from their colleagues?

Answering these research questions through the use of a large-scale survey provides an innovative examination of important questions in TL that have not previously been studied in depth.

Methods

Participants

Data for this study came from the S4. The S4 is a large, national dataset of survey responses from over 11,000 social studies teachers in pre-kindergarten through grade 12 (Fitchett & Vanfossen, 2013; Passe & Patterson, 2013). Administered between 2010 and 2011, the S4 included teachers from 44 states. In this study, we focused on teachers who indicated that they

teach middle or high school grades. A total of 6,702 teachers completed the survey with an average teaching experience of 15.55 years (SD = 9.95). Additional demographic data can be found in Table 1.

Instrument

Survey questions pertaining to our research questions were selected from the S4 dataset. These included demographic questions regarding years of teaching experience, gender, race, and highest degree. The survey included three TL questions: "During this year will you serve as a department lead or chair?"; "During this year did you serve as a lead curriculum specialist?"; and "During this year will you serve on a school-wide or district committee or task force?"

Teachers were also asked to provide information about their school. This included information about socio-economic status (SES) of most students which was coded on a five-point scale with 5 = high income and 1 = low income. The descriptive statistics for this variable can be found in Table 1. Participants were also asked to provide the percentage of non-white students at their school. Participant responses indicated a mean percentage of non-white students of M = 7.26%, SD = 5.69.

Participants were also asked to indicate their instructional practices. This included 12 practices whereby participants selected how frequently they used these practices on a five-point scale where 5 = almost daily to 1 = never. Based on research in social studies education (van Hover & Hicks, 2017), five practices were identified as progressive and supported by current research. Confirmatory factor analysis (Brown, 2006) confirmed these items fit into a single factor as shown in Table 2. These progressive practices (M = 2.793, SD = .548) became the focus of our analysis of teaching strategies among social studies teachers as described below.

Analysis

To begin our analysis, we sought to understand the nature of teacher leadership among social studies teachers in our sample. To accomplish this, we examined descriptive statistics to illuminate the nature of teacher leadership. Next, we wanted to understand if teacher demographic characteristics were predictive of taking on leadership roles. We conducted a logistic regression (Pedhazur, 1997) with the dependent variable being whether or not the teacher held any TL positions (department chair, committee member, or district-wide task force). Then we used years of teaching experience, gender, race, and highest degree earned as the independent variables.

Next, we examined if individuals involved in these TL positions taught in different ways than their peers. We conducted three different regressions for this analysis. In each regression we used progressive teaching practices as the dependent variable. Previous research has shown that teachers are not randomly distributed across and within schools (Boyd et al., 2006; Boyd et al., 2008). Therefore, in our regression models it was important to include teacher characteristics that might also predict instructional choices that teachers make including experience, educational attainment, and school characteristics such as socio-economic and racial characteristics (Clotfelter et al., 2011; Goldhaber, 2008; Goldhaber et al., 2015; Huang & Moon, 2009; Ladd, 2008). We constructed our models with teacher and school characteristics (including gender, race, educational attainment, school SES and school racial demographics) entered first. In some cases, school SES and racial demographic statistics can be highly correlated and cause problems of multicollinearity; however, in this sample, SES and percentage of non-white students had a moderate, negative correlation ($r = -.41$, $p < .001$). This allowed us to use both variables in the regression analysis. Then in each of the three regression equations we entered in a TL position

last which allowed us to understand if the TL positions were associated with differences in instruction after accounting for teacher and school characteristics.

Results

We began by examining descriptive statistics to understand the nature of TL among social studies teachers. In the sample, 91.2% of participants indicated that they had at least one TL position. Table 3 shows the how many TL positions teachers reported serving in the last year. The majority of participants (70.9%) reported serving in at least two TL positions. Among the three TL positions, curriculum specialist was the most frequently reported (82.7%), followed by department chair (68.0%), and district-wide position (46.3%).

Next, we wanted to examine if certain demographic characteristics were predictive of serving in TL positions. First, we used the dichotomous TL position variable to examine the predictive relationship of demographic characteristics to holding any TL position. As shown in Table 4, this resulted in a statistically significant regression equation ($\chi^2 = 58.789$, $p < .001$) with a classification percentage of 91.3% overall. Within the variable, teaching experience and graduate degrees (compared to a bachelor's degree) were negatively related to holding a TL position. This indicates that teachers who hold TL positions would be likely to have less teaching experience and less total education. After examining the descriptive statistics described above, we observed that over 91% of participants reported serving in a TL position. Additionally, the TL positions differ between curriculum work, department leadership, and district initiatives. Therefore, we decided to also conduct logistic regression analysis of each TL position individually. The results can also be seen in Table 4. In all three logistic regressions, the entire models had statistically significant chi-square values. However, the classification percentage values for the logistic regression models varied from 56% to 82.8% as shown in Table 4. Within

the models, experience was consistently negatively associated with having TL positions. Across the models, males were more likely to take TL positions, although this was only statistically significant (at the $p < .05$ value) for department chair and district taskforce. For the curriculum specialist position, race was a significant predictor whereby Native Americans were less likely than Whites to take these positions (odds ratio = .527) while African Americans were more likely than Whites to have these positions (odds ration = 1.516). Teachers with master's (odds ratio = .587) and doctoral degrees (odds ratio = .420) were also less likely to be curriculum specialists. Race was also a significant predictor of joining a district task force with African American (odds ratio = 1.682) and Latinx (odds ratio = 1.803) teachers both being more likely than their White colleagues to take these positions.

The three regression models examining instructional practices also showed significant relationships as conveyed in Table 5. In each model, after accounting for potential individual and school differences, individuals in TL roles reported different instructional practices. The difference was largest for curriculum specialists (β=.224), but was also true of department chairs (β=.125) and committee members (β=.145). While many individual and school characteristics were associated with differences in instructional practices, the TL position was the largest (or tied for largest) predictor in each of the three models. Individuals engaged in TL reported more frequent use of progressive teaching methods than their peers.

Limitations

Prior to discussing the results in greater detail, it is important to understand the limits of this study. A large-scale survey such as the S4 provides an excellent opportunity for research, but also comes with certain drawbacks. First, this survey relies on teacher self-report of instructional practices, TL practices, and demographic characteristics of both themselves and their schools. It

is impossible to check their responses for accuracy; however, self-report has been shown to be a valid approach to educational research (Wagner et al., 2016) with a demonstrated history of empirical results (e.g., Ainley & Carstens, 2018; Author, 2018, 2021; Holzberger et al., 2013; Korpershoek et al., 2016). A second issue results from a lack of definition in the survey for the TL roles. Participants may have different conceptions of what it means to be a department chair, lead curriculum specialist, or serve on a school or district-wide committee or task force. These different conceptions may lead to over- or under-reporting of TL practices. The literature in TL does not provide any data to guide our discussion in this area, but additional research is needed to further examine this issue.

Another potential limitation for this study is the fact that the survey data were collected during the 2010-2011 academic year. Relying on data that are a decade old can potentially be problematic. A cross-sectional survey is a snapshot in time with the ability to provide insights into the relationship between different constructs (Spector, 2019). It is possible that instructional methods and participation in TL has changed in the past decade. However, examination of the recent publication of several high-quality literature reviews in TL (Nguyen et al., 2020; Schott et al., 2020; Wenner & Campbell, 2017), there does not appear to be any evidence this is the case. As far as we are aware, the S4 provides the only large-scale, national database that contains data on both instructional practices and participation in TL. Even with these potential limitations, this dataset provides a unique opportunity to explore unanswered questions in the TL literature.

Discussion

Teacher leadership has been identified as a requirement for schools to run effectively and to support student learning (Nguyen et al., 2020). However, there is still a need for research into who becomes a teacher leader and how those individuals teach. Teacher leaders cross boundaries

by taking on leadership positions while remaining in the classroom (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001; Wenner & Campbell, 2017). Data from the S4 survey provide a unique opportunity to examine the practices of teachers who remain in the classroom while also taking on leadership roles in their schools. These data present surprising and illuminating results. Specifically, we had three main findings: the high prevalence of TL positions, patterns of TL uptake, and a clear picture of teacher leaders' instructional practices.

In this sample of over 6,000 teachers, over 91% of respondents indicated that they were involved in TL. The vast majority of secondary social studies teachers see themselves as lead curriculum specialists (82.7%). Meanwhile, 68% of participants responded that they were department leads or department chairs followed by holding school/district wide committees or task forces (46.3%). As research indicates, there are personal benefits to becoming a teacher leader (Beachum & Dentith, 2004; Hunzicker, 2012), this could be a positive outcome. However, because the survey instrument did not define "lead curriculum specialist," it was up to the interpretation of the respondents. Meanwhile, teachers' participation in TL may not lead to changes in their identities as teacher leaders. Teachers' conceptions of themselves as leaders is gradual (Hunzicker, 2012) and simply because teachers are doing the work of TL does not indicate that teachers are embracing TL. Further work in this area is necessary to understand how teachers understand their roles both formally and informally as teacher leaders (York-Barr & Duke, 2004).

The data explored in this study also show interesting patterns related to who is taking up TL positions. Across all the different TL positions, teachers identifying as male were more likely to take TL positions and experience was negatively related to all TL positions. However, there are differences between the TL positions. In many secondary schools, being a department chair,

along with being a formal mentor, is one of the few formal TL positions that identifies a teacher as a teacher leader (York-Barr & Duke, 2004). In this role, males were more likely than females to take TL positions, which corresponds to gender distribution among secondary school principals. While the numbers of female administrators has been growing (Sebastian & Moon, 2018), at the secondary level men still outnumber women in administrative positions (Tale et al., 2019). Additionally, less experienced teachers were more likely than more experienced teachers to take up these positions. However, for the lead curriculum specialist and school/district committee or task force, race and educational attainment were significant predictors. In these cases, African American and Latinx teachers are reporting more TL engagement than their White colleagues. Additionally, having a graduate degree was negatively related to holding TL positions in these areas. Overall, the survey data show a picture of teacher leaders as less experienced, less educated, and more frequently male. Teachers frequently enter the profession with high levels of motivation (Ponnock et al., 2018). However, these feelings of motivation and even teachers' own sense of self-efficacy may trail off later in their careers (Klassen & Chiu, 2010; Lauermann & Konig, 2016). These veteran teachers may represent an untapped resource of institutional and instructional knowledge in schools. Tapping into this pool of teachers for TL could be a way to both re-invigorate individual teaching careers and move instructional practices forward school-wide.

Meanwhile, while previous research has shown that teachers of color were hired and retained at lower rates than White teachers (D'Amico et al., 2017), data in this study indicate that African American and Latinx individuals are more likely than their white peers to take on TL positions. Retention of teachers of color continues to be a challenge in US schools (Bristol, 2018; Putman et al., 2016). Research does indicate that TL supports the retention of teachers (Berry et

al., 2010; Dauksas & White, 2010). TL might be one avenue towards increasing the retention of teachers of color. As Wenner and Campbell (2017) have noted, this is an area of TL research that needs further exploration.

   Instructional leadership has been identified as an important component of TL (Neumerski, 2012). The assumption is that individuals must be excellent teachers to become instructional leaders (Danielson, 2006). However, this has not been fully examined in the literature. This study shows that teacher leaders do teach differently than their peers. Leaders in all three TL positions examined in this study reported more frequent use of research-supported (van Hover & Hicks, 2017) progressive teaching practices. This is particularly important because teacher leaders often take on the role of instructional coach or mentor teacher (York-Barr & Duke, 2004) in which being an accomplished instructor should be a requirement of TL; however, there was a lack of empirical understanding if this was the case. While principals certainly can influence teacher instructional practice, this is often mediated through communities of teachers (Marzano et al., 2005; Robinson, 2007; Robinson et al., 2008). The most effective schools contain teachers operating in professional learning communities where teachers engage with each other as teacher leaders to improve instructional practice (Neumerski, 2012; Portin et al., 2013; Smith et al., 2016). Therefore it is important that principals who seek to fill formal TL positions be able to identify outstanding teachers. This is one of the first studies to demonstrate that teachers in TL positions are more frequently implementing desirable instructional methods.

   We recognize that TL is a stance and should be examined as a political act (Smulyan, 2016). TL should also be understood as an identity and not a set of specific behaviors in which teachers engage (Hunzicker, 2017). As the research in TL continues to evolve, it is important that this lens is used to understand and examine TL. However, it is also important to understand who

the teacher leaders are and how they approach their craft. Unfounded assumptions can be dangerous and we sought to illuminate the assumption that excellent teaching is a pre-requisite for taking on TL roles (Danielson, 2006) in this paper.

This study provides some promising conclusions about TL in the United States and pushes the field forward in understanding the nature of TL. There is some indication that TL positions may be open to racially diverse individuals. Additionally, the individuals who assume these roles appear to be the instructional models needed for the positions. However, continued research is required to better understand the intricacies of both the antecedents of TL and the instructional leadership these individuals can provide. TL has a significant influence on student learning (Ingersoll et al., 2017) and this research must be taken up in earnest to better understand how to foster and sustain teacher leaders.

References

Aliakbari, M., & Sadeghi, A. (2014). Iranian teachers' perceptions of teacher leadership practices in schools. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership, 42*(4), 576–592. http://doi.org/10.1177/1741143213510500

Ainley, J., & Carstens, R. (2018). *Teaching and learning international survey (TALIS) 2018 conceptual framework: OECD education working papers*. OECD. https://doi.org/10.1787/799337

Angelle, P., & Teague, G. M. (2014). Teacher leadership and collective efficacy: Teacher perceptions in three U.S. school districts. *Journal of Educational Administration, 52*(6), 738-753.

Author (2018).

Author (2021).

Author (forthcoming).

Bardo, N. (2018). Developing global perspectives in the social studies: Three cross-cultural simulations. *Oregon Journal of the Social Studies, 6*(1), 43-54.

Beachum, F., & Dentith, A. M. (2004). Teacher leaders creating culture of school renewal and transformation. *Educational Forum, 68,* 276-286. http://doi.org/10.1080/00131720408984639

Berry, B., Daughtrey, A., & Wieder, A. (2010). *Teacher leadership: Leading the way to effective teaching and learning*. Center for Teaching Quality.

Boyd, D. J., Grossman, P. L., Lankford, H., Loeb, S., & Wyckoff, J. (2006). How changes in entry requirements alter the teacher workforce and affect student achievement. *Education Finance and Policy, 1*(2), 176-216. http://doi.org/10.1162/edfp.2006.1.2.176

Boyd, D. J., Lankford, H. Loeb, S., Rockoff, J., & Wyckoff, J. (2008). The narrowing gap in

New York City teacher qualifications and its implications for student achievement in

high-poverty schools. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management, 27*(4), 793-818,

http://doi.org/10.1002/pam.20377

Bransford, J. D., Brown, A. L., & Cocking, R. R. (2001). *How people learn: Brain, mind,*

experience, and school. National Academy Press.

Brown, T. A. (2006). *Confirmatory factor analysis for applied research.* Guilford Press.

Clotfelter, C. T., Ladd, H. F., & Vidgor, J. L. (2011). Teacher mobility, school segregation, and

pay-based policies to level the playing field. *Education Finance and Policy, 6*(3), 399-

438. https://doi.org/10.1162/EDFP_a_00040

Cooper, K. S., Stanulis, R. N., Brondyk, S. K., Hamilton, E. R., Macaluso, M., & Meier, J. A.

(2016). The teacher leadership process: Attempting change within embedded systems.

Journal of Educational Change, 17(1), 85–113.

http://doi.org/10.1007/s10833-015-9262-4

Danielson, C. (2006) *Teacher leadership that strengthens professional practice.* ASCD.

Dauksas, L., & White, J. (2010). Should I stay or should I go? How teacher leadership can

improve teacher retention. *AASA Journal of Scholarship and Practice, 7*(2), 27-32.

D'Amico, D., Pawlewicz, R. J., Earley, P. M., & McGeehan, A. P. (2017). Where are all the

black teachers? Discrimination in the teacher labor market. *Harvard Educational Review*,

87(1), 26-49.

Dinger, M. (2017). Arguing for democracy: A multimodal approach to argumentative writing

instruction in the social studies classroom. *The Social Studies, 108*(3), 111-119.

https://doi.org/10.1080/00377996.2017.1324393

Estes, T. H., Mintz, S. L., & Gunter, M. A. (2011). *Instruction: A models approach, 6th ed.*

    Pearson.

Fitchett, P. G., & Vanfossen, P. J. (2013). Survey on the Status of the Social Studies:

    Development and analysis. *Social Studies Research and Practice, 8*(1), 1-23.

Frost, D. & Harris, A. (2003). Teacher leadership: Towards a research agenda. *Cambridge*

    Journal of Education, 33(3), 479-498. https://doi.org/10.1080/0305764032000122078

Graham, S., Kiuhara, S. A., & MacKay, M. (2020). The effects of writing on learning in

    science, social studies, and mathematics: A meta-analysis. *Review of Educational*

    Research, 90(2), 179-226. https://doi.org/10.3102%2F0034654320914744

Goldhaber, D. (2008). Teachers matter, but effective teacher quality policies are elusive. In H. F.

    Ladd & E. B. Fiske (Eds.), *Handbook of research in education finance and policy* (pp.

    146-182). Routledge.

Goldhaber, D. Lavery, L., & Theobald, R. (2015). Uneven playing field? Assessing the teacher

    quality gap between advantaged and disadvantaged students. *Educational Researcher,*

    44(5), 293-307. http://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X15592622

Handler, B. (2010). Teacher as curriculum leader: A consideration of the appropriateness of that

    role assignment to classroom-based practitioners. *International Journal of Teacher*

    Leadership, 3(3), 32-42. http://www.csupomona.edu/ijtl

Harrison, C., & Killion, J. (2007). Ten roles for teacher leaders. *Educational Leadership, 65*(1),

    74-77.

Hartshorne, R., Waring, S. M., & Okraski, H. (2019). Developing well-informed, critically

    thinking, and active citizens through the connection of modeling & simulation and social

studies. *The Clearing House: A Journal of Educational Strategies, Issues, and Ideas, 92*(1-2), 48-52. https://doi.org/10.1080/00098655.2019.1571988

Holzberger, D., Phillip, A., & Kunter, M. (2013). How teachers' self-efficacy is related to instructional quality: A longitudinal analysis. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 105*(3), 774e786. https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/a0032198.

Hoyer, J. (2020). Out of the archives and into the streets: Teaching with primary sources to cultivate civic engagement. *7*(9), 1-16. https://elischolar.library.yale.edu/jcas/vol7/iss1/9

Huang, F. L., & Moon, T. R. (2009). Is experience the best teacher? A multilevel analysis of teacher characteristics and student achievement in low performing schools. *Educational Assessment, Evaluation and Accountability, 21*(3), 209-234.
http://doi.org/10.1007/s11092-009-9074-2

Huang, T. (2016). Linking the private and public: Teacher leadership and teacher education in the reflexive modernity. *European Journal of Teacher Education, 39*(2), 222–237.
https://doi.org/10.1080/02619768.2015.1116512

Hunzicker, J. (2012). Professional development and job-embedded collaboration: How teachers learn to exercise leadership. *Professional Development in Education, 38*, 267–289.
http://doi.org/10.1080/19415257.2012.657870

Hunzicker, J. (2017). From teacher to teacher leader: A conceptual model. *International Journal of Teacher Leadership, 8*(2), 1-27.

Ingersoll, R. M., Dougherty, P., & Sirinides, P. (2017). *School leadership counts.* New Teacher Center. http://info.newteachercenter.org/school-leadership-report

Kılınç, A. Ç., Cemaloğlu, N., & Savaş, G. (2015). The relationship between teacher leadership, teacher professionalism, and perceived stress. *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research, 58*, 1-26. http://dx.doi.org/10.14689/ejer.2015.58.5

Klassen, R. M. & Chiu, M. M. (2010). Effects on teachers' self-efficacy and job satisfaction: Teacher gender, years of experience, and job stress. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 102*(3), 741-756. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0019237

Johnson, S. M., Reinhorn, S. K., Charner-Laird, M., Kraft, M. A., Ng, M., & Papay, J. P. (2014). Ready to lead, but how? Teachers' experiences in high-poverty urban schools. *Teachers College Record, 116*(10), 1-50.

Korpershoek, H., Harms, T., & de Boer, H. (2016). A meta-analysis of the effects of classroom management strategies and classroom management programs on students' academic, behavioral, emotional, and motivational outcomes. *Review of Educational Research, 86*(3), 643-680. https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654315626799

Ladd, H. F. (2008). Teacher effects: What do we know? In G. Duncan & J. Spillane (Eds.) *Teacher quality: Broadening and deepening the debate*, (pp. 3-26). Northwestern University.

Lauermann, F., & Konig, J. (2016). Teachers' professional competence and wellbeing: Understanding the links between general pedagogical knowledge, self-efficacy and burnout. *Learning and Instruction, 45*, 9-19. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.learninstruc.2016.06.006

Leithwood, K., Louis, K. S., Anderson, S., & Wahlstrom, K. (2004). *Review of research: How leadership influences student learning.* Wallace Foundation.

Lotter, C., Yow, J. A., Lee, M., Zeis, J. G., Irvin, M. J. (2020). Rural teacher leadership in

science and mathematics. *School Science and Mathematics, 120,* 29-44.

doi:10.1111/ssm.12383

Lukacs, K. S., & Galluzzo, G. R. (2014). Beyond empty vessels and bridges: Toward defining

teachers as the agents of school change. *Teacher Development, 18*(1), 100-106.

http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13664530.2013.856338

Marzano, R. J., Pickering, D. J., & Pollock, J. E. (2001). *Classroom instruction that works:*

Research-based strategies for increasing student achievement. ASCD.

Marzano, R. J., Waters, T., & McNulty, B. (2005). *School leadership that works: From research*

to results. ASCD and McREL.

Morowski, D. L., & McCormick, T. M. (2017). Did it count? Preservice teachers' reflections on

teaching with primary sources. *Social Studies Research and Practice, 12*(3), 280-294.

https://doi.org/10.1108/SSRP-05-2017-0020

Murphy, J. 2005. *Connecting leadership and school improvement.* Corwin Press.

Neumerski, C. M. (2012). Rethinking instructional leadership, a review: What do we know about

principal, teacher, and coach instructional leadership, and where should we go from here?

Educational Administration Quarterly, 49(2), 310-347.

http://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X12456700

Nguyen, D., Harris, A., & Ng, D. (2020). A review of the empirical research on teacher

leadership (2003-2017): Evidence, patterns, and implications. *Journal of Educational*

Administration, 58(1), http://doi.org/10.1108/JEA-02-2018-0023

Nickerson, S. D., Vaughn, M., Lamb, L., Ross, D., Philip, R., LaRochelle, R., & Williams, K. S. (2018). A model for selecting exemplary mathematics and science teacher leaders. *Journal of School Administration Research and Development, 3*(1), 67-73.

Patterson, N., Weaver, J., Fletcher, J., Connor, B., Thomas, A., & Ross, C. (2017). Leveraging literacies through collaborative, source-based planning and teaching in social studies and language arts. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 61*(5), 523-532. http://doi.org/10.1002/jaal.712

Pedhazur, E. J. (1997). *Multiple regression in behavioral research, 3rd ed.* Wadsworth.

Piper, K., & Neufeld-Kaiser, J. (2018). Knowledge in action: Social studies simulations as project-based learning. *Social Education, 82*(1), 30-34.

Ponnock, A. R., Torsney, B. M., & Lombardi, D. (2018). Motivational differences throughout teachers' preparation and career. *New Waves in Educational Research and Development, 21*(2), 26-45.

Portin, B. S., Russell, F. A., Samuelson, C., & Knapp, M. S. (2013). Leading learning-focused teacher leadership in urban high schools. *Journal of School Leadership, 23*, 220-252.

Putman, H., Hansen, M., Walsh, K., & Quintero, D. (2016). *High hopes and harsh realities: The real challenges to building a diverse workforce.* Brown Center on Education Policy at Brookings. https://www.brookings.edu/research/high-hopes-and-harsh-realities-the-real-challenges-to-building-a-diverse-teacher-workforce/

Robinson, V. (2007). *School leadership and student outcomes: Identifying what works and why*. Australian Council for Educational Leaders Monograph No. 41.

Robinson, V., Lloyd, C., & Rowe, K. (2008). The Impact of leadership on student outcomes: An analysis of the differential effects of leadership types. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 44*(5), 564–588. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X08321509

Schott, C., van Roekel, H., & Tummers, L. G. (2020). Teacher leadership: A systematic review, methodological quality assessment and conceptual framework. *Educational Research Reviews, 31*, 1-24. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2020.100352

Searby, L., Browne-Ferrigno, T., & Wang, C. H. (2017). Assistant principals: Their readiness as instructional leaders. *Leadership and Policy in Schools, 16*(3), 397–430. https://doi.org/10.1080/15700763.2016.1197281

Sebastian, J. & Moon, J-M. (2018). Gender differences in participatory leadership: An examination of principals' time spent working with others. *International Journal of Education Policy and Leadership, 12*(8). http://journals.sfu.ca/ijepl/index.php/ijepl/article/view/792

Smith, P. S., Hayes, M. L., & Lyons, K. M. (2016). The ecology of instructional teacher leadership. *The Journal of Mathematical Behavior, 46*, 267-288.

Spector, P. E. (2019). Do not cross me: Optimizing the use of cross-sectional designs. *Journal of Business and Psychology, 34*, 125-137. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10869-018-09613-8

Szeto, E., & Cheng, A. Y. N. (2018). Principal–teacher interactions and teacher leadership development: Beginning teachers' perspectives. *International Journal of Leadership in Education, 21*(3), 363–379. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603124.2016.1274785

Tale, S., Goldring, R., & Spiegelman, M. (2019). *Characteristics of public and private elementary and secondary school principals in the United States: Results from the 2017-2018 National Teacher and Principal Survey*. National Center for Educational Statistics.

Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium (2011). *Teacher leader model standards.* Author.

Tsai, K. C. (2015). A preliminary meta-analysis of teacher leadership. *Journal of Education and Literature, 3*(3), 131-137.

van Hover, S., & Hicks, D. (2017). Social constructivism and student learning in social studies. In M. M. Manfra & C. M. Bolick (Eds.) *The Wiley handbook of social studies research,* (pp. 270-286). Wiley Blackwell.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of the higher psychological processes.* Harvard University Press.

Wenner, J. A., & Campbell, T. (2017). The theoretical and empirical basis of teacher leadership: A review of the literature. *Review of Educational Research, 87*(1), 134-171. http://doi.org/10.3102/0034654316653478

Wissinger, D. R. & De La Paz, S. (2020). Effects of discipline-specific strategy instruction on historical writing growth of students with writing difficulties. *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 53*(3), 199-212. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0022219420904343

York-Barr, J., & Duke, K. (2004). What do we know about teacher leadership? Findings from two decades of scholarship. *Review of Educational Research, 74*(3), 255-316.

Tables and Figures

Table 1
Demographic Profile of Participants

Characteristics	% Indicating Yes
Race/Ethnicity	
American Indian	0.9
Asian/Asian American	0.4
African American	3.8
Latinx	2.1
White	87.9
Missing	4.9
Highest Degree	
Bachelor's	35.4
Master's	59.8
Doctoral	3.4
Gender Identity	
Male	43.4
Female	54.6
Other/Missing	1.9
School Demographics	
High-income	1.8
Upper Middle	12.4
Middle	31.7
Lower Middle	33.2
Lower	19.1

Table 2

CFA for Instructional Strategies

Instructional Strategy	Factor Loadings	
	Traditional Factor α = .429	Progressive Factor α = .673
Cooperative Learning		.615
Textbook-based Worksheets	.742	
Lecture	.429	
Group Projects		.713
Computer-based Activities	.518	
Watch Videos/Films	.442	
Answer Questions/Define Terms from Textbook	.747	
Role Play/Simulations		.682
Examine Primary Sources		.569
Engage in Writing		.569

Table 3

Amount of TL Positions

Number of Positions	% Yes	% No
0	8.8	91.2
1	20.3	79.7
2	35.7	64.3
3	35.2	64.8

Table 4

Logistic Regression Results Examining Predictors of TL Positions

Predictor Variables	TL Position β*	Exp(β)	Sig	Department Chair β*	Exp(β)	Sig	Curriculum Specialist β*	Exp(β)	Sig	District Taskforce β*	Exp(β)	Sig
Years of Teaching Experience	-.023	.978	<.001	-.030	.971	<.001	-.016	.984	<.001	-.005	.995	.067
Gender (comparison = Female)	.158	1.171	.087	.175	1.192	.002	.126	1.134	.066	.259	1.296	<.001
Race (comparison = White)												
• American Indian/Alaska Native	-.398	.672	.366	.051	1.053	.866	-.641	.527	.044	.010	1.010	.970
• Asian/Pacific	-.510	.600	.349	.375	1.456	.391	-.330	.719	.451	.228	1.257	.548
• Black/African American	.178	1.195	.489	.027	1.027	.852	.416	1.516	.040	.520	1.682	<.001
• Latin American/Hispanic	.315	1.370	.393	.073	1.075	.709	.178	1.195	.479	.589	1.803	<.001
Degree (comparison = Bachelor's)												
• Master's Degree	-.408	.665	<.001	-.097	.907	.097	-.533	.587	<.001	-.273	.761	<.001
• Doctorate Degree	-.726	.484	<.001	-.237	.789	.113	-.868	.420	<.001	-.203	.816	.155
					Model Statistics							
χ^2	58.789	<.001		142.701	<.001		104.243	<.001		83.632	<.001	
Nagelkerke R^2	.021			.031			.028			.018		
Classification % Overall	91.300			67.700			82.800			56.000		

*Unstandardized Betas

Table 5

Regression Results of Association of TL Positions with Instructional Methods along with Personal and School Characteristics

Predictor Variables	Department Chair			Lead Curriculum Specialist			School-wide/District Committee or Task Force		
	β	Std. Error	Sig.	β	Std. Error	Sig.	β	Std. Error	Sig.
Gender (comparison = Female)	.075	.015	< .001	.077	.014	< .001	.069	.015	< .001
Race (comparison = White)									
• American Indian/Alaska Native	-.045	.076	.550	-.019	.076	.800	-.043	.076	.572
• Asian/Pacific	.041	.113	.714	.047	.112	.677	.037	.112	.740
• Black/African American	-.125	.039	.001	-.145	.038	< .001	-.144	.039	< .001
• Latin American/Hispanic	-.025	.049	.612	-.027	.049	.583	-.041	.049	.408
Education (comparison = Bachelor's)									
• Master's Degree	-.076	.015	< .001	-.065	.015	< .001	-.072	.015	< .001
• Doctorate Degree	-.100	.041	.015	-.086	.041	.038	-.106	.041	.010
Teaching Experience	.005	.001	< .001	.005	.001	< .001	.005	.001	< .001
School SES	-.029	.008	< .001	-.019	.008	.020	-.025	.008	.002
Percent of Students Non-White	-.001	.000	.032	-.001	.000	.074	-.001	.000	.025
TL Position (see above)	.125	.016	< .001	.224	.019	< .001	.145	.014	< .001
	Model Statistics								
Final R	.177	< .001			.213	< .001		.195	< .001
Final Adjusted R²	.029	< .001			.043	< .001		.036	< .001
Final ΔR²	.031	< .001			.045	< .001		.038	< .001
Standard Error	.538	< .001			.535	< .001		.536	< .001
Final R	.177	< .001			.213	< .001		.195	< .001