

A CASE STUDY OF  
SCHOOL DISTRICT ADMINISTRATORS'  
PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHER LEADERSHIP  
IN ONE NORTHWEST MISSOURI SCHOOL DISTRICT

---

A Dissertation  
presented to  
the Faculty of the Graduate School  
at the University of Missouri-Columbia

---

In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Education

---

by  
DAWN SMITH  
Dr. Carole Edmonds, Dissertation Supervisor

JULY 2014

© Copyright by Dawn Smith 2014

All Rights Reserved

The undersigned, appointed by the dean of the Graduate School,  
have examined the dissertation entitled

A CASE STUDY OF  
SCHOOL DISTRICT ADMINISTRATORS'  
PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHER LEADERSHIP  
IN ONE NORTHWEST MISSOURI SCHOOL DISTRICT

presented by Dawn Smith,  
a candidate for the degree of Doctor of Education and  
hereby certify that, in their opinion, it is worthy of acceptance.

---

Dr. Carole Edmonds, Dissertation Supervisor

---

Dr. Tim Wall

---

Dr. William Hedge

---

Dr. Regina Knott

## DEDICATION

For the honor of my father,

Because of the love of my husband,

Due to the inspiration of my children,

From the encouragement of my students,

In memory of my mother...this is for you, Mom.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

After having spent almost 25 years in the classroom as a secondary English teacher, I decided to pursue a doctorate in something besides my content specialty. I chose this program thinking I would like to study leadership. Little did I know at the beginning, I would only get two semesters to focus solely on the program. By the spring of 2012, I received a diagnosis of breast cancer that changed me, my life, and the lens I now use to understand leadership.

My best friend EVER, Luanne, taught me leadership is encouragement. Lady, we have cried in each other's arms, laughed at ourselves, encouraged each other, gotten lost and found our way home. Here's to "getting through the valley" in one piece, better and stronger than before. I could not have done this without you!

More best friends EVER, Chris and Marcia, taught me leadership is friendship. Chris, who drops everything for over a YEAR to get me through?! Who goes to every doctor's appointment every Friday?! Who laughs, prays, cries and gets angry on my behalf and then shares the joys, too?! Who has sustained me and loved me through it all?! Marcia, who remembers to call and pray and make music CDs and comes over EVERY time I needed you?! I love you both so much. This victory is God's, yours and mine!

My great friend, Jason, taught me leadership is compassion through numerous conversations about faith and life. Buddy, you are already a GREAT leader because you care so much about others...and it shows. This degree just puts letters behind your name!

My family taught me leadership is love. To my amazing sons, Fletcher and Mitchell, thank you, boys for showing me how to really live! You two have been a joy

since the days you were born! I want to be just like the two of you when I grow up. Fletcher, I am so proud of who you are. It is so awesome to talk with you and hear your joy at getting to do what you love in life. Mitchell, you make me laugh and enjoy life more than anyone I know. You keep our family connected and centered. Never forget you already know what is important in life and what is not.

My husband Jeff of 25 years has taught me leadership is perseverance. He is truly the best person I know. He still loves, laughs, and talks with me after all this time. Jeff, I knew I was going to marry you the first second I laid eyes on you. There for a while I was not sure if I would make it...but you always said I would. And I did. You are home. Here's to the future, babe!

My professors taught me leadership is kindness. Dr. Edmonds and all her cards and prayers sustained me. I love ya, Doc. E! Dr. Messner sent flowers upon hearing about my illness. Dr. Placier set up a room for me to nap in if I got too tired. I cannot sing all of your praises enough. Every one of you made it possible for me to continue in this program. I will never forget that.

My ELA department, my school family, and the students at my school taught me leadership is laughter. You all kept me going. You are and continue to be my motivation and inspiration! To "the VICKIES"...thank you for yoga, wisdom, rosaries and phone calls.

My parents, Charlene, and Kenneth taught me leadership is faith. Mom, I wish you could be here to see me walk across that stage...Dad, if it were not for you, I would have lost my mind this last year. You are the heart of our family. Thank you for your daily phone calls. I know you never doubted I would "survive and thrive!" Mom always said,

“Everything will be fine.” And it is.

My godfather, Kane (Yes, I really have one and he is the original bad-ass!) taught me leadership is choosing to understand life differently and having the courage to live out that understanding. Thank you for helping to raise me and instill in me family is what matters most. You are always right. There, it is official! You have many godchildren...but only one with a doctorate, so that makes me the favorite. I love you.

Finally, I need to thank God. He taught me over this last year leadership is about grace, mercy, empathy, forgiveness, and hope.

“Shoshin” is a Buddhist term meaning “beginner’s mind.” According to Shunryu Suzuki, it means “In the beginner’s mind there are many possibilities, in the expert’s there are few.” I made it. I am here. I am so grateful. Here’s to all the possibilities!

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	ii
LIST OF TABLES.....	x
LIST OF FIGURES.....	xi
ABSTRACT.....	xii
1. INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY.....	1
Background	
Theoretical Framework	
<i>Researcher Paradigm</i>	
<i>Collective Leadership Theory</i>	
<i>Leadership Capacity</i>	
<i>Leader versus Manager: Leader</i>	
<i>Style Leadership Approach</i>	
Problem Statement	
Research Purpose	
Research Question	
Design and Methods	
Delimitations, limitations and Assumptions	
Significance of the Research for Teacher Leadership	
Summary	
2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE.....	21
Capacity Building: Principalship	
<i>Increasing complexities of the Principalship</i>	



*Roles & Responsibilities*

*Shortages*

*Succession Issues*

Definition of Key Terms

Capacity Building: Teacher Leadership

Manager versus Leader: Manager

*Definition*

*False Definition*

Style Leadership

*Cultivating Teacher Leadership*

*Ways to Sustain Teacher Leadership*

Summary

3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY.....42

Purpose

Research Question

Design for the Study

*Participants and Sampling Procedures*

*Data Collection*

Data Collection Procedures

Interviews

Style Questionnaire

Unobtrusive Data

Human Subjects Protection and Other Ethical Considerations

	<i>Data Analysis</i>	
	<i>Role of the Researcher</i>	
	<i>Trustworthiness</i>	
	Credibility, Dependability, Transferability, and Confirmability	
	Delimitations, limitations and Assumptions	
	Summary	
4.	RESULTS OF THE STUDY.....	57
	Setting for the Case Study	
	Description of Participants	
	<i>Veterans and Mid-Career Administrators</i>	
	<i>Transitional Administrators</i>	
	Interview Setting	
	Interviews and Focus Group	
	Data Analysis	
	Findings from the Data	
	Theme One: Impact of Length of Service	
	Theme Two: Capacity Building	
	<i>Opportunities: Power can be shared</i>	
	<i>Obstacles: Power cannot be shared</i>	
	Theme Three: Leaders versus Managers	
	<i>Culture: Process</i>	
	<i>Culture: Product</i>	
	Themes Four: Style Leadership	

*In command but not in control*

*In control but not in command*

Theme Five: Style Questionnaire

Summary

5. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS OF FINDINGS.....83

Collective Leadership

*Definition of Teacher Leader*

*Cultivating Teacher Leaders*

*Sustaining Teacher Leaders*

Capacity Building

*Opportunities: Power can be shared*

*Obstacles: Power cannot be shared.*

Manager versus Leader

*Culture: Process*

*Culture: Product*

Style Leadership Approach

*In command but not in control*

*In control but not in command*

Style Questionnaire

*Relationship*

*Task*

Implications for Practice

Implications for Future Research

Conclusion	
REFERENCES.....	103
APPENDIXES.....	115
A.    REQUEST OF DISTRICT	
B.    DISTRICT PERMISISON TO CONDUCT RESEARCH	
C.    LETTER TO ADMINSTRATORS	
D.    INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT	
E.    INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	
F.    QUESTIONNAIRE, INTERVIEW CONFIRMATION AND SURVEY	
EMAIL	
VITAE.....	123

## LIST OF TABLES

### TABLE

1. Participants characteristics.....	59
2. Findings by themes and subthemes.....	63
3. Participants results of Style Questionnaire.....	79
4. Interpretation of findings.....	85

## LIST OF FIGURES

### FIGURE

1. Flowchart of researcher's assumptions.....11
2. Researcher's concept map.....14
3. Network of findings.....64

A CASE STUDY OF  
SCHOOL DISTRICT ADMINISTRATORS'  
PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHER LEADERSHIP  
IN ONE NORTHWEST MISSOURI SCHOOL DISTRICT

Dawn M. Smith

Dr. Carole Edmonds, Dissertation Supervisor

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this qualitative, case study was to gain insight of Administrators' perceptions of teacher leadership in one Northwest Missouri school district. While a well-developed base of literature continues to grow on the topic of teacher leadership, it remains largely an academic pursuit hindered by the status quo of the traditional hierarchical leadership structures in most schools. As an entity, education, seems to have made the leap to issues surrounding teacher leadership without first understanding administrators' perceptions of it. Thus, we have a plethora of teacher leadership models. Many of these models have been put forth without ever having examined the underlying understanding of teacher leadership. Missing from an examination of teacher leadership are the perceptions of the very people who are most empowered to change how leadership is enacted in our schools: the administrators. As administrators' jobs continue to increase in complexity, as external mandates continue to dictate internal school issues, and as society continues to demand increased accountability, a new model of leadership needs to be put forth, but for that to happen, we first need to honestly examine existing perceptions of teacher leadership.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

According to the 2013 MetLife Survey of the American Teacher, the number of teachers who say they are very satisfied with teaching has dropped by 23% in just five years—from 62% in 2008 to 39% in 2013. The MetLife Survey also reports the national teacher turnover rate is 17% (Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, 2013). Studies continue to find half of all urban teachers leave the profession within the first three to five years (National Center for Education Statistics, 2008). Furthermore, a recent study from the New Teacher Project found half of all teachers in the top 20% of effectiveness leave within five years (New Teacher Project, 2012). However, according to that same MetLife Survey, 51% of teachers are interested in teaching part-time and combining teaching with another responsibility in their schools. This failure to understand what motivates teachers to remain in the profession is costing our schools billions of dollars and is negatively impacting student learning (Teoh & Coggins, 2013). We expect teachers to be experts in what motivates students but we have failed to ask the teachers what motivates them.

In his new book *Drive* (2011), Daniel Pink analyzes how modern research is taking a second look at what motivates people. Smart organizations are applying this research to increase employee satisfaction by reconfiguring how their organizations function to reflect this new knowledge. In the past, organizations largely followed a carrot and stick approach. However, this new concept of motivation reflects the theory “human beings have an innate inner drive to be autonomous, self-determined and connected to one another” (Pink, 2011 p. 71). Pink builds this new theory around three



themes of mastery, purpose, and autonomy. It is these same themes teachers report are what they need to remain in the profession. It is what the education profession needs to remain relevant. The teaching profession must embrace mastery or the matching of teachers' skills with the responsibilities of the job (Teoh & Coggins, 2013). In addition, reflecting the survey results, the profession must create opportunities for "teachers to stay in the classroom as they exert their leadership to improve the system" (Teoh & Coggins, 2013, p. 43). Finally, the profession must allow teachers to act "with choice-which means we can be both autonomous and happily interdependent with others" (Pink, 2009, p. 88).

The most powerful strategy for improving both teaching and learning is not achieved by micromanaging teachers or learners, but by fostering teacher leadership (Wallace Foundation, 2010). Engaging in such collective leadership creates a collaborative culture and causes collective responsibility (Dufour & Mattos, 2013). Many administrators might say they support teacher leadership, but in reality for a variety of reasons, they have relinquished little power to the teachers and so teacher leadership is still just another top-down initiative. Real teacher leadership allows teachers to truly share power (Gonzales & Lambert, 2001). Real teacher leadership allows for that mastery, purpose, and autonomy Daniel Pink claims is necessary for teacher motivation. True teacher leadership reflects collective leadership in the following ways: collective responsibility for student learning, shared teaching practices, transparency of results, critical conversations about pedagogical practices, and relevant professional development; not the workshop of the month approach (Louis & Wahlstrom, 2011). All of these factors are dependent on collective leadership (Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, &

Anderson, 2010) and result in higher levels of professional satisfaction, improved student achievement (Louis & Wahlstrom, 2011), and more teachers remaining in the profession (Johnson & Kardos, 2007). If collective leadership is the only type of leadership seeming to inculcate Daniel Pink's new components of motivation and if those theories seem to reflect teacher desires as indicated on the most recent MetLife Survey of the American Teacher, why are not more schools utilizing such collective leadership as shown through teacher leaders? What are the stumbling blocks to sharing leadership, to engaging in real distributed power, in order to give teachers more mastery, purpose, and autonomy?

Perhaps it has something to do with Roland Barth's "myth of presumed competence" which states "principals often feel the need to present an aura of confidence and act as though they know everything, even though everyone realizes this is far from true" (Hoerr, 2013, p. 86). Perhaps it also has something to do with the ever-increasing complexities of the principalship, which is causing high turnover in the position (Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, 2013). Perhaps it even has something to do with a lack of understanding about how to share power, to engage in collective leadership, due to a failure to have the conversation regarding, as Hoerr (2013) asks, "How much autonomy should I give teachers" (p. 86)? But perhaps, before all of those possibilities are explored, we should first ask what administrators really believe about this concept of teacher leadership. Failure to understand their perceptions of teacher leadership will continue to result in teachers' continued exodus from the classroom and administrators' continued exodus from the principalship. More importantly, if we keep losing seasoned veterans from our schools, our children's learning will continue to suffer.

## Background

The 21<sup>st</sup> century in education continues to be one of “a culture of change.” Changes continue in regards to teacher accountability, student achievement, and the curriculum taught; indeed the very way the day is structured at a high school and the way content is delivered. These changes are being dictated by everything from competition for funding to stagnant test scores. The goal of leadership is to *not only* meet the above challenges but to understand meeting those challenges requires sharing power and thus cultivating more effective leaders (Fullan, 2005). Leadership cannot only exist in the realm of what a person says they believe but rather in what they actually do and help others to do. Shoshin is a Buddhist term meaning “beginner’s mind.” According to Shunryu Suzuki, it means “In the beginner’s mind there are many possibilities, in the expert’s there are few” (Suzuki, 2006, p. 1). If public education is going to continue to be offered in this nation, perhaps we need to cultivate a “beginner’s mind” and pursue new possibilities of teacher leadership.

Schools are changing. They are becoming more complex organizations. As such, “everyone’s intelligence is needed to help the organization to flex, respond, regroup and retool” (Hargreaves & Fink, 2003, p. 10). In light of these increasing challenges, the role of the administrator continues to increase in complexity. In a 2013 MetLife Survey of 500 principals and 1,000 teachers, “almost half of the principals report that their daily stress levels are higher than just five years ago” (Harrison & Killion, 2007, p. 7). The belief principals should be held accountable for everything that happens in a school is contributing to this stress. In addition to new responsibilities, principals continue to assume the mantle of building leadership later and retire sooner, leaving a leadership gap

with one-third of principals stating they are likely to leave their positions in the next five years (Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, 2013). Finally, the revolving door of leadership due to a myriad of reasons: removing principals due to low test scores or reassigning effective principals to struggling schools also contributes to the complexity of the position (Fink & Brayman, 2006). In response to this, leadership in many schools is being redefined beyond the traditional model of building principal and vice principals to include teachers (Lambert, 2005). While there are many models of shared leadership occurring in schools such as instructional coaches, department chairs, grade level team leaders, and program administrators, these roles still largely function as managerial roles and not leadership roles (Beauchum & Dentith, 2004). However, these current models of promoting teachers to roles of leadership, with all the responsibility, little training and no authority are fundamentally different than understanding and cultivating authentic teacher leadership (Fink & Brayman, 2006). Real power is still largely concentrated in the hands of building administration; while responsibilities have increased, authority has not (Gonzales & Lambert, 2001). A true understanding of teacher leadership shares power so everyone and anyone in a building at any time can function as a leader (Sergiovanni, 2000). Research in this area focuses mainly on what teacher leaders think about their experiences but rarely focuses on what principals perceive about teacher leadership; how they cultivate and sustain it (Wright, 2008). For teacher leadership, schools, and thus students to thrive, a new understanding of the teacher leadership must emerge and thus a new leadership model in support of it must emerge.

### **Theoretical Framework Guiding Study**

A theoretical framework is the theory used to guide a researcher's inquiry. A set of ideas used to organize the research, it includes the research question, the literature review, the methods, data collection and analysis (Creswell, 2009). Within these frameworks was the social constructivist research paradigm in a phenomenological study. Guiding this study was the theory of collective leadership with the underlying concepts of capacity building, manager versus leader and style leadership.

### **Research Paradigm**

This phenomenological study utilized the social constructivists' worldview, as the intent was "to make sense of (interpret) the meanings others have" (Creswell, 2009, p. 8). The goal of this type of research is to "rely as much as possible on the participants' views of the situation being studied" (Creswell, 2009, p. 8). Thus, the researcher utilized an interview protocol with open-ended questions to allow participants to share their "meaning of the situation" (Creswell, 2009, p. 8). The researcher understood to expect complexity of views as participants have subjective, varied, and multiple meanings of their experiences (Creswell, 2009).

### **Collective leadership**

The theoretical framework guiding this study was the theory of collective leadership. Collective leadership is leadership in which "employees are actively involved in [making] organizational decisions" (Miller & Rowan, 2006, pp. 219-220). Collective leadership sees everyone as a possible leader and is reflective of Bolman and Deal's (2008) "all-channel network" (p. 105) or Helgesen's "web of inclusion" (Bolman & Deal, 2008, pp. 86-87, 105). Collective leadership demonstrates the ability to "combine strong

leadership and strong management and use each to balance the other” (Kotter, 1990/2011, p. 37). Kotter defined leadership functions as establishing direction, aligning people, and motivating and inspiring (Kotter 1990/2011). A leader, according to Kotter’s (1990/2011) definition, is not someone who tries to solve every problem personally but rather someone who, “copes with change” (p. 38). A leader is someone who is involved in setting direction. As opposed to managers, this is what leaders do: set the vision. A teacher who is seen in a positive light is either tapped or volunteers for a position involving more of a leadership role. However, while the responsibility has increased, authority has not and real power is still largely concentrated in the hands of building administration. Further studies by Friedrich, Vessey, Schuelke, Ruark, and Mumford (2009) define collective leadership as leadership relying on the right person with the right skills to emerge as the situation warrants (Friedrich et al, 2009). Collective leadership is leadership which knows the difference between power over and power with other people (Chirichello, 2004). This type of leadership is focused on achieving the goals for the collective good. Under collective leadership, depending on who has the expertise during any given situation, a leader may become a follower and vice versa (Chirichello, 2004). Collective leadership has two premises: it is not just a top-down process between the formal leader and team members and there can be multiple leaders within a group. Collective leadership therefore allows for the sharing of the increasing complexities of principals by having teachers function not only as content specialists but also as leaders of the building invested with decision-making power. True teacher leadership and not just middle management of schools undertaken by teachers reflect this ebb and flow of the leadership role based on the needs of the group. In order for collective leadership to

work, everyone must believe the assumption of leadership in any given situation is not dependent on position but rather experience.

### **Leadership Capacity**

The first concept supporting the guiding theoretical framework was leadership capacity. Lambert (2003) proposed an alternative to building administrators trying to lead through positional power and that was to build “leadership capacity among all members of the school community” (p. 37). This capacity building is leading not due to position but through relationships, not through centralized power and authority but through collective power. By definition, leadership capacity is multi-faceted and results in “shared vision that brings about coherence” (Lambert, 2003, p. 425). In addition, roles and responsibilities are “collective and lead to collective responsibility” (Lambert, 2003, p. 425). Finally, building leadership capacity fosters self-organization. A high leadership capacity school, therefore, results in participation by many on behalf of many (Lambert, 2003).

### **Leaders versus Managers: Leader**

The second concept supporting the guiding theoretical framework was the difference between leaders and managers. Kotter defined leadership functions as establishing direction, aligning people, and motivating and inspiring (Kotter, 1990/2010). A leader is someone who is involved in setting direction and creating visions and strategies (Kotter, 1990/2010). According to Rost (1991) leadership involves a multidirectional influence relationship concerned with the process of developing mutual purposes (Kotter, 1990/2010). Zaleznik (1977) said leaders are concerned with changing the way people think about what is possible. As opposed to managers, this is what

leaders do: set the vision in a process where individuals influence other individuals to achieve a common goal. Collective leadership, by definition, unites individuals to achieve a goal regardless of their formal position.

According to Rooke and Torbert in their *Seven transformations of leadership*, a person practicing collective leadership is beyond functioning at the Achiever level where he “meets strategic goals; promotes teamwork; juggles managerial duties and responds to demands” (Rooke & Torbert, 2005/2011, p. 140). He is even beyond the Individualist level in which he “operates in unconventional ways” (Rooke & Torbert, 2005/2011, p. 140). Instead, due to the innate presence of Theory Y (McGregor, 1957/2011) in cultivating and sustaining teacher leadership, the collective leader has attained the level of Strategist or someone who is “highly collaborative; weaves vision with initiatives; and challenges existing assumptions” (Rooke & Torbert, 2005/2011, p. 140). Collective leadership demonstrates the ability to combine the best of both worlds: strong leadership with strong management (Kotter, 1990/2011).

### **Style Leadership Approach**

The third concept supporting the guiding theoretical framework was the style approach to leadership. The style approach provides a way to assess administrators’ perceptions of teacher leadership by analyzing the focus of both task and relationship tendencies of the administrators themselves. This approach reflects a shift in the study of leadership to “what leaders do *and* how they act” (Northouse, 2010, p. 69). Researchers at Ohio State University analyzed how individuals acted when leading a group. They identified “...two general types of leader behaviors: initiating structure and consideration” (Northouse, 2010, p. 70). The first behavior is essentially task behaviors

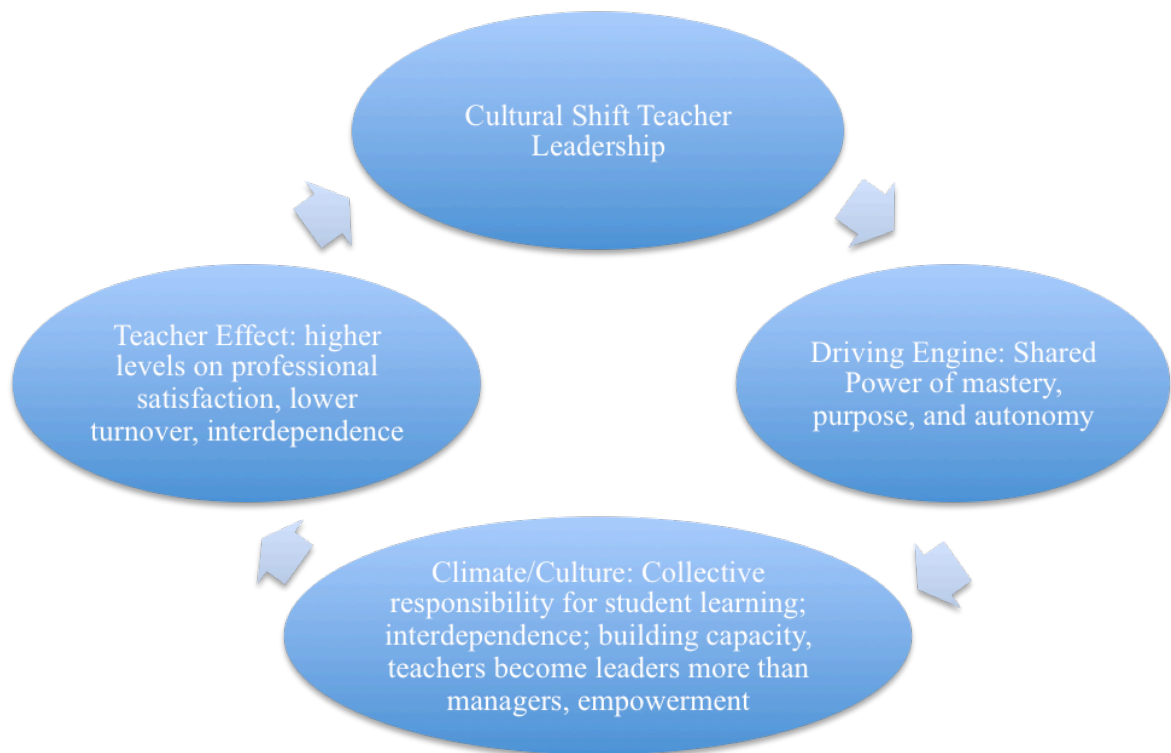


“...including organizing work, giving structure to the work context, defining role responsibilities, and scheduling work activities” (Northouse, 2010, p. 70). Consideration behaviors are those that focus on building relationships including building “camaraderie, respect, trust, and liking between leaders and followers” (Northouse, 2010, p. 70). The idea leadership can be distributed among many individuals, rather than reside in a single leader due mainly to position, has been labeled ‘organic’ leadership by Avery (2004). Organic leadership sees everyone as a possible leader and is more reflective of Bolman and Deal’s (2008) “all-channel network” (p. 105) or Helgesen’s “web of inclusion” (Bolman & Deal, 2008, pp. 86-87, 105). Under such a model, the work of the building is organized more like “reciprocal coupling – the members feed their work back and forth among themselves’ receiving inputs from and provides outputs to the others” (Mintzberg, 1979/2011, p. 225). A definition of such leadership by Miller and Rowan (2006) implies a restructuring of schools:

A shift away from hierarchical patterns of bureaucratic control toward what has been referred to as a network pattern of control, that is, control in which line employees are actively involved in organizational decisions, staff cooperation and collegiality supplant the hierarchy as a means of coordinating work flows and resolving technical uncertainties, and supportive forms of administrative leadership emerge to facilitate line employees’ work. (p. 219)

According to Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weber (2009), the most widely cited definition of this type of leadership is Pearce and Conger’s (2003) where they describe leadership as influence among individuals in groups in order achieve group goals. This influence process involves lateral influence and hierarchical influence (Pearce & Conger, 2003).

Empowering leadership has two premises: it is not necessarily just a top-down process between the formal leader and team members and there can be multiple leaders within a group (Mehra, Smith, Dixon, & Robertson, 2006). True teacher leadership and not just middle management of schools undertaken by teachers reflect this ebb and flow of the leadership role based on the needs of the group. The style approach supports both Kotter's definition of leadership as people who *interact* with others to get things accomplished and Zaleznik's (1977) work, which says that leaders "...are concerned with changing the way people think about what is possible" (Northouse, 2010, p.11).



*Figure 1.* Flow chart of researcher's assumptions concerning the cultural shift when teacher leadership is facilitated and sustained.

### **Problem Statement**

The complexity of the components for which principals have been responsible has increased exponentially in the last twenty years. As schools today provide more services for students than at any time in the past, administrators are overburdened by the many details surrounding instructional leadership, operational management, and accountability (Grubb & Flessa, 2006). Administrators express increasing anxiety about all of these roles and responsibilities (Goodwin, Cunningham, & Childress 2003). This along with the idea the building administrator as the sole leader and final decision maker for an entire building is contributing to the current leadership challenge in schools. In addition, if the administrator remains the only perceived leader in a school, other stakeholders may never develop the capacity to become involved partners in the success of a building. In response to this, research has centered on what teachers think about being teacher leaders; the challenges faced from colleagues; how they became a teacher leader and even models for teacher leadership. However, the majority of this existing research overlooks the voice of the principal. As a result, there is very little research regarding building principals perceptions of teacher leadership. Understanding teacher leadership from the administrators' perspective is critical for the 21<sup>st</sup> century school because how involved teachers are in building leadership is often an indicator of student achievement and building climate (Printy, 2008; Sergiovanni, 1998; Lambert, 2003).

### **Research Purpose**

The researcher's purpose was to explore building principals' perceptions of teacher leadership. As Wright (2008) stated, principals are rarely asked about their perceptions of teacher leadership. The researcher interviewed and surveyed nine building

principals in one school district from northwest Missouri. Building artifacts were also analyzed to better understand administrators' perceptions of teacher leadership. This study added and strengthened the body of literature on teacher leadership because it asked building principals to reflect on teacher leadership by deconstructing their own "conscious and unconscious beliefs" (Wright, 2008, pp. 26-27) regarding it. This study is significant because the reality of leadership is administrators determine the direction and type of leadership in a school. This study is also significant because it leads to the need for further study regarding what degree administrators "practice what they preach" in respect to teacher leadership, possible comparisons of districts that purport to robustly cultivate teacher leadership and provide evidence of the effectiveness of teacher leadership as measured through student achievement.

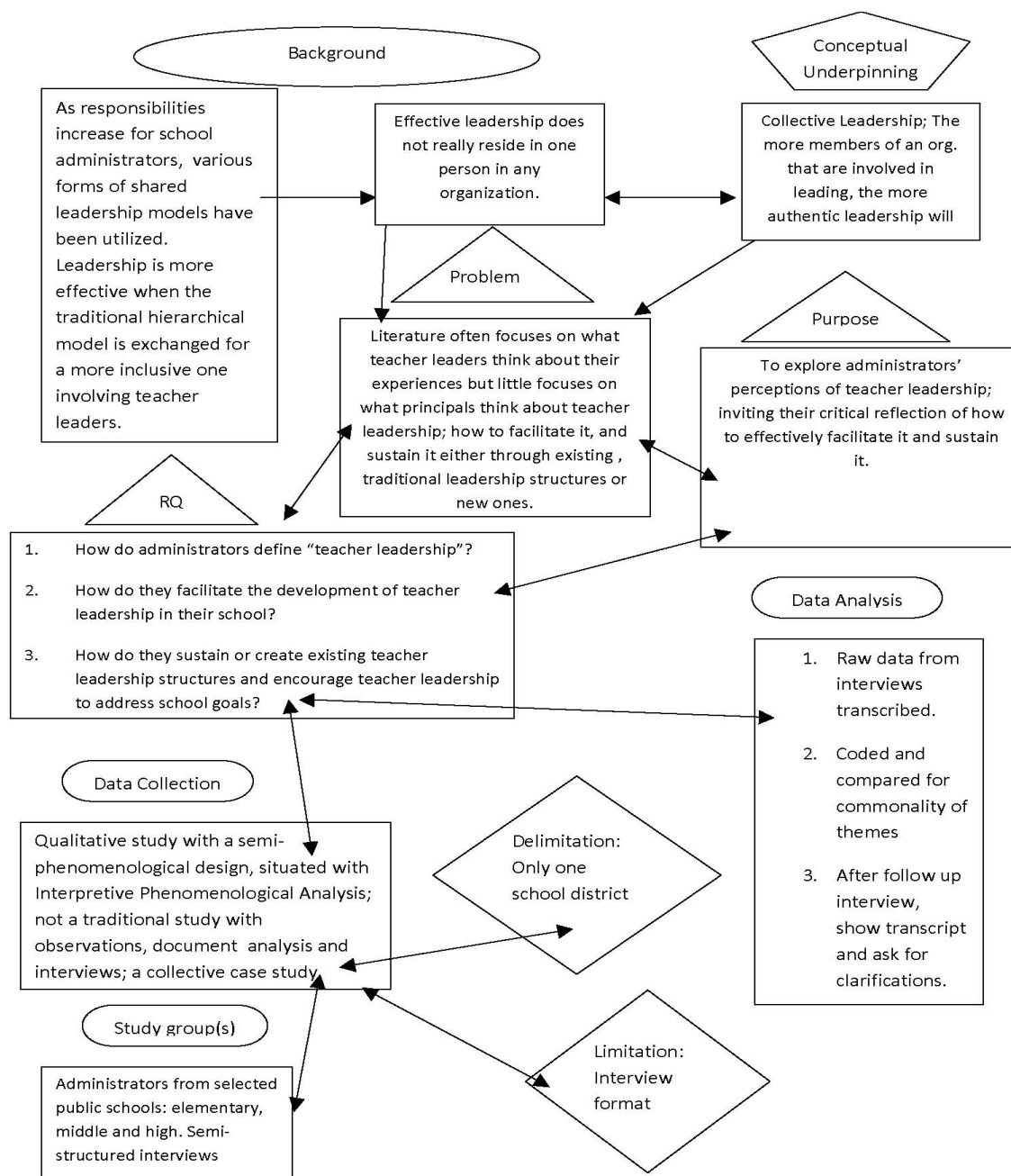


Figure 2. Researcher's concept map of administrators' perceptions of teacher leadership.

### Research Question

The guiding question for this research was: What perceptions do principals possess regarding teacher leadership? Other questions emerged from this one, centering on building administrators' knowledge of leadership theory in general and current

methods of teacher leadership specifically. After a review of literature, additional questions developed regarding what type of shared leadership building administrators most often executed, if any: managerial or decision-making, and whether or not they gave teachers the power that supports that leadership.

### **Design and Methods**

The design and methodology used to construct and guide this study was a social constructivist view, a qualitative methodology, and phenomenological approach to research utilizing a concurrent embedded approach. Social constructivists use a qualitative methodology because “the goal of the research is to rely as much as possible on the participants’ view of the situation being studied” (Creswell, 2009, p. 8). This researcher focused on building administrators’ perceptions of teacher leadership and how they cultivate it. As qualitative methodology inductively builds “from particulars to general themes” it allows the researcher to make “interpretations of the meaning of the data” (Creswell, 2009, p. 4). This interpretation allows for a wider basis for further research as indicative of a qualitative case study. The phenomenological research method was selected because the goal of understanding building administrators’ perceptions of teacher leadership reflects this method’s goal of identifying a firsthand experience of a phenomenon (Merriam, 1998). Looking at only building administrators’ perceptions of teacher leadership bound the study. Finally, the Style Questionnaire was administered in order to “collect both quantitative and qualitative data concurrently” (Creswell, 2009, p. 213) and compare the interview results with the survey responses.

The instrument used was a semi-structured interview (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009), the Style Questionnaire and artifact collection. Participants were contacted by the

researcher and asked to share their perceptions of teacher leadership. Data collection began with interviews using open-ended questions. As this type of research involves “data typically collected in the participant’s setting” (Creswell, 2009 p. 4), building administrators were also observed cultivating teacher leadership. The Style Questionnaire was administered to allow for comparison between interview responses and survey results. Follow up interviews with each administrator allowed for clarification of the original interview transcript (Stake, 2005). The researcher also collected artifacts from each building related to teacher leadership. Interview, survey results, and artifacts were triangulated using open and axial coding to identify emergent themes in order to understand building administrators’ perceptions of teacher leadership (Hatch, 2002).

### **Delimitations, limitations and Assumptions**

The study’s delimitations, limitations, and assumptions were addressed in this section. Delimitations are those things under the researcher’s control and narrow the scope of the study (Creswell, 2009). Limitations, out of the researcher’s control, served as future research. Assumptions of qualitative research and the researcher were explained.

#### **Delimitations**

A delimitation of this study was the decision to interview all nine administrators from one district. An additional delimitation was to conduct a phenomenological case study designed only to capture administrators’ perceptions, not causes.

**Limitations**

A limitation of this study was the administrators' qualifications to participate. As the case study was designed to explore the perceptions of building administrators' in one district there was no requirement beyond position and willingness to participate. Another limitation was to make sure not to oversimplify results leading to false conclusions or to generalize the results to all administrators' (Merriam, 1998).

**Assumptions**

Qualitative research "is a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem" (Creswell, 2009 p. 4). In so doing, the researcher began with some assumptions appropriate to their study. The first assumption made about the building administrators in this study was participants were honest regarding their perceptions of teacher leadership. As building administrators were being asked for their own understandings, positive and negative perceptions were equally anticipated. Understanding the concept of emergent design or "that the initial plan for research cannot be tightly prescribed, and all phases of the process may change or shift after the researcher enters the field and begins to collect data" (Creswell, 2009 p. 176) is critical to achieving this purpose. Therefore, a second assumption is artifacts in each building would exist supporting the principal's perceptions and cultivation of teacher leadership whatever that may be. Finally, emergent design allows for a focus on the subjects' realities about an issue verified by interview data (Creswell, 2009). This being true, it is a myth that qualitative researchers enter into data collection without any questions in mind (Hatch, 2002). On the contrary, the "tension between flexibility and structure" (Hatch, 2002, p. 37) is critical to an interview's success. Therefore, a third



assumption made concerns the purpose of qualitative research design, which is to learn about an issue from subjects (Creswell, 2009). Therefore no pattern of building principals' perceptions of teacher leadership was assumed.

### **Definition of Key Terms**

To better understand the parameters of this study, the following section includes operational definitions of key terms:

**Teacher leadership:** Teacher leadership is both the formal and informal opportunities teachers have to lead in both instructionally and professionally contexts.

**Leadership capacity:** This is defined as the skillful participation in leadership leading to sustainable school improvement (Lambert, 2005).

**Broad based participation:** These are the inclusive structures, which exist allowing different groups to participate and be heard (Lambert, 2005).

**Skillful:** This is the background knowledge and experience participants bring to their engagement in learning (Lambert, 2005). The work of leadership involves developing skills in “dialogue, inquiry, reflection, collaboration, facilitation and conflict resolution” (Lambert, 2005, p. 2).

### **Significance of the Study**

Asking building administrators to reflect on teacher leadership addresses a gap in the current research, which focuses primarily on teachers' perceptions of their leadership. This study is significant because it leads to the need for further study regarding what degree administrators “practice what they preach” in respect to teacher leadership, possible comparisons of districts that purport to robustly cultivate it and provide evidence of its effectiveness as measured through student achievement. How leadership is

perceived, what assumptions we hold about leadership, and how those assumptions impact leadership capacity form the context for teacher leadership.

### **Summary**

Cultivating and sustaining teacher leadership has many positive effects on a building. Building principals must, therefore, understand and cultivate leadership in order to create a culture where everyone, regardless of title or position engages in leadership together as a community (Lambert, 2005). While many studies have researched teacher leadership from the teachers' point of view, few have done so from the building principals' perception. This study fills the gap regarding this point of view and goes one step further by collecting the artifacts supporting the perceptions. The research design and method was a qualitative, phenomenological approach with a social constructivist paradigm utilizing a concurrent embedded approach. Participants were interviewed and surveyed to capture their perceptions regarding teacher leadership; data was coded and analyzed with the conceptual frameworks of capacity building, leader versus manager, and style leadership. Delimitations, limitations, and assumptions of the research were identified. In conclusion, the significance of the study was explained and suggestions for further research of building administrators' perceptions and cultivation of teacher leadership was proposed.

Chapter 1 covered the background of the issue under investigation, stated the problem, purpose of the study, and the research questions. In Chapter 2, the background and theories about teacher leadership will be presented, along with current literature regarding principals and leadership. Chapter 3 will provide a detailed discussion of the

methodology and procedures of the study. Chapters 4 and 5, respectively, will explain the findings and recommendations for further practice and research.

## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

In order to understand administrators' perceptions of teacher leadership, it is important to review the existing literature related to the topic of teacher leadership in general. It is critical to examine the problem of administrators' missing voices on the subject of teacher leadership and investigate administrators' perceptions of teacher leadership (if any) within the current literature. In addition, it is necessary to review the literature for themes relating to the research questions used in this study. This chapter will explore the literature in five main areas: (a) Increasing complexities of administrators' jobs, (b) Definitions of teacher leadership, (c) Potential of teacher leadership to effect change, (d) Ways teacher leadership is cultivated and (e) Ways teacher leadership is sustained. The literature review will use the theoretical framework of collective leadership theory and the three underlying concepts of capacity building, leader versus manager and style leadership as lenses by which the literature is interpreted.

#### **Capacity Building: The Principalship**

##### **Increasing Complexities**

Traditionally, the person responsible for student learning was the classroom teacher and the building administrator was responsible for everything else. As Roland Barth (2013) describes, "By and large, it was the teachers in one place and the principals in the other" (p. 10). In the current climate of accountability, however, those traditional roles have been expanded and now even cross lines. Furthermore, administrators are now expected to be team builders cultivating leadership in others in order to cause an upgrade in skills in addition to using data to drive that upgrade (Portin, 2009). Building

administrators are supposed to be instructional leaders and teachers are also supposed to be data analysts. Administrators are no longer expected to only handle parent phone calls; teachers are no longer only expected to teach their students. Due to such increasing complexities, job satisfaction is at an all time low among building administrators.

According to the 2013 MetLife Survey of the American teacher: Challenges for School Leadership, 75% of K-12 principals surveyed believe the job has become too complex.

Only 59% feel satisfied with their jobs. As the challenges for schools increase, both teachers and administrators have expressed the need for revisiting leadership practices in schools (Bunnell, 2008; Bedell & Burrello, 2006).

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

In addition to the traditional responsibilities for students, staff and structure, principals now cite responsibility for everything ranging from “addressing the individual needs of diverse learners to engaging the community in improving education” (Institute for Educational Leadership, 2000, p. 7). A study by Grubb and Flessa (2006) corroborates these findings with principals reporting responsibilities including everything from instructional leadership to improving student test scores; from disciplining students to hiring staff; from bus schedules to data teams. Principals are also finding themselves in a paradoxical position due to federal mandates such as No Child Left Behind and Race to the Top (DuFour & Mattos, 2013). Principals believe they are expected to improve student learning by implementing mandates that may not have been proven to effectively improve student achievement (DuFour & Mattos, 2013). As responsibilities increase, administrators can no longer be responsible for knowing it all, doing it all, leading it all.

The classic model of school leadership is the perception of principals as a top-down power figure (Bunnell, 2009). Effective leadership, however, does not reside in one person at the top of any organization, but rather effective leadership pervades the entire organization (Sergiovanni, 1998; Spillane, 2006). School leadership is more effective when the traditional hierarchical model is exchanged for a more inclusive one creating teacher leadership. In the most thorough research to date, York-Barr and Duke (2004) define teacher leaders as content specialists, citing teacher leadership as “leading among colleagues with a focus on instructional practice” (York-Barr & Duke, 2004, p. 261) who move that expertise outside of their classroom to influence other teachers and educational policy as a whole. Another definition involves the idea of collaboration (Fullan, 2005). Research continues to show teachers who collaborate meaningfully improve student achievement (Louis, et al., 2010). A third definition revolves around the teacher leader as a motivator for colleagues to change (Spillane, 2006). At the end of *Leading in a Culture of Change*, Fullan (2005) indicates hard to solve problems-their ambiguities and complexities-result in organizational coherence. On any given day, all that shows up are the hard to solve problems (Fullan, 2005). An effective organization cannot be improved only from the top down. People sharing power at all levels are the key component.

### **Shortages of Principals**

In addition to new responsibilities, the perception of the administrators’ role in a building continues to deteriorate. Gilman and Lanman-Givens (2001), Papa and Baxter (2005), Schutte and Hackman (2006) all found teachers holding negative connotations of the principalship; only 16% of them would like that role (Metropolitan Life Insurance

Company, 2013). Research by Gajda and Militello (2008) further reports “63% of principals indicated they expect to leave the occupation of school principal within the next five years” (p. 16). Another concern is principals seem to be choosing the job later in their careers. Papa and Baxter (2005) reported principals’ average age to be 53 years old in 2000 up from 43 years old in 1990. In their article, “Where Have All the Principals Gone?” Gilman & Lanman-Givens (2001) described what teachers stated were the reasons why they were not pursuing the principalship. The main reasons were a long certification process, lack of appreciation for the job, and too much stress and pressure (Gliman & Lanman-Givens, 2001). Therefore, principals are older when they begin, stay fewer years in the position and thus, have less time to become experienced in general. As those people retire and fewer teachers wish to assume the mantle of leadership, this has created a leadership gap.

### **Succession Issues**

Finally, the revolving door of leadership due to a myriad of reasons: removing principals due to low test scores or reassigning effective principals to struggling schools all ensure that most principals will “not see his/her first freshman class graduate” (Fuller, 2012). According to the Educational Research Service, almost 40% of principals will retire or leave the position before 2010, resulting in a catastrophic leadership gap (Ballek, O’Rourke, Provenzano & Bellamy, 2005). Fink and Bryman (2006) found several factors are negatively impacting the succession of principals: turnover and in district rotation; the challenge of federal reform mandates; and lack of mentoring of new principals. In the current climate of student accountability, district tendencies to rotate

principals based on test scores are contributing to the negative connotations of the position (Papa & Baxter, 2005).

As fewer teachers wish to move out of the classroom completely (Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, 2013), one way districts can deal with the increasing complexities of the job, a shortage of candidates, and high turnover is to build leadership capacity through teacher leadership. Cultivating and sustaining the leadership of teachers can help mitigate these issues because “In highly complex, knowledge-based organization, everyone’s intelligence is needed to help the organization to flex, respond, regroup and retool” (Hargreaves & Fink, 2003, p. 10).

### **Capacity Building: Teacher Leadership**

#### **Potential of teacher leadership to effect change**

According to a study by Seashore, Wahlstrom, Michlin, Gordon, and Leithwood (2010), teaching and leadership are the first two factors, in that order, positively impacting student learning. There are many problems teachers “are the most capable professionals to solve” (Sacks, 2012, p. 21). Cultivating and sustaining teacher leadership has many positive effects on a building. If allowed, teachers can have input into hiring decisions (Gabriel, 2005). They also are able, due to their position as organic leaders, foster a collegiality (Swanson, 2000) principals cannot. Schools in which teachers have legitimate control and influence report “fewer problems with student misbehavior, more collegiality and cooperation among teachers and administrators, more committed and engaged teaching staff and do a better job retaining their teachers” (Ingersoll, 2007, p. 22). According to research conducted by York-Barr and Duke (2004) in their study “What do we know about teacher leadership? Findings from two decades



of scholarship,” the work of teacher leaders results in creating positive learning relationships between teachers and improving curricular, instructional, and assessment practices resulting in more learning for students.

Effective teacher leadership is associated with improved instruction and increased student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2001). Teachers thrive and students learn when teachers are empowered for their knowledge and experience (Little, 1988). Given the opportunity, teachers can be the most powerful influence on other teachers’ practice (Darling-Hammond, 2001). Teacher leaders have earned the trust and respect of other teachers by staying “in the trenches” with them. Teacher leaders do not want responsibility for the building; they want to capitalize on their experience with curriculum and instruction. Furthermore, in this age of accountability “it is becoming more widely accepted that the success of school reforms will require teacher leaders who make their work public” (Margolis, 2012, p. 294). Research conducted by Joyce and Showers (2002) found one of the most important ways teachers can improve student achievement is to serve as instructional coaches for other teachers. Teachers can also serve as professional development leaders, addressing “the gritty realities” of the teaching experience (Margolis, 2012, p. 299). The only people in the school that can collaborate meaningfully on curriculum, assessment and professional development are the teachers! Thomas Hoerr writes in *Who Decides What?* “The more decisions teachers can make the better it is for everyone. Teachers are professional who know their curriculum and understand their students, and they need the autonomy to pursue the course that makes most sense to them...” (Hoerr, 2013, p. 86). Developing a hybrid career path allows for

the option of teaching students *and* teaching teachers and results in improved student achievement (Margolis, 2012).

According to Devaney (1987), teacher leaders can effect change by demonstrating leadership in the following areas: continuing to teach and improve their own teaching, organizing and leading peer review of school practice, participating productively in school-level decision making, organizing and leading professional development, coaching and assisting individual teachers in their pedagogical practice, and developing and participating in performance evaluation of teachers. Corroborating this research was that conducted by Hargreaves and Shirley (2009), who found all high performing school systems had the same attributes: well-educated work force, collaboration, autonomy, and professional responsibility.

How healthy the teacher leaders are in a building is often an indicator of the learning and progress of a building (Printy, 2008; Sergiovanni, 1998; Lambert, 2003). Twenty-three percent of teachers are interested in combining teaching with some sort of leadership position grounded in curriculum, assessment or professional development (Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, 2013). Like principals, teacher leaders cite the lack of time and “competing responsibilities” as “the greatest barrier to leadership” (Zinn, 1997, p. 11). If administrators are going to build leadership capacity among their teachers, they must address those concerns and provide strong support through their “presence, active participation and comments” (Margolis, 2012, p. 297).

## **Manager versus Leader**

### **Definitions of Teacher Leadership**

Definitions of teacher leadership reflect the shifting pendulum of leadership theory in general from top-down dictatorial hierarchies to all-inclusive flat organizations.

Several definitions of teacher leadership allude to this shift:

- Gardner (1995) proposed teacher leadership occurred first within the mind of individuals.
- Akerman, Donaldson, and Van Der Bogert (1996) stated leadership first required an individual to think and act like a leader.
- (Senge, Combron-McCabe, Dutton, & Kleiner, 2000) defined teacher leadership as Constructivist leadership, in which leadership was concerned with problem solving and learning rather than authority.
- Conzemious and O'Neill (2001) took the Constructivist theory further and wrote such leadership was concerned with the above in terms of the ability for an entire school to become focus on student learning.
- Spillane (2006) further shifted the definition to one of Distributed leadership in which the situation not the position causes the emergence of leadership skills and therefore anyone can be a leader at any given time.
- Margolis (2012) linked teacher leadership to influence finding teacher leaders if empowered can provide the necessary link between educational research and practice and policy.

Current definitions of teacher leadership continue to advance the focus from the individual to situations and now the interaction of stakeholders. Sheppard, Hurley, and

Dibbon, (2009) defines teacher leadership as leadership in which teachers are “viewed as partners and leadership is defined through the interaction of leaders, constituents, and situation” (p. 13) to influence the classroom next door, the building, the district and the profession as a whole.

### **False definition of teacher leadership: manager versus leader**

In order to build the leadership capacity necessary for teacher leadership, it is critical to understand what teacher leadership is *not* beginning with the differences between manager and leader. Teachers still largely fall under Kotter’s definition of managers. Kotter (1990/2011) defined management functions as planning and budgeting, organizing and staffing, controlling and problem solving. Most teachers spend the majority of their time functioning as a classroom manager. Traditionally, the main focus of a teacher is to function within the classroom as a content specialist bringing to students “a degree of order and consistency” (Kotter, 1990/2011, p. 38). However, as an organization, education is becoming increasingly complex and the traditional leadership models are not adequate for new expectations. For teacher leadership and indeed schools and thus students to thrive, a new understanding of the teacher leadership must emerge.

Teacher leadership is often still leadership bestowed upon teachers by administrators. This is often seen when teachers serve as department chairs, grade level team leaders, or technology liaisons. Teachers functioning as support staff or researchers or on special assignment are not functioning as teacher leaders (Lieberman, Saxl, & Miles, 1988). Being a teacher leader is not just the possession of a certain skill set “but a way of thinking and acting that is sensitive to teachers, to teaching, and to the school culture” (Lieberman, et al., 1988, p. 2).

## Style Leadership

Utilizing the Style Questionnaire provides a way to assess administrators' perceptions of teacher leadership through analysis of whether an administrator is more task or relationship focused. Researchers at the University of Michigan studied this concept and identified key components of leadership behavior as "product orientation and employee orientation" (Northouse, 2010, p. 71). Product orientation are leadership behaviors "...that stress the technical and production aspects of a job" (Northouse, 2010, p. 71). Employee orientation according to Bowers and Seashore (1966) is "the behavior of leaders who ...take an interest in workers as human beings, value their individuality, and give special attention to their personal needs" (Northouse, 2010, p. 71). Rather than treating leadership simply as a personality trait or capacity, the style approach to leadership "includes what leaders did *and* how they acted" (Northouse, 2010, p. 78). By only emphasizing the personality traits of a leader, leadership studies were mired in the idea that "...certain people were born with special traits that made them great leaders" (Northouse, 2010, p. 36). This in effect says that leadership cannot be taught or learned but only executed by a special few. The style approach is "...more focused on what leaders do than who leaders are" (Northouse, 2010, p. 86). In addition, the style approach emphasizes leaders' capacities as well as relationship building. This is in contrast to other leadership styles such as the skills approach, which "contends that leadership outcomes are the direct result of the leader's competencies in problem-solving skills, social judgment skills, and knowledge" (Northouse, 2010, p. 53). The style approach is not centered on who leaders are (trait) or what they can do (Skills) but an awareness of both combined with the behavior towards followers.

By marrying both the production and the people aspects of leadership, the style approach leader focuses on followers matching the tenets of the human resource frame and the task characteristics matching the structural frame of organizational analysis (Bolman & Deal, 2008). Its five major leadership styles: authority-compliance, country-club management, impoverished management, middle-of-the-road management and team management show different amounts of concern on the part of the leader for both the results of an organization and the people in an organization (Northouse, 2010).

Espousing the country club leadership style through “thoughtful attention to the needs of the people” (Northouse, 2010, p. 74), the style approach leader exhibits behavior of human resource theorists by directing leadership “...toward the satisfaction of subordinates [followers] needs and preferences, such as displaying concern for subordinates’ [followers’] welfare and creating a friendly and psychologically supportive work environment” (House, 1971 p. 326). The human resource frame focuses “on the fit between human needs and organizational requirements” (Bolman & Deal, 2008, p. 117). Ideally, a style approach leader would demonstrate Blake and Mouton’s (1985) optimal team management style, whereby a leader “places a strong emphasis on both tasks and interpersonal relationships” (Northouse, 2010, p. 75). Like the Country club leader, the administrator accomplishes work through the commitment of teacher leaders.

The style approach leader espouses the human resource frame when investing in relationships by fostering “openness, caring, mutuality, listening, coaching, participation, and empowerment” (Bolman & Deal, 2008, p. 361). The human resource frame of the style approach is further reflected in the teacher leader’s relationship with the administrator instead of how the administrator or school regarded the teacher leader.

Beginning with the work of Mayo and the Hawthorn plant of Western Electric in 1927, research showed “that complex, interacting variables make the difference in motivating people—things like attention paid to workers as individuals, workers control over their own work, differences in individuals’ needs, management’s willingness to listen...” (Shafritz, Ott, & Jang, 2011, p. 150). Style approach leaders following country club leadership exhibit Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs by demonstrating a “high concern for interpersonal relationship” (Northouse, 2010, p. 73). Effective administrators have developed relationships that are responsive to teacher leaders’ needs instead of what the leader wants to give. Finally, the style approach leader reflects McGregor’s (1957/2011) Theory Y concept of leadership when they focus on arranging “organizational conditions and methods of operation so that people can achieve their own goals best by directing their own efforts” (McGregor 1957/2011, p. 187). The style approach leader, employing Theory Y, turns upside down the conventional leadership perspective that teachers need to be told what to do, having little initiative.

Human resource theorists view the leader “as a facilitator and catalyst who uses emotional intelligence to motivate and empower subordinates [followers]” (Bolman & Deal, 2008, p. 361). Therefore, the style approach leaders often exhibit Goleman’s (1996/2011) Emotional Intelligence concept, especially self-management skills, empathy and social skill that concern a person's ability to manage relationships with others in their interactions with followers. Therefore, teacher leadership is cultivated and sustained by administrators reflecting the style approach as defined by the work of Bowers and Seashore (1966) who wrote that effective leaders “...take an interest in workers as human beings, value their individuality, and give special attention to their personal needs”

(Northouse, 2010, p. 71). First, they communicate their strong belief in teacher leaders as demonstrated through the Leadership Grid's Country Club leader. Like Heifetz and Laurie, they believe in "protecting leadership voices from below" (Heifetz & Laurie, 1997/2011, p. 57). Effective leaders protect relationships with all workers. Second, relationship focused leaders are visible and accessible. Peters and Waterman talk about the notion of "management by walking around" (Bolman & Deal, 2008, p 362). Third, relationship focused leaders empower others. The style approach leader believes it is critical to manage relationships in order to meet objectives by: "setting challenging goals, seeking improvement, emphasizing excellence in performance, and showing confidence that followers will attain high standards of performance" (House, 1971 p. 327).

Style approach has its theoretical underpinnings interestingly enough with the structuralists. According to Bolman and Deal (2008), the structural frame is the interactions, expectations and directions of how things operate within an organization and if the right structure is used it will "...combat the risk that individuals, however talented, will become confused, ineffective, apathetic or hostile" (p. 46). Therefore, even while supportive of teacher leadership, the style approach leader at times must exhibit the Authority-Compliance leadership style. While it is important to be aware of the people in an organization, leaders cannot forget about task responsibilities, including the obligation of an organization to "measure and inspect outputs and procedures" (Bolman & Deal, 2008, p. 78). Style approach leaders echo Frederick Taylor, (1916/2011) a leading structuralist, when using modern day versions of scientific management in order to make work efficient, decide specialization and division of labor, increase profits, worker pay, morale, and relationships with management.



Style approach leaders understand in this increasingly competitive culture, the goal is to help teacher leaders, "...produce more and better work with the same effort" (Fayol, 1949/2011, p. 52). Fayol also advocates for Stability of Tenure of Personnel stating personnel should be "given time to get used to new work" (Fayol, 1949/2011, p. 62). Like Taylor (1949/2011), who supported retraining, the style approach leader demonstrating effective Authority-Compliance leadership understands teacher leaders must be given support to learn their jobs. Therefore, in order to get tasks accomplished, the style approach leader must practice what the structural frame calls "coordination through organization" (Gulick, 1937/2011, p. 86). The Authority-Compliance leader arranges "the conditions of work in such a way that human elements interfere to a minimum degree" (Northouse, 2010, p. 74). The style approach leader must balance his investment in relationships with teacher leaders with responsibility for the task at hand. Since Gulick (1937/2011) determined that "men differ in nature, capacity and skill" (p. 83) a leader must use relationships with teacher leaders in order to clearly align the task to the person. In order to accomplish this, the leader must know the aspects of the task as Gulick suggests (1937/2011) and be able to orchestrate the length of time to completion, the span of control, authority, and pattern of organization. The style approach leader knows some tasks call for Fayol's (1949/2011) scalar chain of command or Bolman and Deal's (2008) vertical coordination where decisions and communication follow a strict line of authority from the highest rank to the lowest. However, other tasks require the work to flow more like "reciprocal coupling – the members feed their work back and forth among themselves' in effect each receives inputs from and provides outputs to the others" (Mintzberg, 1979/2011, p. 225). Style approach leaders know they must facilitate

the “central purpose or objective of enterprise... translated through the combined efforts of many specialists...” (Gulick, 1937/2011, p. 86). Regardless of what is required, effective style approach leaders “incorporate(s) both the followers’ and leaders’ needs, with leadership...emerging from the interplay between leaders and followers” (Northouse, 2010, p. 187).

One criticism of the style approach theory is that it “has not shown how leaders’ styles are associated with performance outcomes” (Northouse, 2010, p. 79). However this approach does “underscore the importance of two core dimensions of leadership: task and relationship” (Northouse, 2010, p. 87). The criticism researchers were unable to identify a universal set of leadership behaviors effective in almost every situation is contradictory to all leadership research because no two leaders, followers, or situations are alike. Furthermore, the criticism researchers are unable to “...associate the behaviors of leaders (task and relationship) with outcomes such as morale, job satisfaction, and productivity” (Northouse, 2010, p. 87) is a misunderstanding of the goal of the approach. While it is true that researchers were unable to link a certain set of behaviors to a certain set of outcomes, the Style Questionnaire is still a valid lens through which to view teacher leadership because it asks leaders to assess their own interactions with teacher leaders in both these areas. Therefore, if for no other reason, the style approach does have a heuristic value as it asks leaders to reflect on their own behavior. Finally, while the Leadership Grid seems to imply the most effective leadership style is one in which the leader is high on task and high on relationships and does not take into account what the followers need as much as it could, the style approach centers on how leaders combine both task behaviors and relationship behaviors; this very pragmatic approach to

understanding leadership has been “used as a model by to improve their effectiveness and organizational productivity” (Northouse, 2010, p. 80) by reflecting on their task and relationship behaviors.

### **Cultivating Teacher Leadership**

Cultivating school leadership to include teachers is now seen as critical for student success and the survival of public education. Administrators, due to their positional authority, are the ones responsible for causing the cultivating of teacher leadership to occur (Murphy, 2005). According to The National High School Alliance, an Institute for Educational Leadership based partner, without teacher leaders “successful high school reform in support of better student outcomes is simply not possible” (Institute for Educational Leadership, 2000, p 7). In order to create leadership opportunities for teachers, it must be understood “the future of leadership must be embedded in the hearts and minds of the many, and not rest of the shoulders of the heroic few” (Hargreaves & Fink, 2003, p. 16). Also, educational systems “should see leadership as a vertical system over time” (Hargreaves & Fink, 2003, p. 16). Finally, sustainable success in teacher leaderships lies “in creating cultures of...leadership throughout the school...not in training and developing a tiny leadership elite” (Hargreaves & Fink, 2003, p. 16). Research conducted by Little (1988) found administrators need to empower teachers with tasks that is “widely and properly held to be important” (p. 4). Teacher leadership is undermined when trivial tasks are assigned to teachers. School districts need to conduct leadership training specifically geared to teacher leaders who wish to have a greater impact on their profession outside of their classrooms but who do not wish to be in the “pipeline” to traditional administrative roles (Little, 1988).

In their meta-analysis of teacher leadership research from the early 1990s, York-Barr and Duke (2004) found while there are three conditions conducive to cultivating teacher leadership: individual development through credentialed programs, team development through professional development programs, and organizational development through restructuring the leadership hierarchy of a district, only one is directly under the influence administrators and that is professional development. In order to create professional development creating teacher leaders, there are several questions administrators need to address. How does an organization grow more leaders (Fullan, 2005)? How can teacher leaders include more than just a few insiders (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006)? How can a school provide experience in leadership for teachers beyond their classroom (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006)? Teacher leadership development must become formal by recognizing the informal leadership teachers have and then must move teachers' content expertise to include the entire educational system (Richardson, 2003). The work of the principal therefore is to develop the skills of "dialogue, inquiry, reflection, collaboration, facilitation and conflict resolution" (Lambert, 2005, p. 2) in teachers in order to create lasting school improvement.

### **Ways to sustain teacher leadership**

Fullan, in his book, *Leadership & Sustainability: Systems Thinkers in Action* (2005) defines sustainability as "the capacity of a system to have continuous improvement consistent with deep values of human purpose" (p. ix). His eight elements necessary for sustainability in leadership are as follows: public service with a moral purpose, changing context at all levels, lateral capacity building through networks, intelligent accountability and vertical relationships, deep learning, commitment to short

and long term results, cyclical energizing, and the long lever of leadership (Fullan, 2005). The long lever of leadership in particular means training leaders for systems thinking. Systems thinking concerns not just the ability of any one administrator but also “how many leaders he or she leaves behind” (Fullan, 2005, p. 31). Systems thinkers, according to Fullan’s research, take about ten years to develop. Couple this with the short tenure of most administrators and one question regarding the leadership gap in education is evident. Administrators cannot very well grow their teacher leaders if they barely understand their own leadership role.

Continuing this discussion are Hargreaves and Fink in their book *Sustainable Leadership* (2006). They identified seven principles of sustainable leadership: depth, length, breadth, justice, diversity, resourcefulness and conservation. Hargreaves and Fink (2006) suggest administrators actively identify future key leaders by building “pools of talent” (p. 76). They go so far as to define the administrator’s role as so complex no one person can possibly know or do it all, therefore, distributed leadership is the only morally responsible choice for an organization (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006).

The latest research on sustainable leadership comes from Alan Blankenstein in his 2013 book, *Failure is NOT an Option: 6 principles that advance student achievement in highly effective schools*. He advocates for sustainability of teacher leadership because, like so many other researchers have stated, the job of administrator is too big for one person. This is also reported by Schiff’s research (2002):

Principals feel the most important aspects of their job are establishing a learning climate, dealing with...evaluations and providing curricular leadership. Yet, of the average 62 hours a week they work, only about 23 hours are spent on these

activities. The rest are spent on parent issues, discipline, community relations and school management (pg. 21).

He also advocates for teacher leadership sustainability because according to Leithwood and Jantzi (2000), teacher leadership results in the following: increased student achievement, improved teacher quality, and increased teacher efficacy outside their classrooms. By synthesizing all of this, teacher and administrator capacity for leadership and learning is improved.

### **Summary**

In this chapter, literature was explored in several areas: Part one delineated the challenges, responsibilities, shortages, and succession issues of administrators. Part two offered several definitions of teacher leadership. Part three discussed how teacher leaders could effect change in a building. Part four discussed how teacher leadership could be cultivated. Part five discussed the concept of sustainability and how that relates to teacher leadership.

The literature selected relates to the conceptual framework of this study of collective leadership as demonstrated by building capacity, manager versus leader, and style leadership. Building leadership capacity among teachers moves them toward professional responsibility for curriculum, assessment, professional development, and evaluation instead of just bureaucratic accountability. Teacher leaders can become change advocates (Margolis, 2012) once they have to have “the authority and autonomy to make authentic decisions” (Nazareno, 2013, p. 51). Manager versus leader was described through the research stating administrators who are able to create teacher leaders no longer think about teacher leaders in terms of assigning managerial roles to

accomplish certain tasks. They have moved beyond couching teacher leadership in task-oriented language like in order to get something done to actually sharing real power with teachers in order for them to function as leaders. The concept of the style approach was explored as a requirement for analyzing administrators' perception of teacher leadership. Administrators understand to cultivate and sustain teacher leadership; it is necessary to think about how to create a building culture, which allows for every stakeholder in a school to be heard (Lambert, 2005).

In general, Lambert (2005) found the following shifts must occur in an organization in order to develop teacher leadership:

1. School must reculture themselves according to values of democracy and equity.
2. Administrators must share some responsibility and power.
3. Teachers must redefine themselves as leaders beyond their content expertise and become experts in polices and issues confronting education.
4. Administrators and teachers must ensure everyone's participation.
5. Administrators must advocate for professional development time for leadership training of teachers.

Leadership capacity is defined as "reciprocal, purposeful learning together in a community" (Lambert, 2005, p. 1). Low leadership capacity schools tend to be "principal-dependent" (Lambert, 2005, p. 2) while moderate leadership capacity schools feature "corralled and exclusive action by a few" (Lambert, 2005, p. 2). Teacher leadership creates a high leadership capacity school amplifying "leadership for all, learning for all, success for all" (Lambert, 2005, p. 3). The administrator in such schools sees his job to be only one of many leaders in the school all "modeling collaboration,

listening and engagement” (Lambert, 2005, p. 2). While sustainability cannot be made through the administrator alone, it must begin with that office (Fullan, 2005). The only way teachers will be regarded as leaders is if they are allowed to function in a way that “affect student learning; contributes to school improvement; inspire excellence in practice; and empower [other} stakeholders to participate in educational improvement” (Childs-Bowen, Moller, & Scrivner, 2000, p. 28).

Following this is Chapter 3, which will delineate the methodology of this study. The introduction will review the problem statement, purpose and research questions from chapter one. Next, the design for the study, data collection procedures, and types of data collection will be discussed. Last of all instrumentation, analysis of data, and ethical issues will be described. The methodology of this study will address the research questions and provide an opportunity to capture the perceptions of administrators’ regarding teacher leadership and the potential of that information to contribute not only to the body of knowledge on this topic, but also to contribute to school improvement as a whole.



## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

There is a disconnect between the demands of building administrators and what they can accomplish (Blankstein, 2013). To put it simply, the principal can no longer be responsible for knowing it all, doing it all, leading it all; there is too much to do. As such, “everyone’s intelligence is needed to help the organization to flex, respond, regroup and retool” (Hargreaves & Fink, 2003, p. 10). In response to the increasing responsibilities, various approaches to shared leadership, including varieties of teacher leadership, have been touted. Indeed, research shows us teacher leadership is a more significant indicator of student success than administrator leadership (Blankstein, 2013). As building leaders, administrators impact teacher leadership, but very little was known about their perceptions of it.

This researcher outlined the method of research in this paper beginning with the purpose for engaging in the study and its significance. Next, the research questions were stated and the design for the study was presented. The worldview of the researcher was presented which functioned to structure the study.

The process followed to conduct this study was delineated beginning with defining and justifying the sample population. Data collection procedures were described at length. The Informed Consent Process was explained. The researcher’s role was asserted along with methods to ensure trustworthiness. Limitations and assumptions were stated with enhances the research design which was a study on administrators’ perceptions of teacher leadership.

### **Purpose(s)**

Before principals and teachers could explore developing new leadership roles reflecting shared power, knowing administrators' perceptions was necessary. The researcher's purpose for this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore administrators' perceptions of teacher leadership. This study added to and strengthened the body of literature on teacher leadership because it asked administrators to reflect on teacher leadership by deconstructing their "conscious and unconscious beliefs" (Wright, 2008, pp. 26-27) regarding it. This study was significant because it led to the need for further research regarding what degree administrators "practice what they preach" in respect to teacher leadership.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were used to guide the research and address the purpose of this study:

#### **SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE PARTICIPANT**

- How long have you been an administrator?
- Now that you are an administrator, what are your responsibilities?

#### **SECTION 2: DEFINITION OF TEACHER LEADERSHIP**

- What are building administrators' perceptions of leadership?
- What are building administrators' perceptions of teacher leadership?
- What kind(s) of leadership do building administrators share?

### **SECTION 3: CULTIVATING TEACHER LEADERSHIP**

- How does your own leadership style cultivate teacher leadership?
- How do administrators sustain teacher leadership in their buildings?
- What concerns do building administrators have regarding teacher leadership?

#### **Design for the Study**

The design of this study was a social constructivist paradigm, a qualitative methodology using concurrent embedded triangulation and phenomenological approach to research. The philosophical assumption of the social constructivist was individuals seek meaning about the world (Creswell, 2009). This was appropriate for this study because reality for the social constructivist was in the form of participants experiencing the world from their own vantage point (Hatch, 2002).

As a social constructivist, the researcher chose the qualitative methodology for two reasons. The first reason was it allowed a focus on a perception not extensively explored, in this case administrators' perceptions of teacher leadership relying as much as "possible on the participants' view of the situation being studied" (Creswell, 2009, p. 8). A second reason was research was grounded in "understanding how individuals make sense of their everyday lives" (Hatch, 2002, pp. 6-7). Qualitative methodology inductively builds "from particulars to general themes" allowing the researcher to make "interpretations of the meaning of the data" (Creswell, 2009, p. 4). Furthermore, the researcher chose a concurrent embedded approach in order to "collect both quantitative and qualitative data concurrently" (Creswell, 2009, p. 213). This method has a primary method guiding the project and a secondary database providing support (Creswell, 2009). In this study, the primary method was the interview and the secondary, embedded method

was the Style Questionnaire. According to this type of methodology, “the secondary method addresses a different question than the primary method. In other words, the researcher was using the embedded approach to “compare one data source with another” (Creswell, 2009, p. 214). In this case, the interviews were compared to the survey results in order to determine if administrators who stated they support teacher leadership also scored high on either Participative or Achievement-oriented leadership. This approach provides a means to “offset the weaknesses inherent within one method with the strengths of another” (Creswell, 2009, p. 213).

In an attempt to go “beyond generic analysis” (Creswell, 2009, p. 184), the researcher selected a phenomenological research method. This was appropriate for this study as the goal was to understand “the essence of human experiences about a phenomenon as described by participants” (Creswell, 2009, p. 13) and not to prescribe a model for teacher leadership.

### **Participants and Sampling Procedures**

The study’s population was the 25 principals and vice principals currently employed by the school district. Also reflective of qualitative research, this study focused on a small group of building administrators in one district following qualitative research guidelines, which suggests a small sample was appropriate (Creswell, 2009). Choosing to conduct the study over a small sample in one district of close proximity allowed the researcher to conduct interviews spending “considerable time in the natural setting gathering information” (Creswell, 2009, p. 178). Qualitative research utilizes nonprobability-sampling methods designed to discover what was occurring (Merriam, 1998). The most common form of nonprobability sampling called purposeful sampling

was used (Merriam, 1998). This sampling was based on the assumption the researcher wanted to “discover, understand, and gain insight” about something (Merriam, 1998). Therefore, the researcher selected a sample from whom the most insight could be learned (Merriam, 1998). In this study, the phenomenon studied was building administrators’ perceptions of teacher leadership in order to develop the “essence description” of the experience (Creswell, 2009, p. 184). Building administrators were selected based on length of time as an administrator from information publicly available on the district website. Only administrators who had served in an administrative capacity for at least five years were considered.

### **Data Collection**

This study focused on the interpretation of a phenomenon. This section described the data collection process, the rationale for the data collection method and how the method aligned with research questions. The procedures for the interview and survey, including addressing potential risks, trustworthiness, protection of participants, and ethical considerations were delineated. Protocols for collecting artifacts were explained. All data were analyzed through an inductive process to identify the phenomenon.

**Data collection procedures.** In order to conduct research in the district, the researcher had to request permission (Appendix A) from the district’s Office of Research task force (Creswell, 2009). The researcher requested an official, written letter of permission on district letterhead to fulfill the requirements of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) (Appendix B). Once the school district had approved the study and the researcher had completed a proposal defense, IRB approval was received. Because the

researcher was not interviewing teachers, students, any at-risk populations, or performing a high-risk study, the IRB review was expedited.

The researcher sent an email to each administrator with five or more year's experience introducing the researcher, the study, and inviting administrator participation (Appendix C). Following this email, a phone call was made within three business days securing administrators' participation. The informed consent letter stated the purpose of the study and described the procedures to be followed (Appendix D). Administrators were told they agreed to complete the Style Questionnaire, participate in an initial interview lasting approximately one hour, allow for the collection of artifacts, and participate in a short follow up interview. In addition, the consent form, acknowledging participants' rights (Creswell, 2009), also stated the significance of the study and the assurances and measures the researcher would take to protect confidentiality.

Participants were informed all data would remain confidential; they could refuse to answer any question and could withdraw participation at any time. The form was designed with two signatory lines: one for general consent to participate and one for consent to be audio-recorded. As qualitative research involves "data typically collected in the participant's setting" (Creswell, 2009 p. 4), administrators were asked to provide artifacts related to teacher leadership. This last piece of data provided "insight into the social phenomenon under investigation without interfering with the enactment of that social phenomenon" (Hatch, 2002, p. 116).

**Interviews.** As this is a qualitative study with a phenomenological design, informal interviews of no more than one hour were the primary method of collecting data to address the main research question, "What is your perception of teacher leadership?"

From a constructivist viewpoint, informal interviews are situations “where researchers and participants co-construct understandings of what is happening in the research context” (Hatch, 2002, p. 93). A semi-structured interview method was followed (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). All questions were open-ended (Appendix E) because the purpose of an in-depth interview is to “understand the lived experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience” (Seidman, 2006, p. 9). Furthermore, all questions were cross-referenced to the Style Questionnaire in order to “integrate the information and compare one data source with the other” (Creswell, 2009, p. 214). Embedding this quantitative data with the qualitative, allows for an enriched description of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2009). Finally, in addition to audio-recording each interview, the researcher took notes to function as a check for accuracy of transcriptions.

The researcher returned to the participants’ sites for a half hour follow-up interview to ensure trustworthiness. Participants were asked to check the accuracy of their perceptions of teacher leadership as reflected in the transcript and artifacts. If there were any concerns, corrections were made. In addition, follow up questions pertaining to the themes emerging after initial data coding and analysis were asked.

*Style Questionnaire.* Following the requirements of concurrent embedded approach methodology, participants were asked to provide quantitative data by completing the Style Questionnaire. This method allowed the researcher to capture a broader perspective of administrators’ perceptions of teacher leadership because the embedded quantitative data provided by the survey enriched the qualitative data provided by the interviews (Creswell, 2009). Such an approach allowed the researched to collect two types of data at the same time, strengthened the study as a whole by providing

qualitative and quantitative data resulting in different perspectives within the study itself (Creswell, 2009). The Style Questionnaire was chosen because, as explained through Blake and Mouton's (1964) Managerial Grid, it quantified how administrators' concern for production intersected with their concern for people (Northouse, 2010). Renamed the Leadership Grid, this research "...joins concern for production and concern for people in a model that has two intersecting axis" (Northouse, 2010, p. 73). Its five major leadership styles: authority-compliance, country-club management, impoverished management, middle-of-the-road management, and team management shows different amounts of concern on the part of the leader for both the results of an organization and the people in an organization (Northouse, 2010). The leadership styles are arranged on a continuum with the authority-compliance style of leadership placing more emphasize on task and job requirements than people (Northouse, 2010). At the other end of the spectrum and with exactly the opposite emphasis is country-club management placing more emphasis on people and less on tasks. The researcher was interested in any convergence between degree of focus of leadership either of task or relationship revealed by the Style Questionnaire and interview results of administrators' perceptions of teacher leadership.

***Unobtrusive data.*** Unobtrusive data related to the study was collected in the form of artifacts, documents, and records and used to answer the research question, "What kind of leadership do building administrators share? i.e. managerial or decision-making?" The inclusion of such data "enables a researcher to obtain the language and words of participants" (Creswell, 2009, p. 180). This data also strengthens the study because it "represents data which are thoughtful in that participants have given attention to



compiling them” (Creswell, 2009, p. 180). These items further strengthen the study by providing data related to the enactment of perceptions of teacher leadership.

**Human subjects protection and other ethical considerations.** The Institutional Review Board (IRB) exists to provide “protection against human rights violations” (Creswell, 2009, p. 89). For this study, the IRB process assessed the risk to participants (Creswell, 2009). Prior to collecting any data, the researcher submitted a proposal containing information about procedures and participants to the campus IRB for review. After having decided the degree of risk for participants in this study was low, were not students, and were not a high-risk population, an expedited IRB form was granted. As per IRB protocol, the Informed Consent Letter included the following components: explanation of the study and any risks to participants, guarantee of confidentiality, and option to refuse any question or withdraw participation (Creswell, 2009). Signing off on both the Informed Consent Letter and consent for audio recording took place before the initial interview began. According to IRB rules, researchers must protect participants during any research by ensuring confidentiality. This was done by protecting their identity through the use of pseudonyms and protecting their responses by archiving data by type (interview, survey, artifact) and not participant. Only the researcher had access to the data and would be discarded seven years after the completion of the study (Creswell, 2009). Interviews and surveys took place at the discretion of the participants regarding time and place; artifacts were also provided at their discretion. Finally, a follow up interview allowed participants to read the initial interview transcripts making any clarifications necessary.

## Data Analysis

Phenomenological research requires inductive data processing. This is appropriate for this study as the researcher extrapolated from individual experiences a general sense of the phenomenon of administrators' perceptions of teacher leadership. Specific data analysis occurred in three stages. First, raw data from the interviews were transcribed and analyzed independently. The researcher identified patterns occurring repeatedly noted them as possible themes. This inductive analysis in which "findings emerge out of the data, through the analyst's interactions with the data" (Patton, 2002, p. 453) is appropriate for a qualitative study of phenomenological design. The phenomenological research method was also selected because the goal of understanding building administrators' perceptions of teacher leadership reflects this method's goal of identifying a firsthand experience of a phenomenon (Merriam, 1998). At this stage of analysis, all transcripts were coded and analyzed together using an iterative codebook designed around the following: if a code persisted through each transcript, the code was kept in the codebook; if it appeared in one transcript but not others, it was eliminated but kept to discuss possible outliers (Creswell, 2009).

During the 30-minute follow up interview, participants were asked to clarify the transcript and further reflected on teacher leadership. During the second stage of analysis, raw data from each administrator's interview was cross-referenced with his or her survey results. The researcher identified whether or not there was consistency between interview and survey results. The third stage of data analysis took place when the researcher triangulated study results using open and axial coding to identify emergent themes (Hatch, 2002). If a theme showed up in the interview, the survey results, and the

artifacts, it was kept; if it appeared in one place but not the other it was eliminated as indicative of the phenomenon but kept to discuss as a possible outlier just as it was during the second stage of analysis (Creswell, 2009).

### **Role of Researcher (Positionality)**

A few years ago, this researcher participated in a leadership symposium. This was a three-year program in which teachers came together to discuss leadership. After reading the book, *Leading in a Culture of Change* by Michael Fullan, during this time, this researcher realized successful leadership is comprised of three attributes that must be developed and shared equally by administrators *and* teachers: power, management, and leadership. Teacher leadership at all levels is the key component. Without sustainable, committed teacher leadership no initiative will last very long and a very valuable opportunity is squandered to impact all our stakeholders in a positive fashion.

### **Trustworthiness**

Lincoln and Guba (1985) state trustworthiness of a research study was critical to evaluating its worth. Trustworthiness involved establishing the following: credibility, dependability, transferability and confirmability.

**Credibility.** Credibility is confidence in findings. It was achieved in this study in three ways: through member checking of data, triangulation of data, and persistent observation. Member-checking of data in the follow up interview allowed participants to confirm particular aspects of the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Triangulation of data, or evaluating the consistency of findings generated by different data collection methods, resulted in a comprehensive account of the phenomenon. Finally, credibility was ensured through observation by identifying characteristics most relevant to the problem and

focusing on them in detail (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

**Dependability.** Dependability or the assurance findings could be repeated was ensured through the use of an inquiry auditor. This person was not familiar with the researcher or the study and functioned to “provide an objective assessment of the project” (Creswell, 2009, p. 192) by checking the connection between the research questions and data and the analysis.

**Transferability.** To demonstrate trustworthiness through transferability or showing findings apply in other contexts by describing the phenomenon thick and rich description was used (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Such description refers to an explicit account putting patterns of cultural and social relationships from a field experience into context.

**Confirmability.** Trustworthiness was established through confirmability or the degree of neutrality on the part of the researcher. Through the use of an audit trail, the researcher compiled a transparent description of the research steps taken from start to finish. This involved description of the process in the following categories: raw data, data reduction and analysis products, process notes, inquiry proposal, instruments for observations, and note taking protocols.

### **Delimitations, Limitations and Assumptions**

All researchers begin with some limitations and assumptions appropriate to their topic and methodology. Limitations are potential weaknesses in the study and are out of the researcher’s control. Assumptions are the things out of the researcher’s control but without which the study would have no relevance (Hatch, 2002).

**Delimitations**

This study was limited by the sample as it was drawn from only one school district from one Midwestern state. The possibility existed administrators in different school districts from different geographical areas could have different perceptions of teacher leadership due to the uniqueness of their own circumstances. In addition, this study was limited in setting. Observations of teacher leadership only took place in administrators' buildings. The researcher only observed what she was invited to observe increasing the possibility of misinterpretation of the phenomenon. Finally, this study was limited in approach. Using the phenomenological approach does have some concerns due to the highly qualified nature of the data. In the zeal to provide rich and thick description, analysis can suffer (Denecombe, 1998). Phenomenological research does not often involve large samples making it difficult to form generalizations. Finally, the subjectivity of the data made it difficult to suspend any presuppositions about this phenomenon (Denscombe, 1998).

**Limitations**

The research in this study was limited in terms of design in the following ways. While interviews provide direct information from participants, such information was "filtered" through their views (Creswell, 2009, p. 179). Observations were limited in use because the researcher may have been seen as intrusive, lacking in observational skills, or biased (Creswell, 2009). Unobtrusive data had its limitations because none of the data were written with this study in mind and may have presented an incomplete or inaccurate picture of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2009).

## **Assumptions**

The methodology of a qualitative study has several assumptions. The key philosophical assumption of qualitative research is individuals construct reality as they interact with their worlds (Merriam, 1998). This reality was also filtered through the researchers' own perceptions. Researchers must guard against making meaning from their perspectives as opposed to those of the participant (Merriam, 1998). In addition, qualitative research assumes the researcher will be immediately responsive to the data; analyzing it, coding it, and extrapolating meaning from it. It was assumed the product of a qualitative study was in participants' own words. Finally, it was assumed the researcher built toward theory from data collected in the field inductively (Merriam, 1998).

There are some assumptions regarding potential risks in this study. The researcher addressed discomfort with the topic by telling participants they could opt out of the study at any time or not answer any question making them uncomfortable. Using pseudonyms for participants and schools created confidentiality. While thick and rich description was sought of the administrators' perceptions of teacher leadership, information revealing individual identities was not. Thus, participants' consent forms, demographic information, and all raw data were not stored together by participant but were instead stored by type in a locked file cabinet.

Several personal assumptions on the part of the researcher informed this study. The first assumption was administrators willing to participate had something to say about it. A second assumption involved the researchers' own experience. The researcher functioned as a teacher leader for the majority of her career and as such was biased

toward the sharing of power with and building of leadership capacity among teachers. Finally, a third assumption involved the importance of this study. Perhaps this study, asking administrators about their perceptions of teacher leadership, provided an opportunity to reflect on perceptions underlying actions.

### **Summary**

This paper explained the research process for this study beginning with reiterating the purpose and research question. Then the actual methodology including worldview paradigm was presented. Explanation and justification for the chosen participants was discussed. Next, the procedures for data collection, including interviews, surveys, and unobtrusive data, were explained. How the data was to be stored, coded, and analyzed was discussed along with trustworthiness and confidentiality issues were addressed. Positionality of the researcher was disclosed along with limitations and assumptions of the research. In the next chapter, the results of the study will be explained in detail, including identifications of themes.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS OF THE STUDY

This chapter will provide results from the analysis of data collected from interviews of eight administrators, a focus group of three more administrators, and questionnaire from all eleven administrators. The data from all these sources were coded and analyzed around emerging themes, addressing the research questions.

This chapter begins with a description of setting, the district profile, and introduces the participants involved in the study. Data analysis procedures used to discover emerging themes are presented. Findings are presented on the impact length of service an administrator seems to have on the perceptions, cultivation, and sustenance of teacher leadership. The next section presents findings from the data relative to the concepts of building capacity, leader versus manager and style leadership and research questions.

#### **Setting for the Case Study**

The school district in this study serves approximately 11,500 students and employs just over 1000 people. It is the second largest employer in a town of about 75,000. Depending on perspective, the town's population is labeled "stable" or "stagnant" as it continues to lose employment and thus population. The district is considered a large district with three high schools, four middle schools, and sixteen elementary schools. Changing population demographics, increasing budget constraints, and aging school buildings, some in use since the Taft administration, are causing the district to "right size." To meet its mission, "Educating Every Child For Success," the



district is currently in a twenty-five year plan to close some neighborhood schools, build new ones, and reassign or hire teachers and administrators.

### **Relationship of Researcher to Research**

As a current employee of this school district, the researcher serves as both classroom teacher and teacher leader as department chair for one of the high schools and as a District Core Coordinator for the entire district. The District has employed the researcher for over 18 years. The researcher has worked in education for 24 years of which half those years was also as a teacher leader. At the time of the study, the researcher was in her first year as the District Core Coordinator and therefore invested in the leadership and management of her content area in all buildings for grades 7-12. In order to manage content successfully, the researcher leads a team of all building department chairs from her content, liaisons with the instructional coaches assigned to each building, and maintains relationships with all building administrators at the middle and high schools. As District Core Coordinator, the researcher reports to two District level administrators: the Director of Secondary Education, the Director of Elementary Education and the Technical Director of Assessment. Due to these connections, it was assumed all parties involved in the study would be willing to share their perceptions of teacher leadership. It was also assumed that the Director of Secondary Education who is also responsible for building administrators and teacher leader programs would find these results provocative.

Due to the researcher's background as a teacher leader, she held some assumptions of how administrators might regard teacher leaders. To be sure of neutrality,

the researcher continually enforced the process of the study and used findings to redirect and redesign later data collection measures.

### **Description of Participants**

The researcher's goal originally was to interview and survey administrators with experience in their position. It was believed that administrators new to the job might not have formed an opinion yet of teacher leadership. Interviews, therefore, were conducted with administrators who had at least nine years of experience as building leaders. Table 1 gives a picture of participants. However, based on the responses from what became identified as veteran (those with 18+ years experience as an administrator) and mid-career administrators (those with 9 through 17 years experience), it was decided a focus group of transitional administrators (those having served less than nine years) might provide either more contrast to the initial findings or confirmation of them.

Table 1

#### *Participants Characteristics*

MEMBER	SCHOOL LEVEL High, Middle, Elementary	TOTAL YEARS ADMINISTRATOR	LENGTH OF SERVICE Veteran, mid- career, transitional
Participant A	High	18	Veteran
Participant B	High	23	Veteran
Participant C	High	14	Mid-career
Participant D	Middle	9	Mid-career
Participant E	Middle	7	Transitional
Participant F	Elementary	15	Mid-career
Participant G	Elementary	8	Transitional
Participant H	Elementary	8	Transitional
Participant I	Elementary	9	Mid-career
Participant J	High	1	Transitional
Participant K	High	7	Transitional

**Veteran and Mid-career Administrators.** All administrators meeting the requirement for service in the principalship received a letter from the researcher asking for their participation. The initial letter indicated the support and approval of the school district to conduct the study. Of the twelve administrators initially contacted, eight were interviewed and surveyed. By the end of this portion of the study, all three high schools were represented, two of the four middle schools, and three of the sixteen elementary schools. At this point, the researcher had no consistency of results and wondered if the decision not to interview new administrators should be revisited.

**Transitional Administrators.** All administrators meeting the requirement for less than nine years of service in the principalship received a letter from the researcher asking for their participation in a focus group. The initial letter indicated the support and approval of the school district for the study. Of the eight administrators meeting the criteria, five agreed to be a part of the focus group and three actually participated.

### **Interview Setting**

Interviews with veteran and mid-career administrators took place during the school day and were held in the administrators' personal offices. The shortest interview took twenty-three minutes with the longest taking an hour.

At the start of each interview, the researcher presented the informed consent documents, reminded the participants they could refuse to answer any question, and withdraw their participation at any time. The researcher also explained how the interview would be recorded. Due to the researcher's previous relationships with administrators, trust was already in place encouraging forthright participation.

## **Interviews and Focus Group**

The researcher had prepared a set of open-ended questions for the administrators and the focus group. In addition, each administrator took a survey to further support the study results. In order to understand administrators' perceptions of teacher leadership, they needed to be asked to explain the following: how they defined it, how they cultivated it, and how they sustained it in their buildings. The guiding question for this research was: What perceptions do principals possess regarding teacher leadership?

The original methodology called for the researcher to complete triangulation by collecting unobtrusive data related to the study in the form of artifacts, documents, and records. The researcher assumed faculty professional development agendas would include teachers leading. However, it became clear this unobtrusive data did not exist. Administrators did not seem to have any artifacts related to teachers functioning as teacher leaders. Furthermore, the results of the interviews indicated there was a similarity in responses from new administrators having served less than nine years and those having served for more than eighteen years, with those having served between nine and seventeen years sharing a different perception of teacher leadership. Wanting to explore this further, the researcher surveyed and held a focus group of more administrators representative of those three groups. The communication from the focus group was recorded, transcribed, analyzed, and coded using the inductive thinking approached by Hatch (2002). Results from the individual interviews, survey results, and focus group were then triangulated.

## **Data Analysis**

This study was conducted using the Style Questionnaire, interviews, and a focus group. Information from the questionnaire and interviews was read, analyzed, and coded. In the first stage of data analysis, all transcripts were coded and analyzed together using an iterative codebook designed around the following: if a code persisted through each transcript, the code was kept in the codebook; if it appeared in one transcript but not others, it was eliminated but kept to discuss possible outliers (Creswell, 2009). During the second stage of analysis, raw data from each administrator's interview was cross-referenced with his or her survey results. This allowed the researcher to capture a broader perspective of administrators' perceptions of teacher leadership because the embedded quantitative data provided by the survey enriched the qualitative data provided by the interviews (Creswell, 2009). The researcher identified whether or not there was consistency between interview and survey results. The third stage of data analysis took place when the researcher triangulated all data for the essence of the phenomenon (Hatch, 2002).

## **Findings from the data**

After triangulation and coding, the study revealed five themes: (1) impact of length of service on perceptions of teacher leadership; (2) capacity building: opportunities and obstacles; (3) leader versus manager: culture as process or product; (4) style leadership: command and control; and (5) Style Questionnaire: gap as struggle indicator. These themes and sub themes were the result of this case study using individual interviews, a focus group and the Style Questionnaire. The coding of the data

indicated a picture of how administrators define, cultivate and sustain teacher leadership and thus their overall perceptions of it.

Table 2

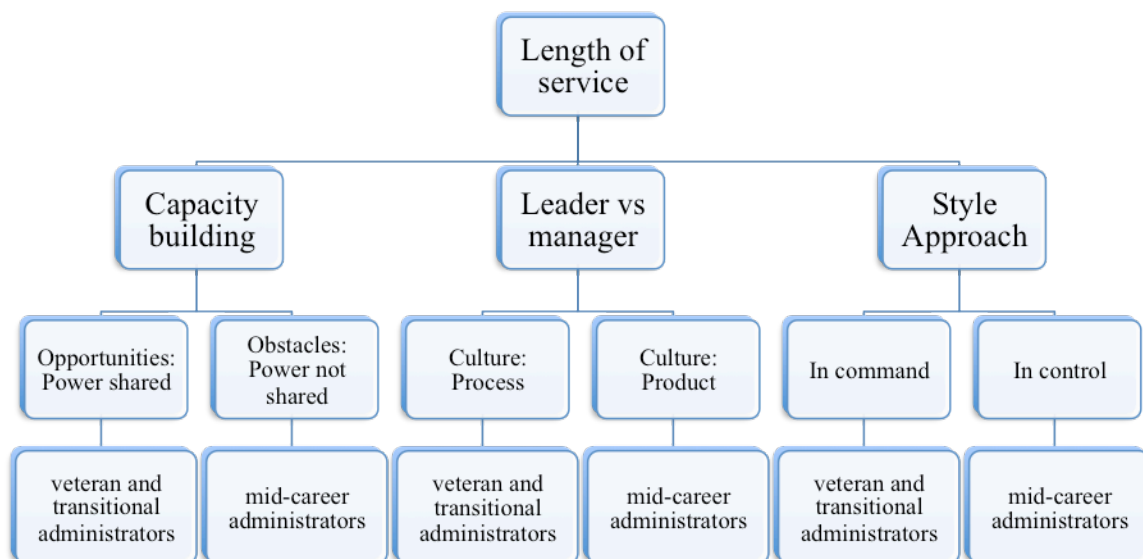
*Findings by Themes and Subthemes.*

Theme 1: Length of Service	Theme 2: Capacity Building	Theme 3: Leader vs Manager	Theme 4: Style Leadership	Theme 5: Style Questionnaire
Veteran administrators (18+ years as an administrator)	Opportunities: Power Shared	Culture: Process	In Command	Gaps
Mid-career administrators (9 - 17 years as an administrator)	Obstacle: Power not Shared	Culture: Product	In Control	
Transitional administrator (9 or fewer years as an administrator)				

**Theme 1: Findings by Research Question #1: The Impact of Length of Service on Perceptions of Teacher Leadership**

The first research question was, “ How long have you been an administrator?” At the beginning of this study, the researcher had no idea answers to this question would emerge as an overarching theme and would categorize the responses for all the other themes and questions. For the purposes of this study, participants were originally selected only if they had served as building administrators for more than nine years. The goal was to choose administrators who had been in a leadership role long enough to have developed a perception of teacher leadership. It became quite clear from the interview responses, those having served for more than 18 years, heretofore known as veteran

administrators (they have served in this role for longer than they were a teacher) had very different perceptions of teacher leadership than those having served for nine to seventeen years, now known as mid-career administrators (they are in the middle of their roles as administrators). Because of these responses, the researcher wondered if those having served as administrators for fewer than eight years, known as transitional administrators (they have recently transitioned from the classroom to the administrative office), would have even different perceptions from the first group. Perhaps the original choice of administrator participants should be revisited? Therefore, a focus group of transitional administrators was convened asking the same questions. Interestingly enough, after transcribing, coding, and analyzing the data, the transitional administrators responses followed most closely with the veteran administrators.



*Figure 3.* Network of findings indicating the impact of length of service on perceptions.

## **Theme 2: Findings by Research Questions #2: Capacity Building**

The first concept anchoring this study was building capacity. Capacity building refers to the ability of administrators to develop the opportunity for skillful participation

of others in leadership leading to sustainable school improvement (Lambert, 2005).

Question 2 asked: “What are your responsibilities as an administrator?” Throughout the interviews, a divergence between veteran and transitional administrators versus mid-career administrators emerged. Veteran and transitional administrators tended to focus on the opportunity for sharing responsibilities or capacity building among teacher leaders while mid-career administrators focused more on the obstacles of sharing responsibilities. They categorized both the opportunities and obstacles around the theme of power that can and cannot be shared.

**Sub theme: Opportunities: Power can be shared**

Veteran administrators tended to have the least concerns regarding the sharing of power. When asked what their responsibilities were, they responded with very little specifics instead saying things like, “I feel like there is more bite in everything.” They also linked sharing power to ownership saying, “I always want teachers to have ownership into any decision.” Another veteran stated, “We have a social contract on how we work with each other.” Veteran administrators were very invested in the opportunity of building capacity believing it was part of their job to build capacity in others by sharing power, “I read about places where there is no principal and the teachers can run the building.” Finally, veteran administrators seemed most comfortable with sharing power saying it is “Basically...giving them a direction and the let them go and facilitate it.” When transitional leaders were asked about their responsibilities, they responded with things like, “My role as principal is to make sure we are servicing everyone’s needs. They also often mentioned “the relationship piece” among staff stating, “You have to communicate with everyone.” One administrator said she “attack[ed] leadership from the



perspectives of servant leadership.” Another said he saw leadership as “trying to help others.” They stated their most important responsibility was “helping teachers which is what I want to spend more time doing.” The transitional administrators also focused on the opportunity to build capacity and seemed to be very invested in it as well. These new leaders spoke of trying to “...grow leaders through opportunity.” They talked about putting opportunities “out there and see who comes forward.” Transitional administrators stated over and over again they had a responsibility to develop new teacher leaders. They stated, “... building leadership capacity is essential” and “I feel it is my responsibility to grow my teachers” and “they’re the biggest factor in school improvement” Like veteran administrators, they also seem comfortable sharing power saying things like, “I want to get them involved and allow them to share decision making along side me.”

**Sub theme: Obstacles: Power cannot be shared**

On the other had, mid-career administrators had a different perception of their responsibilities. Mid-career administrators discussed sharing power as something they were “working on.” When asked what their responsibilities were, they responded with things like, “Curriculum, instruction, operations, and finance; logistics and operations.” They also mentioned quite often “instructional leadership” and “success” and “the direction of the school.” Mid-career administrators seemed to focus more on the obstacles of building capacity saying, “It’s not difficult to do *if* they are capable...” and difficulties arise when “it’s not going to be done always the way you would do it.” One mid-career administrator was very adamant on the obstacles of building leadership capacity or sharing power, saying as administrator, the job is to difficult to “...lead them to where you want to go” but yet in the end “make them think they have made the

decision.” Another stated, “If they don’t believe in the direction that we are moving, it’s very difficult to move forward.” Mid-career administrators also conceded as far as sharing power, they do not do so all the time. One reported consulting teachers only “85% of the time...because there are times when you just have to make a decision and if they are dissatisfied with it, I just have to eat that.”

### **Theme 3: Findings by Research Questions #3-5: Leader versus Manager**

The second concept anchoring this study was that of Kotter’s leader versus manager. Kotter defined management functions as planning and budgeting, organizing and staffing, controlling and problem solving. Kotter’s definition of a manager is someone who deals with complicated situations and change and as such must set the direction for action (Kotter, 1990/2011). Kotter further defined a leader as one who aligns people; motivating and inspiring them (Northouse, 2010). Furthermore a leader is involved in creating visions and strategies (Northouse, 2010). According to Rost (1991) leadership involves a multidirectional influence relationship concerned with the process of developing mutual purposes (Northouse, 2010). Zaleznik (1977) says that leaders...are concerned with changing the way people think about what is possible (Northouse, 2010). Leadership is one person influencing other people to achieve a common goal” (Northouse, 2010). This concept was connected to three questions: Question 3, what are building administrators perceptions of leadership?; Question 4, what are building administrators’ perceptions of teacher leadership?; Question 5, what kinds of leadership to building administrators share? Again, as with the first concept, there was a division of perceptions with veteran and transitional administrators having one perspective and mid-career administrators having another. Veteran and transitional

administrators offered definitions of their own leadership, teacher leadership, and types of shared leadership as leadership in terms of overall building culture. Mid-career administrators offered definitions of their own leadership, teacher leadership, and types of shared leadership as leadership as more managerial in terms of content instruction.

### **Sub-theme: Culture as Process**

The concept of “culture” in an organization continues to be controversial. One definition of culture says it is “a pattern of shared basic assumptions that a group learned as it solved its problems that worked well enough to be valid and...therefore taught to new members” (Schein, 1992, p. 12). In other words, according to Deal and Kennedy, it is the “way we do things around here” (1982, p. 4). Culture is both a process and a product. As a process it is what is done to get wisdom (Bolman & Deal, 2008). As a product, it is the tangible results of that accumulated wisdom (Bolman & Deal, 2008). Veteran administrators were most likely to see the culture in their buildings in terms of process. If everyone has the opportunity to be included in decisions, if teachers feel like there are avenues in place to give feedback, if opportunities exist to serve in areas outside of the classroom, than they reported their “culture was good.” These administrators were not as concerned in measuring any “product” of their “processes.” Veteran administrators were most likely to use labels like “Transformational leader” or “Someone who empowers others to do their jobs” and “I am a teacher’s principal” to describe their leadership. They described themselves as someone who puts “together different groups...on a consistent basis to help make the decisions.” In terms of defining teacher leadership, one veteran administrator said, “...I think it can be taught and developed” and “You have your superstars in every department...and people...respect and model

themselves after that person.” Veteran administrators talked much about the need to get “as much as you can, get other people involved...to delve into things.” Many spoke of teacher leadership in terms of establishing a culture of trust, saying, “You just have to trust your staff” and “I think that trust building is huge and coming together to share knowledge.” All of them reported how much they valued teacher input saying things like, “I would never do or we would never do anything that is not popular with them.” Finally, one veteran administrator talked about the organization as a whole saying the “whole organization is better off when we can apply everybody’s knowledge.”

Like the veteran administrators, transitional administrators described culture in terms of process, usually in terms of a process to build relationships. They described their leadership in terms of others, saying their goal was “to motivate their staff to share the leadership role” and used words like “relational” and “I recognize you can’t get anybody to do anything if you don’t have a relationship.” They said they were “hands on” and felt like they could “make the most impact when...out and about in the building.” These administrators talked about teacher leaders as the biggest factors in improving “overall climates and cultures within the building.” They often couched their definition of teacher leadership in attitude traits like “positive” and “solution based” and “approachable” and “reflective.” When asked about teachers as leaders or managers, one of these administrators defined it as follows: “Managers just sustain improvements that have been made but teacher leaders are the ones pushing for important changes.”

Transitional leaders also talked about the need to help teacher leaders to “take ownership and learn and grow.” They talked about how they “almost always engage my teachers in shared decision making.” Finally, like veteran administrators, transitional administrators

also talked about teacher leadership in terms of the building culture as a whole regarding teachers as leaders, saying, “teacher leaders...truly have a visible, vested interest in the building.”

**Sub theme: Culture as Product**

Mid-career administrators were most likely to see culture in their building in terms of the “products” of the building: usually test results and student learning benchmark results. If overall, the school is doing well according to this data, then the culture is good. They were the group least likely invested in measuring their “process” in order to achieve “product”; in fact, this group seemed to be the most “bottom-line” minded group. In other words, if their buildings performed well on external indicators of student achievement, then it really did not matter how they got there...they got there and that is all that mattered; culture as product. They often expressed their leadership in terms of growing their teachers as instructional leaders by saying it was important to “be in the rooms giving feedback” or helping teachers “who are very instructionally sound in the classroom...communicate what they’re doing effectively to others.”

They also talked most about sustaining teacher leaders in terms of their content rather than their leadership, saying things like “I feel like I make the most impact when I am out and about in the building providing my teachers with descriptive feedback about their teaching.” Mid-career administrators described cultivation of teacher leadership in terms of content saying, “I want them to make instructional decisions because they really are the experts” and “You look for leadership that supports the teaching” and “I need a department leader...” The mid-career administrator group talked most often in terms of “I.” They would say “I...have a vision and I need them to help me bring that vision to

life.” As for defining teacher leadership, mid-career administrators said things like, “You look for leadership that supports the teaching and the learning.” As administrators they reported looking for teacher leaders who “make instructional decisions because they really were the experts.” One mid-career administrator stated, “We are trying to come up with ways, with areas that we need to build leadership...that doesn’t really focus on...instruction.” Another reported, “I don’t have time to ask them what they think...” Finally, unlike veteran or transitional administrators who answered the questions in terms of the overall building culture, mid-career administrators were most likely to give examples of teacher leadership in terms of specific instructional content programs such as “DMI math” or “Reading diagnostic” or “We had a group of teachers that did a little pilot” keeping the focus clearly on content and the teacher as classroom manager.

#### **Theme Four: Findings by Research Questions #6-8: Style Leadership**

The third concept anchoring this study was style Leadership. The style approach is not centered on who leaders are (trait) or what they can do (skills) but an awareness of both combined with the behavior towards followers. Researchers at the University of Michigan studied this concept and identified key components of leadership behavior as “product orientation and employee orientation” (Northouse, 2010, p. 71). The style approach to leadership provides a way to assess administrators’ perceptions of teacher leadership through analysis of whether an administrator is more task or relationship focused. This concept was also analyzed through the survey results of each administrator taking the Style Questionnaire. This method allowed the researcher to capture a broader perspective of administrators’ perceptions of teacher leadership because the embedded quantitative data provided by the survey enriched the qualitative data provided by the

interviews and focus group (Creswell, 2009). This approach strengthened the study as a whole by providing qualitative and quantitative data resulting in different perspectives within the study itself (Creswell, 2009). The first part of this section will concentrate on the interview and focus group results and the second section contains the cross-reference to the survey results.

As in the first two concepts, there was a division of perceptions with veteran and transitional administrators having one perspective and mid-career administrators having another. Veteran and transitional administrators offered definitions of how cultivating and sustaining teacher leadership was a way to address building concerns or needs. These administrators were in overall command of any particular concern but out of daily control of that same concern because rather than focusing on the concern, they focused their energy on helping the *teacher leaders make decisions*. Veteran and transitional administrators functioned more as a sounding board on teacher leaders' decision-making processes. These administrators saw every concern in a building as not only an opportunity to address that concern but also as a possible vehicle to cultivate and sustain teacher leadership. On the other hand, mid-career administrators were in overall control of concerns but out of daily command of those same concerns because rather than focusing on the teacher leaders, they focused their energy mainly on *getting the concern addressed*. Mid-career administrators functioned as a manager of every step of teacher leaders' decision-making process. These administrators saw every concern in a building as a potential obstacle needing immediate resolution and did not see it as also a possible vehicle to cultivate and sustain teacher leadership.

**Sub-theme: In command, but out of control**

Administrators in command of their building but out of control functioned as a mentor to teacher leaders in terms of problem solving. This mean they encouraged teacher contribution not only on how things would get done but what would get done, thus growing teacher leadership while solving problems. They allowed teachers to not only decide what their tasks would be but to set the agenda for attention. Simply put, leaders who are in command but out of control have processes in place that solicit teacher input into what the building does, how it does it and how the building will know it has been successful.

In terms of describing how their leadership style cultivates teacher leadership, veteran administrators were most likely to say it is important “to start with small things and you grow it into bigger, more important pieces” and that their leadership style helps to “keep... on the big picture.” They also said their buildings were not “dictatorships” and that in general leadership “is a shared model.” Veteran leaders said they liked to “divvy things out allowing input.” They had a critical awareness their buildings were only “going to be successful as our teachers make it.” One administrator made a point of saying, administrators must keep teacher leaders “in the loop.” In describing how they sustain teacher leaders, veteran administrators, reported the importance of showing appreciation for what teacher leaders know. One veteran administrator stated, “every teacher leader has so much within them. I go back to that tacit knowledge.” Another talked about how teacher leadership is “underused and undervalued.” Another said their



job is “to make teachers happy” and to “help them understand the other side of the desk” referring to helping teachers become leaders.

When describing their concerns about teacher leadership, veteran teachers tended to state for teacher leadership to thrive the administrator “needs to really know your people” and “we need to be more diligent in developing” teacher leadership. They said it was a concern to make sure “we’re all working hand in hand” and it is necessary to make sure “everybody has their role.” Finally, veteran administrators seemed very comfortable being in command but out of control saying any failure of teacher leaders was the fault of administrators themselves, “if you don’t prepare them, educate them, then you can’t expect a good result.”

Like veteran administrators, transitional administrators, believed their leadership style was a good fit for cultivating teacher leaders. Transitional administrators said things like “teacher leaders are just folks who set the tone positively in the building.” They were most likely to talk about cultivating teacher leadership as part of their job saying, “I feel it’s a responsibility for me to grow my teachers...sometimes I will intentionally place opportunities in a teacher’s path.” They said “building those relationships first is how we cultivate that teacher leadership.” Other transitional administrators said teacher leadership is cultivated whenever you let them “*make* the decisions and you are *backing* the decisions.” They also seem to believe teacher leadership is sustained, when administrators indicated “never dog any decisions that are made...” and they show they “value the input of others.” Like veteran administrators, who were comfortable being in command but out of control, transitional administrators also framed any concerns, regarding teacher leadership in terms of what administrators

failed to do. These administrators were very comfortable with the possible setbacks that come with releasing control, saying, “You have to be willing to listen to what they have to say...you want them to come to you and say what if we try this...and you have to be willing to say OK, go try that, and let’s see how it works. And yeah, sometimes it might not work out by you have to give them that opportunity to grow.” They often express concern about their teacher leaders saying they had to remind teacher leaders to “slow down and go, okay, you can’t do all this at once” and “you can push on those people too much and everything that they get burned out with teacher leadership.”

**Sub-theme: In control, but out of command**

Administrators in control of their building but out of command functioned more as an expert to teacher leaders in terms of problem solving. This meant they presented to teachers not only on how things would get done but what would get done in order to quickly identify and address problems. Such administrators often invited teachers to decide what their tasks would be only after telling them their assessment of their areas of expertise. For example, technology gurus would be tapped to do the computer portion of a task. Such administrators defend such actions and setting of actual agendas as protecting their teacher’s primary focus: instruction. Simply put, leaders who are in control but out of command have their understanding of the realization of product, rather than teacher input, as the driving force regarding what the building does, how it does it and how the building will know it has been successful. The mid-career administrators were the group most likely to talk still in terms of bestowing tasks rather than sharing power. One even said, “I don’t think about the leadership component...” They said

things like, “I am someone who gives—others their job” and it is my job “to provide direction” and “sometimes...we ask them to do something.”

As for sustaining teacher leadership in their buildings, mid-career administrators were the ones who talked about it in terms of being necessary because “teacher leaders help manage responsibilities.” They talked about sustaining in terms of the need to keep “training” teacher leaders to be part of “leadership teams” in order to “get them out in front of peers.” They also were the only group that also talked about ways to get teacher leaders to agree to what they had already decided saying things like “when you vet things you do it very strategically” and “when you are having a conversations with your people, you really kind of lead them to where you want to go, but in the end they think they made that decision” and “its going to go the way I had hoped before I really give a final release.”

Finally, mid-career administrators expressed the most concerns about teacher leadership. One began by stating support for teacher leadership but then added, “You have to be okay with letting them grow and lead, *if* they’re capable.” There were many expressions of what happens when the mid-career administrators described their need to be in control: “just being able to release control” and “I ask them out of courtesy. I don’t have to” and “at the end of the day I’m the one that’s going to make the decision” and “I like to control things and really have to release that.” One even said, “I am kind of controlling” so it is a struggle to “grow them in things beyond making operational decision.” Mid-career administrators expressed the most concerns about meeting the needs of everyone in the building; they are serving “not only students, our staff, but the community.” Another stated concerns about the process of including teacher leadership,

“It is difficult every time to corral a group together to get some input before making the final decision” and “there are those occasions when you just have to make a decision due to lack of time.”

Many stated their struggle with including teacher leadership and being ultimately responsible for what goes on at their school, saying, “I want to hear their voices and problem solve but at the end of the day, I’m the one that’s going to make the decision.” Mid-career administrators struggled with the issues of “you as a leader have to trust and be confident and be okay with some decisions they make.” One administrator really expressed how difficult it is to “release control and saying okay...when you put someone in a leadership position.” That it is difficult “not going back and changing that decision.” It is hard to “be really okay...once you delegate.” Overall, they stated many times their need to be in control resulted in them being out of command due to trust issues among teacher leaders: “difficulty would be...honestly trusting that it is going to be okay” and “if you give them ownership and then have to negate the work they’ve done it wipes it out.” One mid-career administrator admitted to another consequence of being in control but out of command, “Sometimes I think that maybe sometimes they feel like they’re more privy to be part of a decision that really I just gave you the courtesy of asking your opinion but I don’t have to. I also think I’ve kind of spoiled them, that because I do ask for their opinion... when I don’t sometimes they’re offended.”

#### **Theme Five: Style Questionnaire compared to interview and focus group results**

The Style Questionnaire is a valid lens through which to view teacher leadership because it asks leaders to assess their own interactions with subordinates in both the areas of task and relationship. Therefore, if for no other reason, the style approach does have a

heuristic value as it asks leaders to reflect on their own behavior. The questionnaire is scored as follows: 45-50 points Very high range; 40-44 points High range; 35-39 points Moderately high range; 30-34 points Moderately low range; 25-29 points Low range and 10-24 points Very low range. The score received for task refers to the degree to which a leader, in this case, an administrator helps teacher leaders by defining their roles and letting them know what is expected of them. This factor describes the tendency to be task directed toward others when in a leadership position. The score received for relationship is a measure of the degree to which a leader, again, in this case a building administrator tries to make teacher leaders feel comfortable with themselves, each other, and the group itself. It represents a measure of how much someone is people oriented. Like the results from the interviews, the veteran and transitional administrators followed one pattern while the mid-career administrators followed another.

Table 3

*Participant Results from the Style Leadership Questionnaire*

MEMBER	SCHOOL LEVEL High, Middle, Elementary	TOTAL YEARS ADMINISTRATOR	LENGTH OF SERVICE Veteran, mid-career, transitional	Style Questionnaire	
				Relationship	Task
Participant A	High	18	Veteran	47	36
Participant B	High	23	Veteran	43	33
Participant C	High	14	Mid-career	43	42
Participant D	Middle	9	Mid-career	45	43
Participant E	Middle	7	Transitional	44	37
Participant F	Elementary	15	Mid-career	40	38
Participant G	Elementary	8	Transitional	42	41
Participant H	Elementary	8	Transitional	No response	No response
Participant I	Elementary	9	Mid-career	44	42
Participant J	High	1	Transitional	40	34
Participant K	High	7	Transitional	44	40

*Note:* Style Questionnaire scored as follows: 45-50 points Very high range; 40-44 points High range; 35-39 points Moderately high range; 30-34 points Moderately low range; 25-29 points Low range and 10-24 points Very low range.

**Sub-theme: Gap in results as indicated degree to which task and relationship behaviors balance**

The veteran administrators' survey results showed them as all higher on relationship than task behavior. Scoring in the Very high range, they used the word "always" to describe things like "Helps others feel comfortable with the group,"

“Responds favorably to suggestions made by others,” “treats others fairly,” “acts friendly with group members,” and “helps group members get along.” This aligns with their interview comments in which they were more focused on the opportunities associated with teacher leadership than the obstacles; the culture of their building as a whole rather than content, and were more comfortable with being in command than being in control of every little thing. Like the veteran administrators, the transitional administrators also scored higher on relationship than task behaviors. Scoring in the High to Moderately high range, they used the word “often” to describe things like “Responds favorably to suggestions made by others” and “Behaves in a predictable manner to group members” and “Communicates effectively with group members.” As for their task behavior, veteran and transitional administrators’ results showed the biggest gap between results scoring in the Very high range on relationship and Moderately low range to Low range for tasks. Interestingly and in contradiction to their interview comments, mid-career administrators also scored themselves higher on task rather than relationship behaviors. They scored in the High range for relationships using the word “often” to describe “Acts friendly with members of the group” and “Helps others feel comfortable in the group” and “Behaves in a predictable manner toward group members.” This does not align with their interview comments in which they indicated they were more focused on the obstacles associated with teacher leadership than the opportunities; the content of teachers’ classrooms rather than the building as a whole and the pressure to be involved in every aspect of the building.

What the results do align with is mid-career administrators’ awareness relationship is important but again this awareness manifests itself only in terms of how

the agenda and actions, set by the administration, is carried out by teacher leaders. As for their task behavior, mid-career administrators had little difference between their task score and their relationship score such as High range on relationship and Moderately high range on task; Very high range on relationship and Very high range on task. Overall, their scores were not as high on relationship or as low on task. These results do align with their interview results as they reflect their statements regarding the struggle to balance task and relationship issues.

### **Summary**

This chapter examined the findings of the study in two sections. The first section explained of the impact length of service as an administrator seemed to have on the perceptions of teacher leadership. Administrators were divided into three groups: veteran administrators having served for more than eighteen years; mid-career Administrators having served between nine and seventeen years; and transitional administrators having served less than nine years. The next section presented findings relative to the concepts and research questions anchoring the study. Findings regarding the first concept of building capacity were offered. Then findings regarding the second concept of Manager versus leader were presented. Finally, this was followed by findings for the third concept, style leadership. In this section, in addition, interview and focus group results were presented followed by a section including the cross-reference of those findings to the survey results. All participants shared examples of how they define, cultivate, and sustain teacher leadership. These examples seemed to follow a pattern whereby veteran and transitional administrators tended to focus more on the possible opportunities afforded by teacher leadership and its potential to positively impact a building's culture.



Furthermore, the veteran and transitional administrators were most likely to report and have substantiated by the Style Questionnaire as being relationship focused rather than task focused. Mid-career administrators tended to focus more on the possible obstacles that may occur when using teacher leadership and as such tended to see teacher leaders in terms of their content expertise rather than building impact. Furthermore, the mid-career administrators were most likely to have self-reported to be relationship focused but the Style Questionnaire showed them as task focused instead. All of these findings resulted in a depiction of administrators' perceptions of teacher leadership.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS OF FINDINGS

At the time of this study, the administrators in the school district would have been thought to possess a positive definition of teacher leadership as shown through systemic district cultivation and sustenance of teacher leadership through programs such as the Leadership Academy, Instructional Coaches, District Coordinators, Department Chairs, and Building Leadership teams. All of these programs utilize teachers in some sort of leadership capacity either at the district, building, or department level. In fact, one administrator was one of the district's first instructional coaches before making the switch to full time administration.

In brief, this study found all eleven administrators in one Northwest Missouri school district willingly shared their perceptions of teacher leadership including how it was cultivated and sustained in various ways in their buildings. Teacher leadership was universally acknowledged to be necessary. The difference in perceptions and thus cultivation and sustenance came as a result of length of service as an administrator.

As a teacher leader in the district currently as a department chair and District Coordinator, this researcher had great interest in the perceptions of administrators regarding teacher leadership in general. The findings were of interest not only to the researcher for the purpose of this study but also to the District Directors of Education in charge of the above listed programs as they sought information for improving teacher leadership and administrator support.

This qualitative case study was conducted to understand administrator perceptions of teacher leadership. The study had one over arching research question: What is your

perception of teacher leadership? The remaining questions dealt with administrator cultivation and sustenance of teacher leadership. Three qualitative data points were used. First, a representative sample of administrators who had served more than nine years in the principalship was interviewed. The research questions were explored by asking questions about administrators' responsibilities, length of service as an administrator, their perception of leadership in general and teacher leadership specifically, types of leadership that can be shared, how their individual leadership style cultivates and sustains teacher leadership, and what concerns about teacher leadership they might have. The second data point were the results from the Style Questionnaire. These results indicated to what degree an administrator was task or relationship oriented. From these results, the third data point, originally to be artifact analysis was changed to convening a focus group of administrators who had served less than nine years. The same questions and questionnaire was administered to this group. Data was triangulated using the interviews, focus group, and questionnaire to discover emergent themes and sub-themes.

The previous chapter ended with a summary of the findings as related to the research questions and the theoretical framework of collective leadership theory and the three underlying concepts of capacity building, leader versus manager, and style leadership. This chapter will interpret the findings on definition, cultivation, and sustaining teacher leadership through the theoretical framework of collective leadership theory. Next, findings on definition, cultivation, and sustaining teacher leadership will also be discussed through the study's three underlying concepts of capacity building, leader versus manager, and style leadership. Findings will be linked to the literature, respectively, through the sub-themes of length of service; opportunities or obstacles;

culture or content; in command or in control followed by the results of the Style Questionnaire. Next, implications for practice and research of each finding will be discussed. Finally, recommendations for further study will be offered.

Table 4

*Interpretation of Findings: Subthemes*

Theme 1: Length of Service	Theme 2: Capacity Building	Theme 3: Leader vs Manager	Theme 4: Style Leadership	Theme 5: Style Questionnaire
Definition teacher leadership	Opportunities: Power Shared	Culture: Process	In Command	Gaps
Cultivating teacher leadership	Obstacle: Power not Shared	Culture: Product	In Control	
Sustaining teacher leadership				

**Conceptual Framework: Collective Leadership Applied to Findings**

For this study, collective leadership is defined as leadership in which “employees are actively involved in [making] organizational decisions” (Miller & Rowan, 2006, pp. 219-220). This type of leadership is focused on achieving the goals for the collective good. It was clear from the study, collective leadership was an appropriate framework to describe administrators’ perceptions of teacher leadership. The participants in the study were divided into three groups: veteran administrators having served for more than eighteen years; mid-career administrators having served between nine and seventeen years; and transitional administrators having served less than nine years. Collective leadership understanding differed between veteran and transitional administrators and

mid-career administrators. This was linked to question 1: “How long have you been an administrator?”

### **Sub-theme: Length of Service impact on Definition of Teacher leadership**

Veteran and transitional administrators were more likely to see the opportunity afforded by understanding collective leadership in terms of multiple leaders within a group reflective of Bolman and Deal’s (2008) “all-channel network” (p. 105) or Helgesen’s “web of inclusion” (Bolman & Deal, 2008, pp. 86-87, 105) provides. As such they were more likely to embody this definition when they allowed for the sharing of the increasing complexities of their positions by having teachers function not only as content specialists, but also as leaders of the building invested with decision-making power. Mid-career administrators were more likely to understand collective leadership as a top-down process between the formal leader and team members. Friedrich, et al., (2009) define collective leadership as leadership relying on the right person with the right skills to emerge as the situation warrants. However, mid-career administrators were most likely to interpret this definition of teacher leadership as teachers taking on leadership roles as content experts with the assumption of leadership in any given situation more likely to be limited to and dependent upon their primary position as classroom teachers. Mid-career administrators were also most likely to see only obstacles with revising the definition to leadership outside the classroom experience.

### **Sub-theme: Length of Service and Impact on Cultivation of teacher leadership**

As formal leaders of their buildings, administrators are in the unique position to cultivate leadership among their teachers. Teacher leadership is fostered by the “defined leader...[who can] Selectively utilize skills and expertise within a network, effectively

distributing elements of the leadership role...” (Friedrich et al., 2009, p. 933). Again, veteran and transitional administrators were most likely to share power with teachers outside of just their classroom expertise. Instead, they took indication of classroom success as potential to wield a bigger influence on the building as a whole. Such administrators talked about the need to present teachers with opportunities and to build their confidence in leadership in general. Mid-career administrators however, restricted cultivation of teacher leadership to classroom experience when they said they consulted them on such issues as curriculum or materials selection because they were the experts.

**Sub-theme: Length of Service and Impact on Sustaining of teacher leadership**

Finally, all the administrators were aware, no matter how teacher leadership was defined or cultivated, the real difficulty was sustaining those leaders. Reflecting the definition of Collective leadership described by Friedrich et al. (2009) or leadership in which “individuals...have... shared understanding[s]” (p. 938), veteran and transitional administrators expressed their tendency to be relationship focused. They were concerned about teachers taking on too much, but yet believed they were to help teachers develop “the requisite competence...to participate in the leadership process” (Friedrich et al., 2009, p. 938). Mid-career administrators were most likely to be task focused in sustaining teacher leadership believing the more direction they could give teachers and the more they could “take off their plate” and decide for them, the more helpful they were being.

According to a 2013 MetLife Survey, 51% of teachers are interested in teaching part-time and combining teaching with another responsibility in their schools. However, administrators who do not see teacher leadership through this lens lead most of today’s

schools. These mid-career administrators, unlike veteran and transitional administrators are most likely to embody Roland Barth's "myth of presumed competence" which states "principals often feel the need to present an aura of confidence and act as though they know everything..." (Hoerr, 2013, p. 86). So, while they agree the principalship has become so complex "their daily stress levels are higher than just five years ago" (Harrison, & Killion, 2007, p. 7), they are failing to answer the question, "How much autonomy should I give teachers?" (Hoerr, 2013, p. 86). Thus, both mid-career administrators and their teachers continue to feel the stress of their respective increasing responsibilities.

### **Capacity building**

The first concept anchoring this study was capacity building. Capacity building refers to the ability of administrators to develop the opportunity for skillful participation of others in leadership leading to sustainable school improvement (Lambert, 2005). It was connected to interview Question 2: "What are your responsibilities as an administrator?" Veteran and transitional administrators tended to focus on the opportunity for sharing responsibilities or capacity building among teacher leaders while mid-career administrators focused more on the obstacles of sharing responsibilities. They categorized both the opportunities and obstacles around the theme of power that can and cannot be shared.

#### **Sub-theme: Opportunities: Power that can be shared**

Veteran and transitional administrators were most likely to embody true power sharing with teacher leaders considering it as an opportunity to grow teacher leaders outside of just their classroom expertise. Defining teacher leadership as leadership

pervading the entire organization (Sergiovanni, 1998; Spillane, 2006), such administrators were more than willing to put opportunities in the path of their teachers. They believed in giving teachers legitimate control and influence putting into action daily practices which result in teachers who become capable of leveraging their content expertise outside of their classroom to influence other teachers and educational policy as a whole (York-Barr & Duke, 2004).

### **Sub-theme: Obstacles: Power that cannot be shared**

Mid-career administrators, however, were most likely to be concerned about sharing power related to anything beyond classroom expertise. Defining teacher leadership as content specialists by which teachers function as leaders when they lead their colleagues with in instructional practices (York-Barr & Duke, 2004), such administrators were more likely to contain their teacher leaders to classroom leadership dealing with instruction, curriculum, or content specific professional development. They reported cultivating and sustaining the leadership of teachers could improve student achievement (Louis, et al., 2010). Unlike the veteran and transitional administrators who expect teacher leaders to leverage their content knowledge toward larger influence outside their classroom specifically and into the realm of educational policy in general, mid-career administrators expected teacher leaders to serve as a catalyst for colleagues to change instructionally (Spillane, 2006).

### **Manager versus Leader**

The second concept anchoring this study was that of Kotter's leader versus manager. Kotter defined management functions as planning and budgeting, organizing and staffing, controlling and problem solving (Kotter, 1990/2011). A leader, according to



Kotter's definition is someone who, "copes with change" (Kotter, 1990/2011, p. 38).

This concept was connected to three questions: Question 3, What are building administrators perceptions of leadership?; Question 4, What are building administrators' perceptions of teacher leadership?; and Question 5, What kinds of leadership to building administrators share? Veteran and transitional administrators offered definitions of their own leadership, teacher leadership, and types of shared leadership as leadership in terms of overall building culture. Mid-career administrators offered definitions of their own leadership, teacher leadership, and types of shared leadership as leadership as more managerial in terms of content instruction.

#### **Sub-theme: Culture as Process**

Research shows "that complex, interacting variables make the difference in motivating people-things like attention paid to workers as individuals, workers control over their own work, differences in individuals' needs, management's willingness to listen..." (Shafritz, Ott, & Jang, 2011, p. 150). This is what modern human resource theorists advocate is the key to highly effective organizations: "The organization is not the independent variable to be manipulated in order to change behavior... Instead the organization must be seen as the context in which behavior occurs" (Shafritz, Ott, & Jang, 2011, p. 150). Veteran and transitional administrators were most likely to define teacher leadership in terms of the organization as a whole or the culture of the building. They reflect the literature in their definition of teacher leadership when they say their job is to grow leaders who will positively influence the organization as a whole in order to "...combat the risk that individuals, however talented, will become confused, ineffective, apathetic or hostile" (Bolman & Deal, 2008, p. 46). They also reported that cultivating

and sustaining teacher leadership was necessary in order to “...produce more and better work with the same effort” (Fayol, 1949/2011, p. 52) in order to deal with the increasing demands and complexities of education. Finally, veteran and transitional administrators most reflected the literature when they talked about trust. According to Kouzes and Posner (1987), two fundamental practices enable leaders to get amazing things accomplished: enabling others to act and encouraging the heart (Northouse, 2010). They found the ability for leaders to “build trust with people” (Northouse, 2010, p. 184) and “support and recognize” (Northouse, 2010, p. 184) people will increase effectiveness.

**Sub-theme: Culture as product**

Mid-career administrators were most likely to define teacher leadership in terms of classroom expertise and only share power with teacher leaders relative to such expertise. This was the group most likely to focus on “...engaging the [school] community in improving education” (DuFour, & Mattos, 2013 p.7). They were very concerned with test scores, instructional interventions, and data results indicative of learning. Burdened by implementing mandates that may not have been proven to effectively improve student achievement (DuFour, & Mattos, 2013), mid-career administrators most often considered teachers *leaders* if they had demonstrated content expertise. Their response reflected the literature, which says teacher leadership is associated with improved instruction and increased student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2003). In fact, mid-career administrators were the group most responsive to what many teachers say they want: acknowledgement of their curriculum expertise (Hoerr, 2013).

### **Style Leadership Approach**

The style approach is the most valuable “...framework for assessing leadership” (Northouse, 2010, p. 77) because it helps leaders assess leadership through *both* task and relationship foci. Researchers at Ohio State University analyzed how individuals acted when leading a group. They identified “...two general types of leader behaviors: consideration and initiating structure” (Northouse, 2010, p. 70). Consideration behaviors focus on building relationships including building “camaraderie, respect, trust, and liking between leaders and followers” (Northouse, 2010, p. 70). The second behavior is essentially task behaviors “...including organizing work, giving structure to the work context, defining role responsibilities, and scheduling work activities” (Northouse, 2010, p. 70).

This concept was linked to three interview questions, questions 6: How does your own leadership style cultivate teacher leadership?; question 7: How do administrators sustain teacher leadership in their buildings?; and question 8: What concerns to building administrators have regarding teacher leadership? This concept was also analyzed through the survey results of each administrator taking the Style Questionnaire. The first part of this section will concentrate on the interview and focus group results and then contain a section including the cross-reference to the survey results. As in the other themes, veteran and transitional administrators offered definitions of how cultivating and sustaining teacher leadership was a way to address building concerns; these administrators were in command and out of control. However, mid-career administrators let their concerns about their buildings address how they cultivated and sustained teacher leadership; in other words, in control but out of command.

**Sub-theme: In command but out of control**

McGregor's (1957/2011) research revolutionized the field of leadership studies. His Theory Y concept of management or "the essential task of management is to arrange organizational conditions and methods of operation so that people can achieve their own goals best by directing their own efforts toward organizational objectives" (McGregor 1957/2011, p. 187) turns upside down the conventional leadership perspective that workers need to be told what to do, are generally lazy and have little initiative. Theory Y is called management by objective or being in command in contrast to "management by control" (McGregor 1957/2011, p. 187). Veteran and transitional administrators echoed this belief in their teacher leaders when they talked about how their job is to cultivate teachers leaders' ability to set objectives for the organization themselves. They reported cultivating and sustaining the leadership of teachers can help mitigate the complex issues facing schools today because "everyone's intelligence is needed to help the organization to flex, respond, regroup and retool" (Hargreaves & Fink, 2003, p. 10). Their awareness of the role appreciation played in sustaining teacher leadership is reflected by research by Fayol (1949/2011), which says for "personnel to carry out... duties [they] must be treated with kindness" (p. 62). Furthermore, their concerns for their teacher leadership reflect the human resource theorists' advocacy for "openness, caring, mutuality, listening, coaching, participation, and empowerment" (Bolman & Deal, 2008, p. 361).

**Sub-theme: In control but out of command**

Mid-career administrators were most likely to espouse management by control or Theory X, as opposed to Theory Y and management by command (McGregor 1957/2011). They were most likely to cultivate teacher leadership in terms of their being

in command *of* the teachers by “setting challenging goals, seeking improvement, emphasizing excellence in performance, and showing confidence that followers will attain high standards of performance” (House, 1971 p. 327). The mid-career administrators cultivate and sustained leadership empowering teachers for their content knowledge and experience (Little, 1988). Mid-career administrators reflected the literature regarding the necessity of sustaining teacher leadership in terms of a cause-effect relationship: due to providing more services for students than at any time in the past combined with complex details regarding instruction, operations management, and accountability (Grubb & Flessa, 2006), administrators need more help, thus teacher leadership must be utilized. Research shows this opinion of the administrator-teacher leader relationship reflects the types of concerns of mid-career administrators stated in this study: administrators express increasing anxiety about all of these roles and responsibilities (Goodwin, et al., 2003) including the role of mentor of teacher leaders, the very people that might be able to help.

### **Style Questionnaire**

The Style Questionnaire is a valid lens through which to view teacher leadership because it asks leaders to assess their own interactions with subordinates in both the areas of relationship and task. The score received for relationship is a measure of the degree to which a leader, in this case a building administrator, tries to make teacher leaders feel comfortable with themselves, each other, and the group itself. It represents a measure of how someone is people oriented. The score received for task refers to the degree to which a leader, again, an administrator helps teacher leaders by defining their roles and letting them know what is expected of them. This factor describes the tendency to be

task directed toward others when in a leadership position. Like the results from the interviews, the veteran and transitional administrators followed one pattern while the mid-career administrators followed another.

**Sub-theme: Relationship orientation**

Researchers at the University of Michigan studied this concept and identified a key component of leadership behavior as employee orientation. Both veteran and transitional administrators scored highest on relationship or employee orientation. According to the literature, this means they reflect Bowers and Seashore (1966) work when they "...take an interest in workers as human beings, value their individuality, and give special attention to their personal needs" (Northouse, 2010, p. 71). Veteran and transitional leaders' scoring high on relationship rather than task is supported by Fiedler's (1967) work in which he found a key component to success is based on "...the degree of confidence, loyalty and attraction that followers feel for their leaders" (Northouse, 2010, p.112). Finally, veteran and transitional administrators, when showing concern for people first and product second, are reflecting research by Goleman (1996/2011), with his groundbreaking studies regarding Emotional Intelligence, which suggests effective leaders are empathetic and " build rapport with others to move them in desired directions" (p. 3).

**Sub-theme: Task orientation**

On the other hand are mid-career administrators who, while also scoring higher on relationship than task behaviors, did not show nearly the same gap in scores. This does not align with their interview comments in which they were more focused on the obstacles associated with teacher leadership than the opportunities; the content of their

classrooms rather than the building as a whole and were more concerned with being in control of everything rather than being in command. As for their task behavior, mid-career administrators had little difference between the task score and their relationship score; as overall their scores were not as high on relationship or as low on task. The literature says while it is important to be aware of the people in an organization, leaders cannot forget about the task responsibilities including the obligation of an organization to “measure and inspect outputs and procedures” (Bolman & Deal, 2008, p. 78). This struggle to balance relationship and task issues does align with the interview results of mid-career administrators. Mid-career administrators seem to waver between utilizing teacher leadership to make work more efficient, decide roles, and increase test scores with increasing and improving morale and relationships. Finally, mid-career administrators struggled most with the knowledge they need to balance their investment in relationships with their responsibilities for the task at hand.

### **Summary**

From this small study attempting to understand administrators’ perceptions of teacher leadership, it became obvious depending on the length of service as an administrator, perceptions differed widely between veteran and transitional administrators and those who were identified as mid-career administrators. The administrators in this study reflect thorough knowledge of the *need* to build capacity in their teachers, *share* power more reflective of teachers treated as leaders rather than just managers and *balance* task behaviors with relationship behaviors. The veteran administrators seem to have the “long view” that comes from experience to do this with the least amount of concern. The transitional administrators seem to have the enthusiasm

stemming from the new experiences of being administrators; in other words, they have not been “bit” yet by some of the negative incidents of sharing power. However, the mid-career administrators seem to be the most stressed in trying to balance their own leadership with the complexities of the principalship.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The overall design of this study contributed to several limitations. The first limitation was all data was self-reported. Administrators may have indicated their definition, cultivation, and sustenance of teacher leadership differently than what is actually reflected in their buildings. Cross-referencing their results with interviews with teachers in their buildings may add new information to the study.

The data was gathered from administrators in one school district in Northwest Missouri. The findings were all based on a small sample of the population. As participants volunteered to be included in this study, findings may not be considered to be indicative of all administrators. A larger population of participants may add new information to the study.

### **Implications for Practice**

After a thorough reading of the most recent literature combined with the findings of this study, the following recommendations are offered to assist the district in the utilization of teacher leadership and support of administrators. Each recommendation is linked to one of the themes of the study:

#### **Length of Service**

1. District level administration needs to survey all building administrators’ perceptions of teacher leadership.



- a. Administrators should discuss concerns related to their respective experiences with teacher leadership
  - b. Administrators should discuss concerns related to developing a teacher leader pipeline.
2. Restructure monthly administrator meetings to include inviting teacher leaders.
    - a. Administrators and teachers should assess various teacher leader models.
    - b. Administrators and teacher leaders should identify and replicate effective teacher leader practices

### **Capacity Building**

1. District level administration needs to begin the conversation with building administrators about what teacher leadership is and how it is going to function in the district.
  - a. Provide professional development to administrators in how to sustain and cultivate teacher leadership in school.
  - b. Encourage higher education programs to include teacher leadership as part of methods course work for all teachers.
- c. The district needs to make it part of their explicit practice to grow the next generation of leaders by making a formal commitment to expanding opportunities for more teachers to lead.
  - a. Create more hybrid roles for teachers where teachers can instruct part time and serve as building leaders part time in addition to expanding traditional teacher leader opportunities as instructional coaches, coordinators, mentors.
  - b. Create district teacher leader academies providing potential teacher leaders

information in areas such as adult learning theory, program evaluation, and leadership.

### **Manager versus leader**

1. Building administrators and teacher leaders should convene on a regular basis to discuss how teacher leaders will be defined, cultivated and sustained in the district.
  - a. Redesign administration preparation programs to include promotion of shared leadership with teachers as an area of focus.
  - b. Establish compensation systems that reward teacher leadership.
2. The concept of how teachers wish to function as leaders needs to be aligned with how administrators need teachers to function as leaders through an ongoing commitment to real power sharing and not task management.
  - a. Redesign teacher preparation programs to include teacher leadership as an area of focus.
  - b. Establish an evaluation system that specifically identifies the varied roles of teacher leaders.

### **Style leadership**

1. District leadership, once aware of administrator and teacher leader concerns, should develop the following mentor programs:
  - a. Veteran administrators should mentor mid-career administrators in order to help them deal with the stress of balancing task and relationship needs of their position.

- b. District administration should mentor transitional administrators in areas beyond the logistics, finance, and instructional components of their new job, but also include how to utilize teacher leaders.
2. The district should revise all of its current teacher leadership assignments
  - a. Match up veteran administrators with the newest teacher leaders, the mid-career administrators with the most seasoned teacher leaders, and the transitional administrators with teacher leaders at the mid-point in terms of service.
  - b. Develop a mentoring program using the experience of both the administrators and teacher leaders to provide an understanding of opportunities and obstacles of power sharing, a balance between a focus on culture and content, and an awareness of the importance of tasks and relationships.

### **Implications for Further Research**

The following implications emerged for future research in an effort to contribute to the existing body of knowledge in regards to administrators' perceptions of teacher leadership. First, the results from interviewing and conducting focus groups using a larger population of participants at each level of administrative experience should be conducted and compared to these results. Second, administering the Style Questionnaire to the same administrators regarding not their own leadership, but in order to assess the teacher leaders in their building would help to define how the administrators' definition, cultivation, and sustaining of teacher leadership are impacting teacher leaders in their buildings.

Another implication for further research would be to interview self-identified teacher leaders and administrator-identified teacher leaders and seek to find what their definitions of teacher leadership are and how they need to be cultivated and sustained as teacher leaders. The results of these findings could be cross-reference with what administrators believe and do in order to identify a knowing-doing gap between the two groups.

Another implication for further research would be, after conducting a larger study in a district, to use the results to explore why administrators in the different years of service have such different perceptions and as such cultivation and sustenance of teacher leaders. Finally, an implication for further research would be to therefore identify ways administrators at the different levels of experience can be supported themselves in order to better utilized teacher leadership.

### **Conclusion**

As 23% of teachers are interested in combining teaching with some sort of leadership position grounded in curriculum, assessment or professional development (Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, 2013) are mid-career administrators on the right track with defining, cultivating and sustaining teacher leadership most often in terms of the content expertise? While this may be most reflective of what teachers say, it is a double-edge sword. Failure to share any of the other responsibilities for a building may be the reason almost 40% of principals retired or left the position before 2010 (Ballek et al., 2005). Defining, cultivating and sustaining leadership in terms of classroom expertise is only half the picture. What the research really says is teacher leadership is leadership *beginning* “among colleagues with a focus on instructional practice” but moving such

expertise outside the classroom to influence other teachers and educational policy as a whole (York-Barr & Duke, 2004, p. 261).

Teacher leadership is an example of “leadership (as opposed to leaders) that transcends the capabilities of individuals alone” (Lichenstein, et al, 2006, p. 2). Administrators’ perceptions of teacher leadership were studied because the traditional hierarchy of school leadership is less and less capable in our increasingly complex educational organizations due to “external changes and forces [demanding] either organizational adaptation or organizational extinction” (Marquardt, 2011, p. 2). Teacher leadership is an educational adaptation effort attempting to grapple with the changing responsibilities of building administrators. Teacher leadership, while redirecting emphasis from any one individual as leader, still demonstrates leadership is critical to an organization’s success. Teacher leadership “recognizes leadership transcends the individual” (Marion & Uhl-Bien, 2001). Implementation of teacher leadership advocates more than just dividing up responsibilities but instead inherently invests power in leaders other than building administrators.

If it is indeed true “success of school reforms will require teacher leaders who make their work public” (Margolis, 2012, p. 294), than all administrators need to do more to define, cultivate and sustain teacher leaders outside their classroom as well as within. A robust teacher leadership pipeline has the potential to be developed leading to greater capacity building for teacher and administrators alike only if the district is willing to analyze how it is utilizing teacher leaders currently.

## References

- Akerman, R. H., Donaldson, G. A., & Van Der Bogert, R. (1996). *Making sense as a school leader*. San Francisco: CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Avery, G. C. (2004) *Understanding Leadership: Paradigms and Cases*, London: Sage.
- Avolio, J., Walumbwa, O., & Weber, J. (2009). Leadership: Current theories, research, and future directions. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 60(1), 421-449.
- Ballek, K., O'Rourke, A., Provenzano, J., & Bellamy, T. (2005). Keys in cultivating principals and teacher leaders. *National Staff Development Council Journal*, 26(2), 42-49.
- Barth, R. S. (2013). The time is ripe again. *Educational Leadership*, 71(2), 10-16.
- Beachum, F., & Dentith, A. M. (2004). Teacher leaders creating cultures of school renewal and transformation [Electronic version]. *The Educational Forum*, 68, 276-286.
- Bedell, C. P., & Burrello, L. C. (2006). A cultural shift toward distributed leadership [Electronic version]. *Journal of School Leadership*, 16, 740-771.
- Blankenstein, A. (2013). *Failure is NOT an option*. (3<sup>rd</sup> edition). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.
- Bolman, L. G., & Deal, T. E., (2008). *Reframing organizations: Artistry, choice, and leadership* (4<sup>th</sup> edition). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Bowers, D. G. & Seashore, S. E. (1996). *Predicting organizational effectiveness with a four factor theory of leadership*. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 11, 238-263.

- Bunnell, T. (2008). The Yew Chung model of dual culture co-principalship: A unique form of distributed leadership [Electronic version]. *International Journal of Leadership in Action, 11*, 191-210.
- Childs-Bowen, D., Moller, G., & Scrivner, J. (2000). Principals: Leaders of leaders. *National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) Bulletin, 84*(616), 27-34.
- Chirichello, M. (2004). Collective leadership: Reinventing the principalship [Electronic version]. *Kappa Delta Pi Record, 40*(3), 119-123.
- Conzemius, A. & O'Neill, J. (2001). *Building shared responsibility for student learning*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.
- Creswell, J.W. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Darling-Hammond, L. (2001). *The right to learn: A blueprint for creating schools that work*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Deal, T. E., & Kennedy, A. A. (1982). *Corporate cultures*. Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley.
- Denscombe, M. (1998). *The good research guide for small scale social research projects*. (3<sup>rd</sup> edition). New York, NY: Open University Press.
- Devaney, K. (1987). *The lead teacher: Ways to begin*. New York: Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy.
- DuFour, R., & Mattos, M. (2013). How do principals really improve schools? *Educational Leadership, Vol. 70 No. 7, 34-40*.

- Fayol, H. (2011). General principles of management. In J. M. Shafritz, J. S. Ott, & Y. S. Jang (Eds.), *Classics of organization theory* (7<sup>th</sup> ed., pp. 52 – 64). Boston, MA: Wadsworth. (Reprinted from *General and industrial management*, pp. 19-42, trans. by Constance Storrs, 1949, London: Pitman)
- Fiedler, F. E. (1967). *A theory of leadership effectiveness*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Fink, D., & Brayman, C. (2006). School leadership succession and the challenges of change [Electronic version]. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 42, 62-89.
- Friedrich, T. L., Vessey, W. B., Schuelke, M. J., Ruark, G. A., & Mumford, M. D. (2009). A framework for understanding collective leadership: The selective utilization of leader and team expertise within networks [Electronic version]. *The Leadership Quarterly* 20, 933-958.
- Fullan, M. (2005). *Leadership & sustainability: Systems thinkers in action*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Fuller, E. (2012, July 16). Examining principal turnover. [blog post]. Retrieved from Shanker Blog at <http://chankerblog.org/?p=6196>.
- Gabriel, J. G. (2005). *How to thrive as a teacher leader*. Alexandria, VA: ACSD.
- Gajda, R., & Militello, M. (2008). Recommitting and retaining school principals: What we can learn from practicing administrators [Electronic version]. *AASA Journal of Scholarship and Practice*, 5(2), 14-20.
- Gardner, H. (1995). *Leading minds: an anatomy of leadership*. New York: basic Books.
- Gilman, D. A., & Lanman-Givens, B. (2001). Where have all the principals gone? [Electronic version]. *Educational Leadership*, 58(8), 12-1 A.



- Goleman, D. (2011). What makes a leader. In *Harvard Business Review's 10 must reads on leadership* (p. 4-34). Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Publishing Corporation. (Reprinted from *Harvard Business Review*, June, 1996, Harvard: Harvard Business Review)
- Gonzales, S., & Lambert, L. (2001). Teacher leadership in professional development schools: Emerging conceptions, identities, and practices [Electronic version]. *Journal of School Leadership, 11*, 6-24.
- Goodwin, R. H., Cunningham, M. L., & Childress, R. (2003). The changing role of the secondary principal [Electronic version]. *NASSP Bulletin, 87*(634), 26-42.
- Grubb, W. N., & Flessa, J. J. (2006). "A job too big for one": Multiple principals and other nontraditional approaches to school leadership [Electronic version]. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 42*, 518-550.
- Gulick, L. (2011). Notes on the theory of organization. In J. M. Shafritz, J. S. Ott, & Y. S. Jang (Eds.), *Classics of organization theory* (7<sup>th</sup> ed., pp. 83-91). Boston, MA:Wadsworth. (Reprinted from *Papers on the science of administration* , pp. 3-13, ed. By Luther Gulick and Lyndall Urwick, 1937, Institute of Public Administration).
- Hatch, J. A. (2002). *Doing qualitative research in educational settings*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Hargreaves, A., & Fink, D. (2003, May). Sustaining leadership. *Phi Delta Kappan, 84*(9), 693-700.

- Hargreaves, A., & Fink, D. (2006). *Sustainable leadership*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Hargreaves, A., & Shirley, D. (2009). *The fourth way: The inspiring future for educational change*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.
- Harrison, C., & Killion, J. (2007). Ten roles for teacher leaders [Electronic version]. *Educational Leadership*, 65, 14-11.
- Heifetz R., & Laurie, D. (2011). The work of leadership. In Harvard Business Review, *Harvard business review's 10 must reads on leadership* (pp. 57-78). Boston, MA: Harvard Business Review Press. (Reprinted from *Harvard Business Review*, 1997, Harvard: Harvard Business Review).
- Hoerr, T. (2013). Who decides what? *Educational Leadership*, 70(7), 86-87.
- House, R. J., (1971). A Path-Goal theory of leadership effectiveness. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 1(XVI) 321-38.
- Ingersoll, R. (2007). Short on power, long on responsibility.[Electronic version]. *Educational Leadership*, 65(1), 20-25.
- Institute for Educational Leadership. (2000). *Leadership for student learning: Reinventing the principalship*. Washington, D.C.: Author
- Johnson, S. M., & Kardos, S. (2007). Professional Culture and the promise of colleagues. In S. M. Johnson, *Finders and keepers: Helping new teachers survive and thrive in our schools*. (pp.139-166). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Joyce, B., & Showers, B. (2002). Student achievement through professional development. In B. Joyce & B. Showers (Eds.), *Designing training and peer coaching: Our need for learning*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

- Kotter, J. P., (2011). What leaders really do. In *Harvard Business Review*, *Harvard business review's 10 must reads on leadership* (pp. 137-161). Boston, MA: Harvard Business Review Press. (Reprinted from *Harvard Business Review*, May, 1990).
- Kouzes, J. M., & Posner, B. Z. (1987). *The leadership challenge: how to get extraordinary things done in organizations*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Lambert, L. (2003). Leadership redefined: An evocative context for teacher leadership [Electronic version]. *School Leadership & Management*, 23, 421-430.
- Lambert, L. (2005). What does leadership capacity really mean? [Electronic version]. *Journal of Staff Development*, 26(2), 38-40. Business Review.
- Leithwood, K. & Jantzi, D. (2000). The effects of transformation leadership on organizational conditions and student engagement with school. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 38(2), 112-129.
- Lichtenstein, B., Dooley, K., and Lumpkin, G.T. (2006). "Measuring emergence in the dynamics of new venture creation," *Journal of Business Venturing*, ISSN 08839026, 21: 153-175.
- Lincoln, Y., & Guba, E.G. (1985). *Naturalist Inquiry*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Little, J. W. (1988). Assessing the prospects for teacher leadership. In A. Lieberman (Ed.), *Building a professional culture in schools* (pp. 78-106). New York: Teachers College Press.

- Louis, K. & Leithwood, K., Wahlstrom, K. & Anderson, S. (2010). *Learning from leadership: Investigating the links to improved student learning*. New York: Wallace Foundation.
- Louis, K., & Wahlstrom, K. (2011). Principals as cultural leaders. *Phi Delta Kapan*, 92(5), 52-56.
- Margolis, J. (2012). Hybrid teachers and the new professional development ecology. *Professional Development in Education*, 38(2), 291-315.
- Marquardt, M. J. (2011). *Building the learning organization: Achieving strategic advantage through a commitment to learning* (3rd ed.). Boston, MA: Nicholas Brealey Publishing.
- Marion, R. & Uhl-Bien, M. (2001). Leadership in complex organizations, *The Leadership Quarterly* 12, pp. 389–418.
- McGregor, D. M. (2011) The human side of enterprise. In J. M. Shafritz, J. S. Ott & Y. S. Yang (Eds.), *Classics of organizational theory* (7<sup>th</sup> ed., pp. 222-233). Boston, MA: Wadsworth. (Reprinted from *Management Review*, pp. 183-188, November 1957, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall).
- Mehra, A., Smith, B. Dixon, A., & Robertson, B. (2006). Distributed leadership in teams: The network of leadership perceptions and team performance. *The Leadership Quarterly*. 17, 232-45.
- Merriam, S. (1998). *Qualitative research in education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc.
- Metropolitan Life Insurance Company. (2013). *The MetLife Survey of the American Teacher: Challenges for School Leadership*. New York: Author.

- Miller, R. J., & Rowan, B. (2006). Effects of organic management on student achievement. *American Educational Research Journal*, 43(2), 219-253.
- Mintzberg, H. (2011). The five basic parts of the organization. In J. M. Shafritz, J. S. Ott & Y. S. Yang (Eds.), *Classics of organizational theory* (7<sup>th</sup> ed., pp. 222-233). Boston, MA: Wadsworth. (Reprinted from *The structure of organizations: A synthesis of the research*, pp. 18-34, 1979, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall) 561.
- Murphy, J. (2005). *Connecting teacher-leadership to school improvement*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- National Center for Education Statistics. (2008). *Schools and staffing survey*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from [http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/sass/tables/sass0708\\_011\\_t12n\\_02.asp](http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/sass/tables/sass0708_011_t12n_02.asp).
- Nazareno, L. (2013). Portrait of a teacher-led school. *Educational Leadership*. 71(2), 50-54.
- New Teacher Project. (2012). *Perspectives of irreplaceable teachers*. New York: Author.
- Northouse, P.G. (2010). *Leadership theory and practice* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). New Delhi, India: Sage Publications.
- Papa, F., & Baxter, I. (2005). Dispelling the myths and confirming the truths of the imminent shortage of principals: The case of New York State [Electronic version]. *Planning and Changing*, 36, 217-234.
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Pearce, C. L., & Conger, J. A. (2003). *Shared leadership: Reframing the hows and whys of leadership*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- Pink, Daniel. (2011). *Drive: The surprising truth about what motivates us*. New York: Riverhead Books.
- Portin, B. (2009). *Assessing the effectiveness of school leaders: New directions and new processes*. New York: Wallace Foundation.
- Printy, S. M. (2008). Leadership for teacher learning: A community of practice perspective [Electronic version]. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 44, 187-226.
- Richardson, L. M. (2003). Helping teachers participate competently in school leadership [Electronic version]. *Clearing House*, 76, 202-205.
- Rooke D., & Torbert, W. R. (2011). Seven transformations of leadership. In Harvard Business Review, *Harvard business review's 10 must reads on leadership* (pp. 137-161). Boston, MA: Harvard Business Review Press. (Reprinted from *Harvard Business Review*, 2005, Harvard: Harvard Business Review).
- Rost, J. C. (1991). *Leadership for the twenty-first century*. New York: Praeger.
- Sacks, A. (2012, October 17). Beyond tokenism: Toward the next stage in teacher leadership. *Education Week*. Retrieved from [www.edweek.org/tm/articles/2012/10/17/tl\\_sacks.html](http://www.edweek.org/tm/articles/2012/10/17/tl_sacks.html).
- Shafritz, J.M., J. S. Ott & Y. S. Yang (Eds.), *Classics of organizational theory* (7<sup>th</sup> ed., pp. 320-329). Boston, MA: Wadsworth. (Reprinted from *Power failure in management crisis*, July-August, 1979, Harvard: Harvard Business Review).
- Schein, E. H. *Organizational culture and leadership*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1992.

- Schiff, T. (2002, Jan.). Principals' readiness for reform: A comprehensive approach  
*Principal Leadership*, 2(5), 21-26.
- Schutte, T. J., & Hackmann, D. G. (2006). Licensed but not leading: Issues influencing individuals' pursuit of the secondary principalship [Electronic version]. *Journal of School Leadership*, 16, 438-466.
- Senge, P., Combron-McCabe, N., Dutton, J., & Kleiner, A. (2000). *Schools that learn*. New York: Currency.
- Seashore Louis, K., Wahlstrom, K. L., Michlin, M., Gordon, M., Thomas, E., & Leithwood, K., (2010). *Learning from leadership: Investigating the links to Improved student learning*. Retrieved from [http://www.cehd.umn.edu/carei/Leadership/Learning-from-Leadership\\_Final-Research-Report\\_July-2010.pdf](http://www.cehd.umn.edu/carei/Leadership/Learning-from-Leadership_Final-Research-Report_July-2010.pdf).
- Seidman, I., (2006). *Interviewing as qualitative research*. (3<sup>rd</sup> edition) New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Sergiovanni, T. J. (1998). Leadership as pedagogy, capital development and school effectiveness [Electronic version]. *Leadership in Education*, 1, 37-46.
- Sergiovanni, T. J. (2000). *The lifeworld of leadership*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Sheppard, B., Hurley, N., Dibbon, D. (2010, May). *Distributed leadership, teacher moral and teacher enthusiasm: unraveling the leadership pathways to school success*. Paper presented at American Educational Research Association, Denver, CO.
- Smith, J. A., Flowers, P., & Larkin, M. (2009). *Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis: Theory, method, and research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Spillane, J. (2006). *Distributed leadership*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.

- Stake, R. E. (2005). Qualitative case studies. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research (3rd ed.)* (pp. 443-466). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Suzuki, S., (2006). *Zen Mind, beginner's mind*. Boston, Mass., Shambhala.
- Swanson, J. (2000, April). *What differentiates an excellent teacher from a teacher leader?* [Electronic version]. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA.
- Taylor, F. (1916). The Principles of scientific management (*Bulletin of the Taylor Society*). In Shafritz, J. S. Ott & Y. S. Yang (Eds.), *Classics of organizational theory* (7<sup>th</sup> ed. Pp.65-76). Boston, MA: Wadsworth.
- Teoh, M. & Coggins, D. (2013). *Great expectations: Teachers views on elevating the profession*. Boston: Teach Plus. Retrieved from [www.teachplus.org/uploads/Documents/1350917768\\_Teach%20Plus%20Great%20Expectations.pdf](http://www.teachplus.org/uploads/Documents/1350917768_Teach%20Plus%20Great%20Expectations.pdf).
- Wallace Foundation. (2010). Reimagining the job of leading schools: Lessons from a 10-year journey. *Journal of Staff Development*, 31(2), p. 10-12, 14, 16-17.
- Wright, L. L. (2008). Merits and limitations of distributed leadership: Experiences and understandings of school principals [Electronic version]. *Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy*, 69, 1-33.
- 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.



Zaleznik, A. (1977, May-June). Managers and leaders. Are they Different? *Harvard Business Review*, 55, 67-78.

Zinn, L. F. (1997, March). *Supports and barriers to teacher leadership: Reports of teacher leaders* [Electronic version]. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago, IL.

## APPENDIX A

**Request of District**

May 13, 2013

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen:

My name is Dawn Smith, and I am an English Teacher at [redacted]. I am also a doctoral student enrolled in the Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis doctoral program at the University of Missouri. I am about to begin working on my dissertation, and I would like to request permission to conduct research in the [redacted] School District, as approval is required before undergoing Institutional Review Board (IRB) procedures.

The purpose of my dissertation is to explore administrators' perceptions of teacher leadership. As responsibilities for principals continue to increase, numerous forms of teacher leadership are also increasing. Most of the literature regarding teacher leadership is oriented from the teacher leader's perspective, and fails to include the perceptions of administrators. Specifically, I am interested in how administrators define and cultivate teacher leadership in their buildings.

The benefits of this study include critical reflection on administrators' leadership philosophy and professional practices. Discovering how administrators perceive the concept of teacher leadership may lead to findings, which may yield new practices or areas for improvement in utilizing teacher leaders.

In order to explore administrators' perceptions of teacher leadership, I would like permission to interview school administrators who have served at least five years as a building leader. If you have any questions or would like to meet with me in order to discuss this, my phone number is 816-714-6569, and my email is [dawn.smith@nwmissouri.edu](mailto:dawn.smith@nwmissouri.edu). In addition, the chair of my dissertation committee is Dr. Carol Edmonds; her phone number is 1-660-562-1258 and her email is [CAKE@nwmissouri.edu](mailto:CAKE@nwmissouri.edu).

Last of all, I will need a signed letter on official district letterhead granting me permission to research in your school district. I have already written a detailed letter that meets our strict IRB requirements, and have included it here.

I look forward to hearing from you and I appreciate your time in considering my request.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Dawn Smith

## APPENDIX B

**District Permission to Conduct Research**

7/15/2013

Dear Instructional Review Board:

We granted Mrs. Dawn Smith, a doctoral student enrolled in the Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis Ed.D. program at the University of Missouri, permission to conduct her research investigation with the \_\_\_\_\_ School District on 6/20/2013 as a Data Task Force. Signatures on the \_\_\_\_\_ Research Checklist and Approval form include those of \_\_\_\_\_. We believe the data collection for her dissertation entitled “Building Administrators’ Perceptions of Teacher Leadership” will occur at individual schools during the 2013-2014 academic year.

Mrs. Smith will contact individual principals of schools in order to interview them about their perceptions about teacher leadership and fostering and sustaining a shared leadership culture in their respective buildings.

I am aware that with principals’ signed consent, Mrs. Smith will interview them and audio-record the interviews.

If you require further clarification, please contact me at \_\_\_\_\_.

Sincerely,

Assessment Coordinator  
Data Task Force Co-Chair

## APPENDIX C

**Letter to Administrators**

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen:

My name is Dawn Smith, and I am an English Teacher at \_\_\_\_\_ and the English Language Arts Coordinator for the \_\_\_\_\_ School District. I am also a doctoral student enrolled in the Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis doctoral program at the University of Missouri. I have been granted permission by the University of Missouri's Institutional Review Board to conduct a research study for my dissertation, titled "Administrators' Perceptions of Teacher Leadership." In addition, your district has given me permission to contact you for my study.

The purpose of my dissertation is to explore administrators' perceptions of teacher leadership. As responsibilities for administrators continue to increase, numerous forms of teacher leadership are also increasing. Most of the literature regarding teacher leadership is oriented from the teacher leader's perspective, and fails to include the perceptions of administrators. Specifically, I am interested in how administrators' define and cultivate teacher leadership.

The benefits of this study include critical reflection on administrators' leadership philosophy and professional practices. Discovering how administrators perceive the concept of teacher leadership may lead to findings, which may yield new practices or areas for improvement in utilizing teacher leaders.

I would like to request your participation in my dissertation study. I know your time is extremely valuable. Your participation in this study will require an audio-recorded interview, lasting approximately one hour, a short survey and a brief follow up request asking for your verification of the interview transcript.

I would greatly appreciate your participation in this study and look forward to hearing from you. I will call within one week of this email in order to schedule an interview. If you have any questions or would like to meet with me in order to discuss this, my phone number is 816-714-6569, and my email is [dawn.smith@\\_\\_\\_\\_\\_](mailto:dawn.smith@_____). In addition, the chair of my dissertation committee is Dr. Carol Edmonds; her phone number is 1-660-562-1258 and her email is [CAKE@nwmissouri.edu](mailto:CAKE@nwmissouri.edu).

Sincerely,

Mrs. Dawn Smith

## APPENDIX D

### Informed Consent Document

#### Consent to Participate in Research

Title of Study: Administrators' Perceptions of Teacher Leadership

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Mrs. Dawn Smith a Doctoral student at the University of Missouri. This study contributes to Mrs. Smith's dissertation, leading to an Ed.D. in Educational Leadership. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you are an administrator in a local school having served as such for at least five years.

#### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of my dissertation is to explore administrators' perceptions of teacher leadership. As responsibilities for administrators continue to increase, numerous forms of teacher leadership are also increasing. Most of the literature regarding teacher leadership is oriented from the teacher leader's perspective, and fails to include the perceptions of administrators. Specifically, I am interested in how administrators' define and cultivate teacher leadership.

#### Procedures

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will do the following things:

1. Complete a short survey regarding teacher leadership.
2. Participate in an interview that will last approximately one hour
3. Participate in a brief follow up interview in order to review the initial transcript.

#### Potential Risks and Discomforts

- 1) Questions are about perceptions of teacher leadership and leadership experiences. There is the risk of recalling unpleasant memories or practices. You may decline to answer any question.
- 2) There is the risk of confidentiality concerns and the worry that responses may be traced back to you. To protect your identity, pseudonyms will be used. In addition, all transcripts will be analyzed together as one unit, rather than by building. You will only see your own transcript, not that of the other participants.

#### Potential Benefit to Participants and Society

The benefits of this study include critical reflection on principals' leadership philosophy and professional practices. Discovering how principals perceive the concept of teacher leadership may lead to findings, which yield new practices or areas for improvement in utilizing teacher leaders.

#### Confidentiality

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as

required by law. To protect your identity, pseudonyms will be used.

The first interview will be audio-recorded with your consent. The interview will be transcribed verbatim by a paid transcriber.

As part of the follow-up email, you will be given an opportunity to review the transcript of this interview and clarify any data. Only the researcher will have access to the recordings, which will be stored for seven years on a password-protected computer before being erased.

The transcripts, raw notes, and consent forms will be stored in nonsequential order, separate from each other, in a locked file cabinet for seven years before being destroyed.

### **Participation and Withdrawal**

You can choose whether to participate in this study. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you do not wish to answer and still remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which in the opinion of the researcher warrant doing so. Your participation or non-participation will not affect your employment status or any other personal consideration or right you usually expect.

### **Identification of Investigators**

If you have any questions or would like to meet with me in order to discuss this, my phone number is 816-714-6569, and my email is [dawn.smith@](mailto:dawn.smith@). In addition, the chair of my dissertation committee is Dr. Carol Edmonds; her phone number is 1-660-562-1258 and her email is [CAKE@nwmissouri.edu](mailto:CAKE@nwmissouri.edu).

### **Rights of Research Subjects**

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, please contact the University of Missouri Institutional Review Board at 573-882-9585 or [umcresearchcirb@missouri.edu](mailto:umcresearchcirb@missouri.edu).

**CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE**

I understand the procedures and conditions of my participation described above. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

Name of Participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**CONSENT TO BE AUDIO-RECORDED FOR INTERVIEW**

I consent to be audio-recorded during the first, approximately hour-long interview. I understand I can decline to be recorded at any time.

Name of Participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX E

### Interview Questions

#### **SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE PARTICIPANT**

1. How long have you been an administrator?
2. Now that you are an administrator, what are your responsibilities?

#### **SECTION 2: DEFINITION OF TEACHER LEADERSHIP**

3. What are building administrators' perceptions of leadership?
4. What are building administrators' perceptions of teacher leadership?
5. What kind(s) of leadership do building administrators share?

#### **SECTION 3: CULTIVATING TEACHER LEADERSHIP**

6. How does your own leadership style cultivate teacher leadership?
7. How do administrators sustain teacher leadership in their buildings?
8. What concerns do building administrators have regarding teacher leadership?

You've shared a lot of information with me about your background and your leadership philosophy, and this has been very helpful to my research into administrators' perceptions of teacher leadership. At this point, would you summarize any final thoughts about teacher leadership and its role in school leadership, or what teacher leaders means to you as an administrator?

Thank you for your time and assistance, and when the transcript of this interview is ready, I will contact you for a shorter follow-up interview. I'll share the transcript with you, ask if you feel you have represented yourself accurately, let you know if I have any emergent interpretations or questions, and ask you if I am accurate in my interpretation of your data. This meeting will not be audio-recorded, but I will take notes.



## APPENDIX F

**Questionnaire, Interview Confirmation and Survey Email**

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Thank you for agreeing to be part of my dissertation study. The first portion of my data collection involves completion of a short survey. Here is the link to that survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/NKR8985>. While the survey does ask for your name, please be assured that I guarantee complete confidentiality of responses. Furthermore, the survey results, interview transcripts, raw notes, and consent forms will only be accessible by this researcher and will be stored in nonsequential order, separate from each other, in a locked file cabinet for seven years before being destroyed.

Again, thank you for your time and I look forward to our interview on \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_.

Sincerely,  
Dawn Smith

## VITA

Dawn Michelle (Hand) Smith has always loved school! Her mother was a teacher and Dawn, wanting to be just like her mom, used to “play school” using her bedroom walls as a chalk board and making up worksheets for her little brother to complete...which she then very seriously graded.

Dawn believes the first commitment one should make as a teacher is to constantly strive to be qualified for the job. As such, she earned a B. S. in Secondary Education emphasis in English from Truman State University, an M. A. in Secondary Education emphasis English from Northwest Missouri State University, and an Ed. D in Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis from the University of Missouri. She has also earned National Board Certification and is trained as an Advanced Placement instructor in Language and Composition and as an International Baccalaureate Instructor in English Year One, Theory of Knowledge, and Extended Essay.

The second commitment one should make as a teacher is to try new things. Therefore, throughout her career, Dawn has taught seventh through twelfth grades, Regular, Honors, Advanced Placement, and International Baccalaureate courses. She earned Teacher of the Year in 2010.

The third commitment a teacher should make is to try to understand “the other side of the desk.” In other words, become a teacher leader. Dawn is currently serving as a Department Chair, Building Leader, and District Core Coordinator for English.

Dawn believes the fourth commitment and *most important one of all* is for teachers to remember to be kind. One can accomplish a lot more with humor,

compassion, and mercy than one ever can with just knowledge. Thus, the most important things in her classroom are the pictures and notes on her desk from her students.

Dawn lives out in the country with her husband of twenty-five years and their two children: Fletcher, 20 and Mitchell, 17. Her hobbies include still playing school, gardening, reading, and traveling.