VITA

April Holder

EDUCATION

2014   Indiana State University, Terre Haute, Indiana
               Ph.D. in Educational Leadership

2001   Indiana University Southeast, New Albany, Indiana
               M.A. in Elementary Education

1999   Indiana University Southeast, New Albany, Indiana
               B.A in Elementary Education

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

2010 – 2014   Greater Clark County Schools, Wilson Elementary, Jeffersonville, Indiana
               Principal

2009 – 2014   Indiana University Southeast, New Albany, Indiana
               Adjunct Professor

2007 – 2012   East Washington School Corporation, East Washington Elementary
               Pekin, Indiana
               Elementary Assistant Principal

2006 – 2007   Greater Clark County Schools, Pleasant Ridge Elementary School
               Charlestown, Indiana
               Reading First Instructional Coach

1999 – 2006   Greater Clark County Schools, Parkwood Elementary School
               Clarksville, Indiana
               Teacher

IDENTIFYING, CULTIVATING, AND UTILIZING ELEMENTARY TEACHER LEADERS

_____

A Dissertation

Presented to

The College of Graduate and Professional Studies

Department of Educational Leadership

Indiana State University

Terre Haute, Indiana

_____

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

_____

by

April Holder

December 2014

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Committee Chair: Steve Gruenert, Ph.D.

      Associate Professor of Educational Leadership

      Indiana State University

Committee Member: Ryan Donlan, Ed.D.

      Assistant Professor of Educational Leadership

      Indiana State University

Committee Member: Terry McDaniel, Ph.D.

      Associate Professor of Educational Leadership

      Indiana State University

Committee Member: Steven Daeschner, Ph.D.

      Superintendent

      Greater Clark County Schools

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate how elementary principals identify, cultivate, and utilize teacher leaders within high-growth elementary schools. For the purpose of this study, high-growth schools are schools that surpassed the state average of high growth for the bottom 25% and top 75% in English/language arts and math for two consecutive years based on the Indiana Department of Education A-F Accountability Report Card. Through this qualitative study, the roles of the principals in three similar Indiana elementary schools were analyzed in regard to the commonalities of the identification of teacher leaders, cultivating talent and leadership, and the utilization of teacher leaders to improve student achievement.

iv

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To my husband who has given 110% to make this possible by being the taxi driver, mom, dad, cook, counselor, maid, and everything to our four children so that I could put in the extra hours to make this possible. You are truly my better half, I love you, Don.

To my children, Cortney, Ethan, Abby, and Avery, I have given my all to be the best example possible of high work ethic balanced with love and family. The four of you have motivated, loved, and provided joy and giggles to lift my spirit and my heart.

To my leadership team, John, Linda, Jessica, Diane, and Chrissie, I am truly inspired by your energy, leadership, and commitment to children. You are the reason I wanted to learn more about teacher leadership so that I could be the best instructional leader to support you in return. John, thanks for your red pen markings and professional dialogue and arguing that made me fight to find the right words.

To the instructional leaders who took the time to support my quest to learn, I continue to reflect and explore ways to follow their lead and example. Mrs. Korfhage and Dr. Daeschner, you have both left a footprint beside me on my journey to be a great leader.

To my New Albany group, Travis, Tim, Amy, Jennifer, and the best study partner a person could have, Kim, I thank you for making me laugh and motivating me to keep pushing. I am truly blessed to work with such a great group of leaders in Greater Clark County Schools.

To Wilson Elementary School for being my real research lab for the last five years. The students, parents, and staff have tested my leadership and stretched my capacity. I am blessed to

have been given this opportunity and responsibility. I dedicate this research to you, so that

together we can continue to make gains in student achievement and leadership.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER 1

THE PROBLEM

School leadership within the elementary school has become more complex and requires a variety of specialized skills and abilities. The ability to develop teacher leaders is crucial for today's administrator (Danielson, 2007). The role of school administrators has evolved into a multifaceted pursuit of excellence. Shared leadership is a necessity in order to stay current with the fast pace of educational trends.

The Indiana Department of Education (IDOE; 2012) has listed leadership and talent development as a competency to rate the effectiveness of principals. Competency 1.1.4 requires administrators to encourage and support teacher leadership and progression on career ladders, systematically provide opportunities for emerging leaders to distinguish themselves, and give them the authority to complete the task and recognizing and celebrate emerging leaders (IDOE, 2012). In addition, the demand for student achievement and accountability is also under heightened scrutiny.

Administrators who develop leadership teams who support learning find the stresses of change and accountability easier to manage (Gregory & Kuzmich, 2007). An important step in creating schools successful in helping all students learn at a higher level is to recognize how this challenge requires more than a heroic individual leader whose will and skill compensates for the

deficiencies of the staff (DuFour, 2008). Elementary principals must embrace teacher leaders in order to ensure academic success.

The evolution of the role of the elementary teacher has occurred inside and outside of the classroom. Inside the classroom new initiatives and the adoption of national common core standards have increased instructional rigor (Kendall, 2011). Students' ability to problem solve, collaborate, and think critically has taken lessons out of the textbook and into relevant modern day problems and exploration. Teachers are able to collaborate through networks that span the globe and through all content areas. Outside of the classroom many teachers have stepped into teacher leadership roles to share their talents and success with student achievement. Teacher leaders are effective teachers who exhibit best practice, professional growth, and heart (Meredith, 2007).

The role of teacher leader has also evolved from a grade-level chair who planned field trips and holiday parties to a building-level expert or liaison with a voice in policy and decision making, student data analysis, job embedded professional development and instructional practice. Teacher leadership can occur within a team or department, within the school or beyond the school (Danielson, 2007). "By understanding the phenomenon of teacher leadership and helping teachers develop the skills required to act as leaders, we will improve schools and help teachers realize their full potential" (Danielson, 2007, p. 15). Teacher leaders' roles can include professional learning communities, teacher mentorships, instructional coaches, and building leadership teams. School administrators need to be adequately prepared and purposeful in developing these talents among teacher leaders and by providing opportunities for teacher leaders to thrive and improve student achievement (Gabriel & Farmer, 2009).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate how elementary principals identify, cultivate, and utilize teacher leaders within high-growth elementary schools. For the purpose of this study, high-growth schools are schools that surpassed the state average of high growth for the bottom 25% and top 75% in English/language arts and math for two consecutive years based on the IDOE A-F Accountability Report Card (IDOE, 2014). This information will help elementary principals create a culture of collaboration and breed strong teacher leaders. Three elementary schools in the state of Indiana were chosen for this study. These schools were chosen based on similarities in grade-level configuration and student achievement. Interviews were conducted to determine the role of the principal and to find similarities in leadership identification, cultivation, and utilization. The goal of this study was to provide elementary principals with knowledge of how high-growth schools are thriving with strong teacher leaders. Indiana administrators could benefit from current research on the impact of teacher leaders within a school where the principal identifies, cultivates, and utilizes teacher leaders to improve student achievement.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the inquiry and findings of this qualitative study in regard to identifying, cultivating, and utilizing teacher leaders to improve student achievement.

1. What is the role of the elementary principal in identifying, cultivating and utilizing teacher leaders to improve student achievement?

2. How are teacher leaders identified or recruited?

3. What training is needed to cultivate teacher leaders for the administrator and teacher leaders?

4. How are teacher leaders utilized within the school?

Personal Statement

When I look back at my resume and reflect on the teachers, principals, and administrators who provided me with exemplary leadership role models and allowed me the opportunity to cultivate my leadership and knowledge, I applaud them. Early in my career, someone noticed my desire to improve student achievement and my own leadership skills. I was fortunate enough to work with three administrators who had different styles and talents. Each one allowed me to take on leadership roles and responsibilities. Each taught me the value of collaboration and the need for shared leadership.

The work of an elementary administrator is never done. The ability to delegate and disperse leadership opportunities is a necessity. However, passing the work is not the same as developing teacher leaders. I aspire to be among the preeminent principals that are able to cultivate teacher leaders and improve student achievement. I believe that shared leadership is needed to impact student achievement. I hope to ascertain knowledge from successful principals in the identification, cultivation, and utilization of teacher leaders.

I have been a public school educator for 15 years. I taught at a Title I school and then moved to instructional coach. After completing my Master's degree, I served as an assistant principal for three years in a small rural district where I also completed my high ability license before moving to my current position. I have been the principal for the last five years in a K-5 school where the majority of teachers are young and are always encouraged to grow and pursue teacher leadership.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following definitions are provided for clarification in understanding this study:

Elementary school is defined as a public school that educates kindergarten to fifth-grade students.

High growth schools are schools that surpassed the state average of high growth for the bottom 25% and top 75% in English/language arts and math for two consecutive years based on The IDOE A-F Accountability Report Card (IDOE, 2014).

Leadership cultivation includes the scouting, training, time and resources used to develop teacher leaders (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2012).

Leadership identification includes the characteristics, traits and qualities that effective teacher leaders demonstrate (Pillars, 2013).

Leadership utilization is a time, assignment, or professional development that allows a teacher leader to share responsibility for student achievement by collaborating with others and sharing best practice or instructional techniques (Boyd-Dimock & McGree, 1995).

Principal is a state-licensed building-level administrator who works full time in a public elementary school.

Student achievement is performance on a state standardized achievement test.

Teachers are state certified instructor for students in grades kindergarten through fifth grade.

Teacher leader is a teacher who works in an elementary school and shares responsibility for student achievement by collaborating with others and sharing best practice or instructional techniques.

Limitations and Delimitations

This research is limited due to the scope of inquiry that narrowed and focused on three elementary schools. These schools were selected based on the principals' responses that teacher leaders had a strong impact on student achievement and voluntarily wanted to participate. In addition, these schools shared similar academic growth as demonstrated by student achievement scores that surpassed the state average of high growth for the bottom 25% and top 75% in English/language arts and math for two consecutive years, based on the IDOE A-F Accountability Report Card (IDOE, 2014).

This study was delimited to three schools and included three administrators, six teacher leaders, three focus groups, and a variety of school documents from each site. This study did not include all certified staff in the data collected nor did it allow for a secondary educator to participate. Even with the limitations of this study, the findings can be used by administrators to identify, cultivate, and utilize teacher leaders.

This study included preset and emergent coding procedures. The use of both types could have created an opportunity for the researcher's bias to influence the themes. In addition, the decision to cross analyze principal interview data could have created a secondary opportunity for bias to effect the themes. I controlled for bias by using only textual data and quotes from interviews to create the themes and findings of this study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Leadership is not about speed, ideas, efficiency, or power. . . . It is about knowing your

own limitations and celebrating the gifts of others. It is growing in wisdom,

understanding the number of our days, and seeking to understand rather than be

understood. It is caring for people, always hoping for, and expecting the best. It is being

brave enough to be vulnerable in front of others. It is seeing the big picture of where

things are, and building a road to the future with limited casualties. It is helping each

person to sing their song from the heart, and leading the band in praise to their Maker.

(Beerens, 2010, para. 1-7)

This poem written by Dan Beerens (2010) set the tone for this literature review. The

demands of the modern principalship surpass the ability of one person; in order to thrive, school

improvement depends more than ever on the active involvement of teacher leaders (Danielson,

2007). This literature review examined the historical evolution of teacher leaders, the principal's

role, identification of teacher leaders, cultivation of teacher leaders, utilization of teacher leaders,

obstacles encountered by teacher leaders, and how teacher leaders impact student achievement.

Leadership

The word leadership resonates differently among rank and file. Throughout history

theorists have defined, redefined, and tried to refine leadership and what it means. Different

forms of leadership and leadership theory use adjectives such as instructional, participative, democratic, transformational, moral, and strategic. These descriptors capture different styles and methodologies but share a commonality with essential objectives that are critical to any organization's effectiveness—helping the organization set a defensible set of directions and influencing members to move in those directions (Leithwood et al., 2004).

Historians will describe the 20th century as a period of critical change with regard to educational perspectives and policies on public education (Elmore, 2000). Elmore's (2000) leadership theory predicted failure in social isolation and called for administrators to foster teacher leaders by creating interdependencies that stretch over various talents and roles. Distributed leadership is defined as an organized system of specialists who are expert-based on their interests, aptitudes, prior knowledge, and skills. An administrator must understand people and how teachers vary in order to tap their full potential. Education is a knowledge-intensive enterprise, and principals need to distribute the responsibility of leadership (Elmore, 2000).

Fullan (2007) completed a case study on six leadership styles: coercive, authoritative, affiliative, democratic, pacesetting, and coaching. Fullan's theory of change included leaders who have a moral purpose built on relationships, who have knowledge-building skills, who have a solid understanding of change, who have a knowledge of creation and sharing, and who have coherence making. His theory focused on reshaping the culture to include leadership at all levels. In an increasingly complex and fast-changing world, one cannot just rely on charismatic leaders to solve problems. Leadership needs to be cultivated at all levels of any organization, business, or education "to face problems for which there are no simple, painless solutions" (Fullan, 2007, p. 3). Effective leaders thus mobilize commitment, both external (based on management policies) and internal (getting a job done is intrinsically rewarding). The aim or

outcome of leadership is to make sure that *more good things happen* and *fewer bad things happen,* defined according to different contexts. Fullan's theory is not about creating leaders who have all the answers. Instead, his work is about helping leaders understand how they can motivate people to bring about the change that is needed to address the problems (Fullan, 2007).

Transformational leadership, coined by Burns (1978), paints a leader as a visionary or change agent. Burns's assumptions include that people will follow a person who inspires them; a person with vision and passion can achieve great things and the way to get things done is by injecting enthusiasm and energy. Transformational leadership creates a culture to sustain motivation through small celebrations and the use of ceremonies, rituals, and other cultural symbolism. This type of leader can balance action and the mindset of their followers.

Ash and Persall (1999) developed the formative leadership theory on the belief that there are numerous leadership possibilities and many leaders within a school. This theory of leadership is based on the concept of the teacher as leader and the principal as the leader of leaders. This theory is grounded in the belief that learning is a student and adult responsibility (Ash & Persall, 1999).

Formative leadership theory believes positive school change is neither top down nor bottom up. It is instead an interactive model that encourages participation from every grade and department level. The principal's role as chief learning officer of the school is to build an organizational climate that encourages and supports emergent leadership throughout the school. An administrator's role includes

leading faculty talks on beliefs, vision, mission, student work, and student outcomes is a powerful tool in proving teaching and learning in the school. Ideas and information are

the basic tools for creating a school full of leaders who elicit for their colleagues and students alike. (Ash & Persall, 1999, p. 20)

The report, *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983) set the tone for modern elementary school reforms including the demand for teacher leaders and shared leadership. In order for the United States to remain globally competitive, the quality of educational and academic skills of all students must improve (Muhammad, 2009). School improvement must be effective. In the 1980s, school reform shifted to shared leadership and teacher leaders became more predominant (York-Barr & Duke, 2004).

Teacher leadership is not a new concept, but to meet the demanding accountability models, an evolution has occurred. Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) defined teacher leadership as "leading within and beyond the classroom, identifying with and contributing to a community of teacher learners and leaders, and influencing others toward improved educational practice" (p. 5).

The role of teacher leaders has evolved from a limited scope of roles including: department chairs, association leaders, and curriculum developers (Boyd-Dimock & McGree, 2013). Over time these roles have become outdated and pleas for dramatically different roles for teachers and increased professional development have come to the forefront as a necessity to school improvement. This requires a school administrator to provide roles inside the classroom and share school-wide leadership responsibilities (Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, 1986).

Schools need school leaders with expertise and interest in helping the school improvement. School leaders expertise is often more important than finding an answer or

solution. We must embrace that a heroic leader cannot do it alone and must develop leadership teams to support change and improve achievement (Wagner et al., 2006).

Research is clear about what needs to be done to create collective efficacy. A principal must develop teachers who are knowledgeable of best instructional practices, are committed to strong home and school communication, are committed to collaboration, believe that all students can succeed, set high expectations, adhere to time on task, increase student engagement, monitor student data, and align curriculum (Manthey, 2012). The school principal sets that tone by fostering collaboration and shared leadership by identifying, cultivating, and utilizing teacher leaders.

The Principal's Role

A principal's role in identifying, cultivating, and utilizing teacher leaders is to develop a learning organization. A principal must understand leadership, conditions for leadership, and how people work together.

For many principals, a personal transformation in leadership must accompany the quest to cultivate teacher leadership and efforts to nurture the growth of teacher leaders because it is a change in control and leadership philosophy (Murphy, 2005). The Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL) encourages administrators to guide a leadership community that includes recruiting, involvement, data collections, framework of goals, opportunities and options for teacher leaders and an action plan. IEL challenges administrators to "create an organizational culture and infrastructure that supports leadership opportunities for everyone called a 'leader-full' organization" (Murphy, 2005, p. 616).

Reeves (2008) affirmed that the role of a principal is to serve as the talent scout looking for teachers who are making a difference in the classroom and then replicated those practice

within the school. This would include hiring the best and looking internally at the current teaching staff to build capacity and expertise within the current faculty. After leaders are recruited or identified the real work for an administrator begins. Creating a school culture and cultivating teacher leaders is a very complex entity and requires knowledge, dedication and resolve.

Maxfield and Flumerfelt (2009) found that job-embedded professional development is necessary to cultivate teacher leaders and believes that the role of the principal is to establish a culture of coaching. "Principals' attitudes and behaviors impact teacher leaders and play an important role in the formative process of leadership development" (Maxfield & Flumerfelt, 2009, p. 46).

Smylie and Denny (1990) identified three factors that influence the development and success of teacher leaders within various roles in a school setting. An administrator must understand leadership and provide teacher leaders with the understanding of their role. This includes the following factors:

1. Teacher leaders need to understand the certainties and uncertainties of their role.

2. Administrators must communicate the effective performance of their roles and how it ties to the vision and mission of the school.

3. Teacher leaders need to be prepared to endure the tension created related to the newly assumed leadership roles including time constraints and peer conflict.

In order for administrators to be effective in building teacher leaders, they must understand that leadership is influenced not only by the organizational structure, but also by the interactions and commitments between the administrator and teacher leaders (Danielson, 2007). Successful administrators understand that as teacher leaders develop their craft and expertise, the

teacher leaders become more involved in decision making and the role of the principal shifts from sole leadership to a shared leadership model. A principal committed to working within a learning organization will need to rethink the assumption that a principal is the single source for instructional leadership and set up the conditions for change (Schoetzau, 1998).

The principal's role is to ensure that the necessary conditions for leadership are evident within the school. A principal's perspective must see teacher leaders as people who set the direction, make the key decisions, and energize others (Schoetzau, 1998). Multiple conditions and planning are needed to support and sustain teachers in leadership positions. Lieberman (1992) identified vision, structure, time, and skills as essential conditions needed to support the success of teacher leaders.

1. Vision: Teacher leaders' roles need to be tied to a school vision in order to provide systematic support needed for change and improvement.

2. Structure: Teacher leaders' roles need to be clearly defined and must bring legitimacy to the new role and facilitate the understanding that knowledgeable

3. Time: Time to discuss, cultivate and collaborate is needed to allow teacher leaders to prepare, problem solve, create and share the leadership responsibilities within the school.

4. Skills: Time to discuss, cultivate and collaborate is needed to allow teacher leaders to prepare, problem solve, create and share the leadership responsibilities within the school.

The National Foundation for the Improvement of Teaching study found similar findings to Lieberman's conditions and outlined three recommendations to cultivate teacher leaders (Leithwood et al., 2004). First, schools must provide and find time to capitalize on the

opportunities, training, planning, and professional development available. Teacher leaders must have time to participate in training, planning, and professional development available. School administrators must make it a priority to empower teachers to assume responsibility for their own professional development including peer review, standards and accountability, and school-based professional development. And finally, schedules, resources, and revenue should support the importance of teacher leadership and be an ally in cultivation instead of an obstacle or barrier.

The responsibility of school principals is to cultivate teacher leaders by empowering their participation, encouraging their collaboration, and creating environments that foster collaboration (Vernon-Dotson, 2008). Educators are more productive when they work together (Wald & Castleberry, 2000). Principals and teachers must work together to improve education for all students by shaping policy, curriculum, and instruction (Fullan, 2001). The role of a principal needs to include a partnership with teacher leaders to create the policies, curriculum and instructional changes needed for improvement (Danielson, 2007; Fullan, 2001). A critical aspect of leadership is developing knowledge and a shared understanding about the vision of the organization and the goals and responsibilities needed for improvement (Hallinger & Heck, 2002). Sustaining school improvement requires the ability for an administrator to build leadership capacity (Lambert, 2003).

Understanding people and how they work together is a crucial role for today's administrator. The ability to engage in practices that help develop people is required to improve the quality of teaching and learning (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002). Principals need to identify, train, and work with teacher leaders to reduce isolation and increase a commitment to school improvement and provided opportunities for teacher leaders to share leadership responsibility resulting in increased commitment (DuFour, 2008).

An administrator's essential function should include creating a learning organization. Several leadership theories including McGregor's (1960) Theory X and Theory Y leadership model and Blake and Mouton's (1966) managerial grid both show that strong commitment and relationships must be present in optimal organizations to accomplish results. An effective administrator will remove the antiquated assumption that people are basically powerless, lack personal vision, and have an inability to master the focus of change, and that only a few great leaders can lead schools to continuous improvement. Instead administrators must embrace their role and create a learning organization that identifies, cultivates, and utilizes teacher leaders (Senge, 1990).

Identifying Teacher Leaders

Cultivating leadership requires the ability to talent search and identify good teachers who can become great leaders (Dozier, 2007). Administrators play a role in identifying teacher leaders. The process starts with hiring the best and looking for leadership skills during the interview process. Good teachers have knowledge and skills in student learning, educational reform, curriculum design and implementation, parent and community satisfaction, and school district morale (Peterson, 2002).

Administrators should not only look to new hires but also within the teaching staff to identify leaders. Pillars (2013) identified seven verbs for teacher leaders: invite, take risks, grow, act, fail, catalyze, and respect. Leader must start by offering an invitation to lead. When administrators see expertise, knowledge, and leadership skills, they need to invite that teacher to share their craft and talent with others. The simple act of acknowledgement can validate their work and encourage them to share with others. By having other perspectives, insight and knowledge the entire organization grows beyond the capacity of the solely the principals

expertise. Administrators need to take risks and move teachers from novice to experts and be willing to take criticism and complaint. If an administrator is focused on student success fear will not prevent them from sharing leadership roles with others in the school. Mistakes in selection or communication are bumps in the road and are learning opportunities for an administrator. The first step to identify teacher leaders is being passionate about creating opportunities for others to innovate and grow. Identification is seeking and acknowledging the good in others, encouraging the reticent, and exemplifying the belief that our value is not defined or limited by our role (Pillars, 2013).

Great teachers are often great teacher leaders. Most universities and administrative programs agree that great leaders start with great educators. Concordia University (2009) described five qualities that teacher leaders must have to be successful: commitment, passion, learner, communicator, and agent of change. First, they must be committed to students and be willing to go above and beyond to explore new strategies, techniques and recourses to ensure success. They must also be passionate about teaching and learning. They not only must love their job but also value and seek learning opportunities for themselves and students. Teacher leaders must be willing to collaborate and share. They need to have strong communication skills and be able to develop rapport with others. But most importance they must embrace change. Change is evident and teacher leaders must have adaptability and flexibility to move beyond the answers for today and be open to solutions for the problems of tomorrow.

Great leaders have the ability to problem solve. The best solution to problem solving is setting up teacher-driven systems instead of a top down approach (Sacks, 2013). Allowing teachers to collectively discuss and problem solve creates a sense of purpose. By identifying teacher leaders and providing them opportunities, teacher leaders will thrive.

Overcoming the "I Am Just a Teacher Syndrome" by Helterbran (2008) highlighted considerations that must be present to foster teacher leadership. Consideration number one calls for an administrator to recruit and hire the best. Every new teacher hired is an opportunity for new leadership and ideas to infuse the school and strengthen achievement. In addition to hiring, cultivating requires an induction or mentor to help the novice teacher develop leadership skills and confidence.

Consideration number two calls for veteran teachers to set measurable goals within the school group and share ideas of teaching, learning and ways to better collaborate. The sharing of ideas is imperative. If one can get veteran teachers to *own* the school, they will take care of it and help it to succeed. The third consideration focuses on the principal and the need to model learning and how to work collaboratively. The more this is done, the more likely others will follow. Learning is social and the school culture needs to inspire learning, ideas, and leadership (Helterbran, 2008).

In 2001, a survey was conducted by Krisko (2001) to identify characteristics of teacher leaders. Commonalities included being creative, flexible, lifelong learners, humorous, efficacious, risk takers, and effective communicators. These are the prerequisite skills needed to be an effective teacher leader (Krisko, 2001).

Leadership opportunities motivate good teachers to stay in the classroom and continue to craft their instruction and professional learning. Identification calls for a principal to focus on mastery and match teacher's abilities with job responsibilities (Coggins & Diffenbaugh, 2013). In addition, teachers need a sense of purpose. Research has found that many teachers enter the profession to influence the lives of their students (Lortie, 1975). As teachers move from novices to veterans they need to find a voice in policy, procedures, or climb the ladder to administrative

roles. Teachers can also find purpose and autonomy by leading their peers in meaningful discussion and under collaborative conditions (Coggins & Diffenbaugh, 2013).

Formal and informal layers of leadership exist within a school (Smylie & Denny, 1990). It is common practice to find teachers serving as representatives or in leadership capacity in regard to educational reform. In order for meaningful school reform to take hold, more teacher leaders must be developed in formal and informal roles.

Formal roles can be subdivided into volunteers and assigned. Assigned leaders are chosen for their expertise and skill set. Often they act as department or free-level chairs. Other formal leadership roles include teachers who can naturally navigate their teams through the maze of curriculum, instructional strategies, and assessment system. Informal layers consist of teachers who lead by example and create a successful learning environment (Martin, 2007). School communities that have levels of leadership from within the walls coupled with a vision can strengthen classroom practice, encouraging teacher ownership in the change process, assuming the role of teacher expert, engaging colleagues in mutual learning and change (Day & Harris, 2003).

Covey (1989) believed that "what we communicate" (p. 51) is more powerful than what we say. An administrator must not preach about leadership but instead embrace shared leadership by actively inviting, recruiting, and identifying teacher leaders.

Cultivating Leadership

The principal has responsibility to create a school culture that fosters leadership and a high work ethic (Danielson, 2007). Fullan (2001) believed that "a school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by advocating, nurturing, and

sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional" (p. 261).

Teacher leadership enables effective teachers to share the responsibility of providing professional development and leading collaboration. Parents and school faculty are respectful of teacher leadership because of the real experience, knowledge and insight that teacher leaders offer. A principal must cultivate the leadership by welcoming it, appreciating it, highlighting it, and celebrating it. A principal also needs to recognize the efforts and contributions of teacher leaders, this can be done through parent newsletters, faculty bulletins, certificates of recognition, and letters of acknowledgement to the district leaders. A *thank you* helps to build relationships and school culture (VanDover, 2009).

The Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement (2008) found five characteristics within school cultures that foster teacher leaders.

1. A school-wide focus on learning and collaboration.

2. The teachers should be encouraged to take initiative and an expectation of team work.

3. Shared responsibility and decision- making should align with the schools goals and mission.

4. Teacher leaders should be valued as role models and a strong sense of community is needed to push everyone to professional heights.

5. School leadership thrives in a culture of optimistic and rigorous expectations that are communicated with the mission.

Patterson and Patterson (2004) conducted a study that found teacher leaders offer a powerful contribution to shaping the culture and building school resilience. In order to sustain a culture of learning, one must understand how the organization learns and grows (Schein, 1996).

Schools that have high leadership capacity amplify leadership for all (Searby & Shaddix, 2007).

A culture of leadership provides opportunities for broad participation in teams, learning

communities, vertical groups and action research. Joint accountability needs to be

communicated and understood. The principal and teacher leaders are responsible for outcomes.

Cooperation and quality is expected by all (Block, 1993).

Viewing teachers as leaders requires a paradigm shift about the concept of leadership in a

school system (DuFour, 2006). Effective administrators understand that a thriving school culture

includes capitalizing on the experience of educators within a school when they share a vision,

value system, goals, beliefs and faith in the organization with teacher leaders (Deal & Peterson,

2009).

Principals must consider ways to build the learning capacity of teacher leaders in order to

create a culture of learning. Learning organizations must find ways to increase individual,

collective, structural, cultural, organizational, and leadership capacity (Easterby-Smith,

Burgoyne, & Araujo, 1999).

Principals must believe in their role as instructional leaders and take the time and

initiative to shift leadership to teacher leaders (Flath, 1989). Teacher leaders need a culture in

which they are empowered and respected as professionals. An administrator must build trust and

rapport, diagnose organizational conditions, deal with processes, manage the work and build

skills and confidence in others (Boyd-Dimock & McGree, 2013).

School culture is combination of countless attributes that create the school's experience

and encompasses their principles, outlook, and behaviors (Kuntz, 2012). It is largely defined by

what is important in to the school and the schools norm. The culture influences all aspects of

school community.

The Center for Teacher Leadership (2003) at the Virginia Commonwealth University conducted a survey that asked 300 teachers what they thought about leadership. The highest rating of the survey indicated that these teachers felt confident about themselves as teacher leaders and believed that others saw them as leaders. They also felt teachers engaged in many leadership roles and had a constant desire for new leadership roles.

The survey also found that training was needed to support teacher leaders. Eighty-two percent of the teachers surveyed reported that they had not received training for their current leadership roles or positions. The survey found three areas of need in regard to teacher leadership training:

1. Teacher leaders need training and background knowledge in understanding education policy and issues.

2. Teacher leaders need training to develop skills to help them work collaboratively with education policymakers and peers.

3. Teacher leaders need training in interpreting education research. (Center for Teacher Leadership, 2003)

Training alone is not enough. Teachers also need opportunities to break out of their isolation and build leadership skills by working with others that share a vision of education excellence (Dozier, 2007).

Collaboration is an integral part to learning organization and is often facilitated by teacher leaders (Leithwood et al., 2004). Teacher leadership training needs to include training on positive attitudes and shared beliefs. By building relationship and trust, teacher leaders can more effectively lead and create professional development, leadership skills, and utilize resources to

support collaboration (Richardson, 1996). Teacher leaders work inside and outside of the

classroom with the ultimate goal of improving student achievement (Killion, 2001).

Shared leadership and the trust in others abilities to lead and the belief that teacher

leaders can make a difference must be evident in words and actions. An administrator must

gravitate toward Theory Y (McGregor, 1960). A principal cannot just state that teacher leaders

are important but must cultivate a learning organization that trains and utilizes teacher leaders.

Utilizing Teacher Leaders

Recent changes to the scope and variety of teacher leadership roles in elementary schools

is contributed to increases in student achievement (Boyd-Dimock & McGree, 1995).

Historically, teacher leaders have been assigned or volunteered to serve as department chairs and

on school, district and state committees. These types of roles limit the leadership capacity of

teacher leaders and utilize them as *representatives* rather than *leaders* who enact change

(Livingston, 1992). In addition, traditional leadership roles have lacked flexibility and been time

consuming with little impact (Boyd-Dimock & McGree, 1995).

Leadership roles have evolved and allow teachers to assume a range of roles that support

school improvement and student achievement. Killion (2001) identified 10 roles for teacher

leaders to pursue to actively contribute to their schools' success:

1. A resource provider can be a catalyst between colleagues and instructional resources.
   Teacher leaders can share their knowledge of helpful web sites, instructional
   materials, readings, or other resources to use with students. They could also share
   professional resources as articles, books, lesson or unit plans, and assessment tools
   with peers during grade level and department meetings.

2. An instructional specialist facilitates change through effective teaching strategies. If the school has a need or curiosity in a certain area an instructional specialist can find more information to share.

3. A curriculum specialist understands content and has the ability to plan and align content to classroom instruction. These teachers are able to develop pacing guides and utilize a scope and sequence to make decision about curriculum and assessment.

4. A classroom supporter helps teacher with implementation. Support to colleagues could include demonstrating a lesson, co-teaching, or observing and giving feedback.

5. A learning facilitator leads professional development and learning opportunities. Teacher leaders have the ability to know the dynamics within a school and can make professional development relevant and align training needs to directly improve student learning.

6. A mentor plays an important leadership role by supporting novice teachers. Mentors can serve as role models and help acclimate new teachers to the school. They can also guide new teachers to resources and school procedures, practices, and politics.

7. A school leader serves as a representative for various school committee and improvement teams. It is important for school leaders to share the same vision and professional goals with those of the school and district.

8. A data coach moves beyond the volume of data and lead teachers and team to use the data to make instructional changes and to look at students to make plans and improvement student achievement.

9. A catalyst for change is confident in their work and abilities. They have a strong commitment to continual improvement and pose questions to generate analysis of student learning.

10. Being a learner is another important role teacher leaders assume. Being a lifelong learner is important to help schools find new ways and methods to help all students achieve.

Barn (1947) charged principals with the task to explore teachers' abilities, creative power, and experience to develop quality teacher leaders. Becoming a teacher leader requires breaking the stereotypical isolation and the principal must capitalize on resources from within to create leaders and opportunities.

Danielson (2007) outlined three areas of school life where teacher leaders can make an impact: within a department, across the school and beyond the school. Teacher leaders can extend their reach and expertise in various roles including school-wide policies and programs, teaching and learning, and communication and community relations (Danielson, 2007).

1. Teacher leaders could support school-wide policies and programs. Leadership roles could include working with colleagues to design schedules to increase instructional time and student achievement. Teacher leaders could serve as the building liaison to student teachers or lead a school task to create, reinforce or overhaul school policies. In additions, teacher leaders can serve as advocates or representatives to school, district, state and national programs and initiatives.

2. In the area of teaching and learning, teacher leaders could organize and facilitate book studies and discussion on teaching and current practices. Teacher leaders could serve

on school wide committee to analyze student achievement data or lead grade-level discussions on student work samples.

3. Communication and community relations could also be a role for teacher leaders. Teacher leaders could publish newsletter for parents, initiate regular meeting times to confer with colleagues about individual students and develop procedures for specialist and generalist teachers to share their assessments of and plans for individual students. Teacher leaders could also serve on the district or state parent–teacher association.

Teacher leadership roles include attending, creating, planning, and leading professional development. Quality professional development that leads to school improvement is one of the most important influences on student achievement that occurs in school districts (Sergiovanni, 1996). Teachers have a practical perspective of the needs of a school that transcends the knowledge of an outside expert (Hickey & Harris, 2005). Teacher leaders are vested in sound instruction and their school community. Donaldson (2001) saw every individual in a school as both a "shaper and shaped." Every person owns a share of the influence and responsibility not just over their individual job but over school-wide concerns. Leadership opportunities outside of the classroom provide a means of growth that increase a teacher's spectrum of influence among teacher leaders. The role of teacher leaders is not limited to professional development.

Intellectual capital is the source of ideas and knowledge within any institution that can improve operations if used properly (Belasco & Stayer, 1993). The diverse talents of teachers are the intellectual capital within the school. Great organizations have a strong culture that needs to be nurtured through consistent leadership. The development of leaders within the school provides resources for cultural development consistent with the core values of the institution (Collins & Porras, 1994).

Teacher leaders can be advocates, innovators, and stewards. Lieberman and Miller (2004) emphasized these three roles of teacher leaders. An advocate can be introvert or extrovert and his or her leadership can take place one-on-one or in open groups. Advocates focus discussion and decisions back to a central focus of student learning. Innovators are the creative change agents in schools that see a problem and transform the school towards a solution. Stewards are consistent role models that epitomize excellence.

Barth's (2001a) study on school culture found 10 areas where teacher involvement was essential for the health of the school: school committees, textbook adoption, curriculum shaping, setting standard for student behavior, student tracking, retention policies, school budgeting, teacher evaluation process, hiring of new colleagues, and hiring of administrators. The role of a teacher leader stretched across all areas of the school community.

The roles of teacher leaders are vast and cover a wide breadth of talent, skills and abilities but the commonality is a shared belief in student achievement and a common vision and goal to make things better (Leithwood et al., 2004). Teacher leaders must see the whole school perspective and learn to collaborate with colleagues and parents. Teacher leaders must also be willing to contribute to school improvement to strengthen the learning environment (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005).

Obstacles for Teacher Leaders

Teacher leaders believe in the power of collaboration and working together to improve student achievement, but obstacles such as, limited time, heavy responsibilities, lack of self-confidence, and negative colleagues can be a barrier (Barth, 2001b). If a leadership environment is not present, teacher leadership will not thrive. A successful environment allows teachers to seek out answers and support from colleagues. They value others opinions and experiences.

Collaboration and professional development that reflect the social nature of learning include opportunities for discussion, talking and building relationships. Collaboration can encourage shared learning and allow teachers to explore new ideas and increase confidence while building relationship and collegiality (Meredith, 2007).

Teacher leaders benefit from collaboration. Working with others reduces isolation and increases a commitment to school improvement. It allows shared responsibility and increased commitment (Gregory & Kuzmich, 2007).

Welch (1998) outlined four types of barriers to collaboration.

1. Conceptual barriers are framed around status quo and notions that things are the way that they have always been.

2. Pragmatic barriers include the logistical side that would prohibit collaboration time including schedules, time and opportunity.

3. Attitudinal barriers are roadblocks that have teachers reluctant to share ideas or risk challenges.

4. Professional barriers that include lack of collaborative skills, problem solving, conflict resolution and communication also stifle collaboration.

A principal can alleviate the obstacles and barriers for teacher leaders. Time constraints and scheduling can be altered to allow teachers the opportunity to collaborate and problem solve (DuFour, 2008). Shared leadership allows various teacher leaders to be active in school improvement without overloading individuals. In addition, a principal must keep teacher leaders motivated to change status quo and the encourage them to be patient with reluctant colleagues. Teacher leaders view time constraints as a concern and often battle their responsibilities and ability to succeed in the dual roles of both teacher and leader (Dierks et al., 1988; Lieberman,

Saxl, & Miles, 1988; Wasley, 1989). With additional responsibilities and little extra time, teachers are often forced to make sacrifices that compromise their ability to be effective in both roles.

The School Leadership for the 21st Century Initiative Task Force on Teacher Leadership (Institute for Educational Leadership [IEL], 2001) found several roadblocks to teacher leaders. The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) looked at 1,300 schools and colleges and reported a need for reform in teacher preparation institutions. Few teacher training programs offered courses below the graduate level on management and leadership (IEL, 2001). The report also found another obstacle for new teacher leaders that included on-the-job frustration (IEL, 2001). Novice teachers experience stress as they discover lack of training and courses in regards to the reality of the classroom.

Administrators must understand the obstacles that face teacher leaders and able committed to providing training and supporting teacher leaders to overcome the barriers and focus their time and talent on school improvement. Leadership poses a cadre of challenges including external (from people and situations), internal (from within the leader himself or herself), and simply from the circumstance of being a leader. These challenges can cause periods of instability, doubt or uncertainty. An administrator must keep teacher leaders focused on the vision and be proactive, creative, able to face conflict squarely, able to look for common ground, be objective, and be collaborative (Rabinowitz, 2013).

Impact

Teacher leaders have knowledge of children and subject matter. They have empathy, dedication, readiness to help and communication skills that are needed for school improvement (IEL, 2001). School improvement is defined to include more than improved standardized test

scores. School improvement also encompasses school climate, student motivation, and engagement and improved technology and problem solving skills for students and teachers in a collaborative setting (Wetzler, 2010). Newmann, King, and Youngs (2000) conducted a study on school capacity and found research to support that when the principal focuses on teacher development, teacher leadership, professional development and resources to create a culture of learning, even high poverty schools can improve student literacy scores.

A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century (Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, 1986) described teacher leaders of school reform those that accept the role of change and become a change agent to improve student learning and achievement. This study emphasized new leadership roles for teachers and leadership teams. Barth (1999) conducted a study on over 250 school reforms and found that the simple act of teachers taking on more leadership roles had the most impact on reform and student achievement.

Teacher leadership is further defined as the ability to build community, decision making and share a commitment of student achievement and improving school climate. Leadership opportunities include study groups, vertical communities, and action research teams (Searby & Shaddix, 2008).

Teachers and administrators who develop teams that support learning needs as professionals find the stresses of change and accountability easier to manage (Gregory & Kuznich, 2007). An important step in creating schools that are successful in helping all students learn at a higher level is to recognize this challenge requires more than a heroic individual leader whose will and skill compensates for the deficiencies of the staff (DuFour, 2008). Elementary principals must embrace teacher leaders in order to ensure academic success citation.

The research framework below features 10 interdependent variables that link teacher leaders to the ever changing demands of all aspects of school life. It supports the need for teacher leaders to be involved in all areas of the school in order to instrumentally make the changes necessary for improvement (Leithwood et al., 2004).
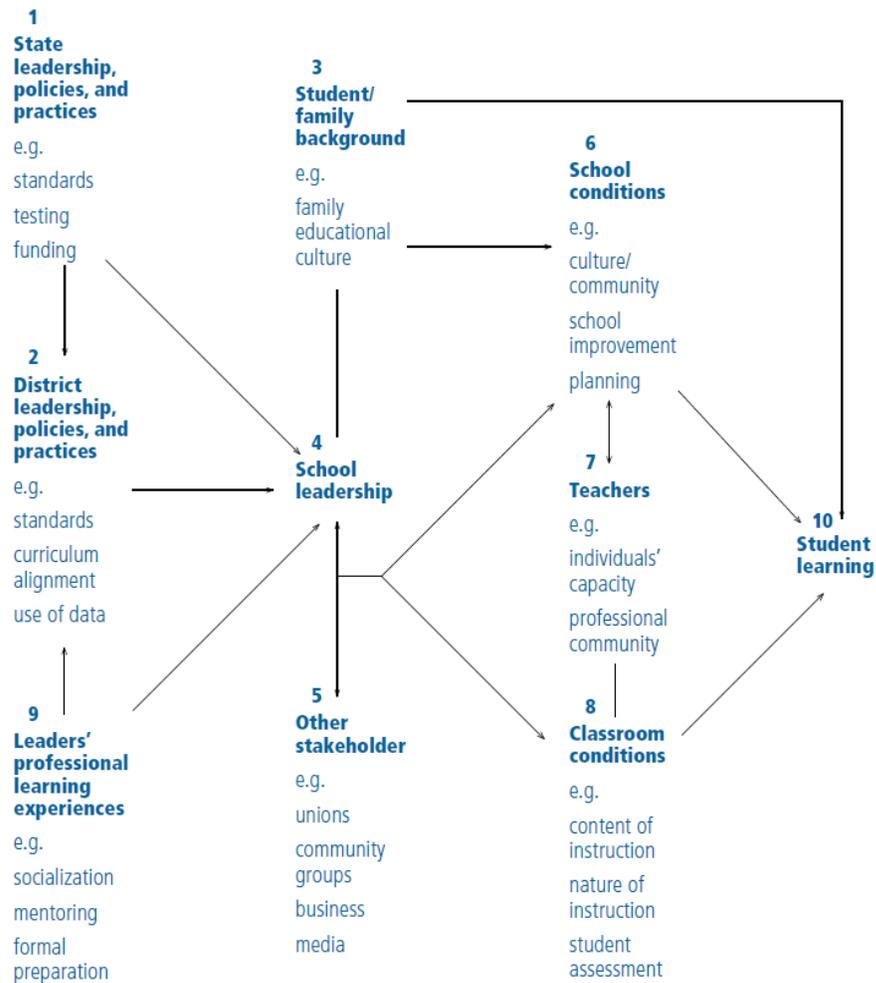
Figure 1. Linking leadership to learning: The research framework features 10 interdependent variables. Adapted from Leithwood et al. (2004).

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate how elementary principals identify, cultivate, and utilize teacher leaders within high growth elementary schools. For the purpose of this study, high growth schools are schools that surpassed the state average of high growth for the bottom 25% and top 75% in English/language arts and math for two consecutive years based on the IDOE A-F Accountability Report Card (IDOE, 2014). Through this qualitative study, the role of the principals in three similar Indiana elementary schools were analyzed in regard to the commonalities of the identification of teacher leaders, cultivation of talent and leadership, and the utilization of teacher leaders to improve student achievement.

Research Questions

1. What is the role of the elementary principal in identifying, cultivating and utilizing teacher leaders to improve student achievement?

2. How are teacher leaders identified or recruited?

3. What training is needed to cultivate teacher leaders for the administrator and teacher leaders?

4. How are teacher leaders utilized within the school?

Qualitative Inquiry

Creswell (1998) explained the reason for qualitative study based on the nature of the research question. Quantitative research questions are usually framed to examine whether a certain condition exists and to explain why. Qualitative research allows exploration of a topic to develop theories, provides a detailed view of a topic, allows for study in a natural setting, provides time and resources to collect data and data analysis, and allows the researcher a role as a learner instead of an expert or judge.

Creswell (2003) explained that qualitative data analysis needs refined and smart questions that can ascertain answers through active observation. Qualitative research allows research to be conducted in a natural setting with multiple data sources that allow participants to explain their meaning and learning. The researcher can analyze and interpret the data while the data collection is in progress. This study examined attitudes, feelings, and beliefs in regard to leadership and leadership opportunities among three schools. The goal of this study was to explore in depth the identification, cultivation, and utilization of teacher leadership. Teacher leadership is a vast subject that goes beyond quantitative numerical data and statistics. This qualitative study explored similarities among the behaviors of three principals in regard to identifying, training, and using teacher leaders to improve student achievement. Behaviors that cultivate a culture of shared leadership were explored to ascertain themes and potential characteristics of administrators that foster teacher leaders. Yin (2011) stated that

> studying the meaning of people's lives, under real-world conditions; representing the
>
> views and perspectives of the people in a study; covering the contextual conditions within
>
> which people live; contributing insights into existing or emerging concepts may help to

explain human social behavior, striving to use *multiple sources of evidence* rather than

relying on a single source alone. (p. 8)

Research Sites

The first phase of inquiry was to ascertain permission from the Indiana State University

Review Board (Appendix A). Selection of schools was determined using purposive sampling.

Purposive sampling allows for schools to be chosen based on their beliefs on teacher leaders and

their effects on student achievement. Schools that identify, cultivate, and utilize teacher leaders

provide the most relevant and plentiful data on this topic. Three schools were selected in which

to conduct interviews and focus groups in order to gather further insights into the identification,

cultivation and utilization of teacher leaders. Table 1 indicates the variables that were used to

select the research sites for this study.

Table 1

Variables Used in Selecting Elementary Schools Percent of Student with High Growth from the

Bottom 25% of Students Tested

Site	2011-2012 Math % of Bottom 25% With High Growth	2012-2013 Math % of Bottom 25% With High Growth	2011-2012 ELA % of Bottom 25% With High Growth	2012-2013 ELA % of Bottom 25% With High Growth
A	47.7%	55.3%	54.8%	60.5%
B	39.2%	45.2%	44.0%	35.1%
C	47.1%	66.7%	37.2%	56.4%

Note. Math = Mathematics, ELA = English/Language arts

Table 2

Variables Used in Selecting Elementary Schools Percent of Student with High Growth from the

Bottom 75% of Students Tested

Site	2011-2012 Math % of Top 75% With High Growth	2012-2013 Math % of Top 75% With High Growth	2011-2012 ELA % of Top 75% With High Growth	2012-2013 ELA % of Top 75% With High Growth
A	43.7%	62.3%	48.4%	41.6%
B	46.1%	53.0%	41.1%	40.4%
C	37.1%	60.3%	36.8%	42.9%

Note. Math = Mathematics, ELA = English/Language arts

Participants included three elementary schools that fit the following criteria:

1. Indiana elementary school principals who had two consecutive years of high growth

    and who indicated a willingness to participate in this study

2. Indiana elementary schools whose administrators agreed to participate and agreed that

    teacher leaders had a positive effect on student achievement scores.

3. Those schools in which teacher leaders were willing to participate.

Data Collection Methods

Three different data sources were used to conduct this study including document data,

focus groups, and interviews. Triangulation potentially converged multiple data sources of

information to form themes or categories in a study (Creswell & Miller, 2000). A narrative

included multiple sources and go beyond a single event or data point to show validity (Creswell

& Miller, 2000).

Patton (1990) outlined three concerns that qualitative studies must address in order to be credible including the techniques and methods used to ensure the integrity, validity, and accuracy of the finding; what qualifications, experience, and perspective the researcher brings to the study and what assumptions provoked the study. All participants in this study understood that any individually identifiable information that was gathered during the study would not be released to any other parties without the participant's permission or be used in any data presentations outside of this research study. Participants were requested to keep all shared information confidential after the interview and focus group were held. Every effort was made to ensure confidentiality and was communicated in writing as found in each respective letter to participants as shown in Appendixes B through E. This was also stated before the focus group began, and I asked participants to keep the information shared confidential.

Document Review

This study analyzed documents pertaining to teacher leaders and leadership opportunities at each research site. These documents can provide a timeline or evidence of teacher leaders and opportunities prior to the study (Patton, 2002). These documents included school improvement plans, meeting record forms, student achievement, and any other documents that supported the identification, cultivation, and utilization of teacher leaders. These documents were used to determine the importance of teacher leadership.

Conduct Interviews

For this study, an individual interview with each principal and two teacher leaders from each building was conducted. Each interview lasted between 30 to 45 minutes and was held during the spring semester of the 2013-2014 school year. An interview protocol that included instructions for the interview, a list of questions, probes, and ample note taking were utilized

(Creswell, 2003). Interviews allowed me to ascertain the perspective of the participant (Patton, 2002). Interview questions can be found in Appendix F. These interviews allowed me to collect the stories of the participants through open-ended questions (Merriam, 2001). Notes allowed me to code and analyze by site and to conduct an analysis across sites to discover themes from textual data.

Host Focus Groups

This study utilized focus groups that allowed interviews on teacher leadership and opportunities to take place in a small-group setting (Patton, 2002). Focus groups allowed participants to piggy back off of each other's responses and thoughts to create a collective story of the role of the principals in cultivating teacher leaders and leadership opportunities. The focus group provided a collective record of the groups shared response in regard to leadership. Focus groups were conducted in an open environment where participants had a degree of trust with each other and understood the intent and purpose of the study (Patton, 2002). Focus group questions can be found in Appendix F.

Analysis of Data

A qualitative method of analysis included open coding to create labels and categories within the data where applicable. Open coding allowed data to be compared, conceptualized, and categorized to find patterns (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Preset and emergent coding were used to extrapolate themes from the textual data recorded from the document reviews, interviews, and focus groups. The information from the interviews was transcribed by me and then coded using open coding. I began with a pre-set list of codes. The pre-set list included the following: principal role, teacher leader, identification, traits, utilization, training, barriers and impact. In addition to coding, notes were also placed in the margin as themes began to emerge

and questions developed. I reviewed the coding repeatedly to find emerging themes within each

site and a cross analysis was competed to include the central themes from all three research sites.

By using triangulation and a multifaceted approach, I analyzed different types of data to find

accurate and reliable themes.

Procedures

A qualitative, multi-site case study research design was used to describe the role of the

principal in identifying, cultivating, and utilizing teacher leaders. A case study approach allowed

this topic to be explored in real time and allowed me to deeply understand the situations

surrounding the leadership and opportunities (Merriam, 2001). A case study approach allowed

in-depth exploration. An emergent design allowed me to revisit the participants and sites as

needed to gather additional data.

Indiana State University guidelines were followed pertaining to the use of human subjects

in the case study as specified by the Institutional Review Board (IRB). All participants were

informed of the purpose of research prior to collection. A consent form including the purpose of

the study, a voluntary statement for participation, and information on confidentiality and opting

out was provided. I provided a safe environment, reasonably free from judgment, and allowed

participants to share openly their views on the identification, cultivation, and utilization of

teacher leaders.

Recruitment of potential participants took place after IRB approval of this study. IDOE

data were screened to produce a list of qualifying schools based on two consecutive years of high

growth that surpassed the state average of high growth for the bottom 25% and top 75% in

English/language arts and math for two consecutive years based on the Indiana Department of

Education A-F Accountability Report Card. After IRB approval was obtained, formal

recruitment began, and each school that fit the research criteria was sent a participant letter (Appendix B).

This letter was sent by e-mail to each administrator of each school that met the high growth standard outlined above. The e-mail introduced the study and asked three essential questions.

1. Do you believe teacher leaders positively impacted student achievement?

2. Do you utilize teacher leaders in your building?

3. Would you be willing to participate in a research study on the identification, cultivation and utilization of teacher leaders?

Follow up e-mails were sent if a sufficient number of schools did not respond on the first attempt. After responses were received, administrative responses were screened. An administrator had to answer "yes" to all three questions in order to qualify for the study. Three elementary schools that qualified with a principal who agreed that teacher leaders positively impact student achievement, and who utilized teacher leaders in their building, were called to set up an initial school visit. During the school visits I explained the purpose of the study and I provided a list of potential documents for document review. At that time, I obtained a staff list including names and teaching assignments from the administrator through e-mail. The list was put into alphabetical order. The fifth- and eighth-teacher were asked to participate through an e-mail. Each received a letter of consent to sign before their independent interview was conducted. Each participant was sent a questionnaire and a consent letter prior to being interviewed (Appendices F and G).

A date to conduct the document review and interview was set through e-mail. After completion of the document review and interviews, focus group sessions were held to discuss the

topic. The interview with the principal and two individual interviews with teachers were conducted in one setting for 30 to 45 minutes. The interview began with me reviewing the Informed Consent and risk of participation and stressing confidentiality during and after the interview.

Prior to the face-to-face interview, a list of questions were sent by e-mail to the participants for review and reflection. The interview included questions directly related to the research questions. These questions were intentionally generalized to allow the participant opportunities to explore personal thoughts and feelings from their experiences with the topic. If needed to gain further insights, follow-up interviews were requested by me (Creswell, 2007). Each interview was recorded for later transcription. During the transcription, the participant was not referred to by name. I maintained confidentiality for all participants by providing pseudonyms.

Each focus group was a random selection that included a primary, intermediate, special education, and/or related arts teacher representative. All focus group participants were selected from the staff list electronically submitted by the principal. Participants were asked to participate and if they agreed were sent a consent letter prior to participation in the focus group. The focus group participants met as a group one time for 45 to 60 minutes. Those participants were sent a consent letter and a copy of the interview questions prior to participation in the focus group (Appendixes F and G). The focus group began with me reviewing the Informed Consent and risk of participation and stressing confidentiality among the focus group members. Confidentiality was expected, but could not be guaranteed due to multiple participants in the focus group. I began by asking the group to define leadership and covered questions on the identification, cultivation, and utilization of teacher leaders. The focus group was recorded for

later transcription. During the transcription, participants were not referred to by name.

Transcription took place by me within seven calendar days of each session.

Upon the conclusion of the document review, interviews and focus group information

were coded and analyzed by me. Collected information provided an overview of the findings

and did not include individual names or information. A follow-up interview would have

happened with the school administrator if needed.

All notes and transcriptions were typed and arranged according to site by the researcher.

Coding was used to categorize with a term, or code for the participant's responses (Creswell,

2009). The coding process was an in-depth process that began with transcription and ended with

a written narrative representing the findings of the study.

Step 1: I began by transcribing principal interviews, teacher interviews, and the focus

group interviews.

Step 2: I used a pre-set list of codes. The pre-set list included the following: principal

role, teacher leader, identification, traits, utilization, training, barriers and impact. These

codes were color coded and written in the margin of all transcribed interview data.

Step 3: I then reread the transcribed documents and made notes in the margin. The notes

included thoughts and labels that did not fit the pre-set list of codes.

Step 4: In addition to coding, notes were also placed in the margin as themes began to

emerge and questions developed.

Step 5: The color-coded files were then merged together and the researcher reviewed the

coding repeatedly to find emerging themes within each site.

Step 6: A written narrative was composed representing the research findings for each

individual site.

Step 7: I brought the individual files together and a cross analysis was completed to include the central themes from all three research sites. The interview data was color coded by principal and then read multiple times. I recorded questions and comments in the margin until themes were apparent and supported with quotes and textual data. This step allowed me to ascertain themes from all three sites to provide collected textual themes.

Step 8: The final step was to compose a narrative representing the research findings. I interpreted the findings by answering several questions including what was learned and what further areas of study may be warranted (Creswell, 2009).

Interviews were recorded digitally on multiple devices including a GE Fast playback recorder and IPAD digital voice recorder. All digital copies of the interviews and focus group were kept in my professional office to ensure safety of the recording (Creswell, 2007). Access to the IPAD and computer where transcriptions were typed was protected by password entry. All information was stored and labeled by location of the case study not by school or individuals' names.

I transcribed all information from the document review, interviews, and focus groups. In compliance with the Indiana State University IRB, original and copies of digital recordings will be destroyed within the prescribed timeframe to protect the identity of the interview and focus group participants upon completion of the study.

Personal Statement

Educators are influenced by social values and belief systems that shape their attitudes and behavior (O'Donohue & Nelson, 2009). My position as the researcher in this study is grounded in a belief system surrounding teacher leadership. This belief system is the foundation for this

study and aligns with how information was assimilated and interpreted. I believe that elementary

principals can create a culture that motivates teacher leaders to lead by example and with

confidence that they will improve student achievement. I believe that good teachers have the

potential to lead students, teachers, communities, and administrators to work together to improve

student achievement. My leadership experiences as a teacher, professor, and administrator have

compelled me to look beyond my war stories to the stories of others in an attempt to find

commonalities among leadership and opportunities. The findings of this qualitative study came

from multiple interpretations from the participants and me (Merriam, 2001). Acknowledging the

researcher's lens helps the research to remain neutral and alleviate bias by cross-checking data

from documents, interviews, and focus groups (Merriam, 2001).

Conclusion

This chapter explained the research design and following components; the research

questions, qualitative inquiry, procedures, research sites, personal statement, and data collection

method. Documents were reviewed and voluntary participants participated in focus groups and

interviews for me to glean context in regard to teacher leaders and leadership opportunities.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Research supports the need to identify, cultivate, and utilize teacher leaders in highly

effective elementary schools. The responsibility of school principals is to cultivate teacher

leaders by empowering their participation, encouraging their collaboration, and creating

environments that foster collaboration (Vernon-Dotson, 2008).

Many qualitative studies have attempted to explain ways to effectively identify, cultivate,

or utilize teacher leaders. There is justification for research among highly-effective schools that

have used teacher leaders to improve student achievement.

The purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate how elementary principals

identify, cultivate, and utilize teacher leaders within high growth elementary schools. Three

different data sources were used to conduct this study including document data, focus groups,

and interviews. Triangulation converged multiple data sources of information to form themes or

categories from the textual data analyzed by me in this qualitative study (Creswell & Miller,

2000). A narrative included multiple sources and extended beyond a single event or data point to

show validity (Creswell & Miller, 2000). The following research questions guided the inquiry

and finding of this qualitative study in regard to identifying, cultivating, and utilizing teacher

leaders to improve student achievement.

Research Questions

1. What is the role of the elementary principal in identifying, cultivating and utilizing teacher leaders to improve student achievement?

2. How are teacher leaders identified or recruited?

3. What training is needed to cultivate teacher leaders for the administrator and teacher leaders?

4. How are teacher leaders utilized within the school?

Chapter 4 provides the findings from the research. This qualitative study investigated how three elementary principals identified, cultivated, and utilized teacher leaders within high-growth elementary schools. For the purpose of this study, high growth schools are schools that surpassed the state average of high growth for the bottom 25% and top 75% in English/language arts and math for two consecutive years based on the IDOE A-F Accountability Report Card. Three elementary schools in the state of Indiana were chosen for this study (Table 3).

Table 3

Demographic and Student Achievement Results for Research Sites

Site	Grade-level configurations	Surpassed the state in Math and ELA in 2011-2012	Surpassed the state in ELA 2012-2013
A	K-5	Yes	Yes
B	K-5	Yes	Yes
C	K-5	Yes	Yes

Summary of Methodology

Chapter 3 explained the methodology used to complete this study, a short description of the methodology in Chapter 4 includes the study sample, data collection, and data analysis used for this qualitative study.

Study Sample

For the purpose of this study, high-growth schools are schools that surpassed the state average of high growth for the bottom 25% and top 75% in English/language arts and math for two consecutive years based on the IDOE A-F Accountability Report Card. Three elementary schools in the state of Indiana were chosen for this study. The IDOE website in conjunction with the Indiana School Guide for 2014-2015 was used to identify elementary schools in the state of Indiana. I then used Compass school data from the IDOE to obtain growth date (IDOE, 2014). Under the accountability tab, each school report card was reviewed to find schools that surpassed the state in 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 in both in English/language arts and math (Tables 4, 5, 6, and 7).

Table 4

Variables Used to Compare Research Sites to State Average to Establish the Research Site Fits

the Definition of High Growth in Math in 2011-2012

Site	2011-2012 bonus target for bottom 25% with high growth	2011-2012 Math % of bottom 25% with high growth	2011-2012 bonus target for bottom 75% with high growth	2011-2012 Math % of top 75% with high growth
A	44.9%	47.7%	39.2%	43.7%
B	44.9%	39.2%	39.2%	46.1%
C	44.9%	47.1%	39.2%	37.1%

Note. Schools received a bonus for surpassing the state average on the A-F accountability model. Students were placed in the top 75% or bottom 25% of their grade level within their school. That group was then compared to the state average to determine if a bonus point l (IDOE, 2014).

Table 5

Variables Used to Compare Research Sites to State Average to Establish the Research Site Fits

the Definition of High Growth in Math in 2012-2013

Site	2012-2013 bonus target for bottom 25% with high growth	2012-2013 math % of bottom 25% with high growth	2012-2013 bonus target for bottom 75% with high growth	2012-2013 math % of top 75% with high growth
A	44.9%	55.3%	39.2%	62.3%
B	44.9%	45.2%	39.2%	53.0%
C	44.9%	66.7%	39.2%	60.3%

Note. Schools received a bonus for surpassing the state average on the A-F accountability model. Students were placed in the top 75% or bottom 25% of their grade level within their school. That group was then compared to the state average to determine if a bonus point l (IDOE, 2014).

Table 6

Variables Used to Compare Research Sites to State Average to Establish the Research Site Fits

the Definition of High Growth in ELA 2011-2012

Site	2011-2012 bonus target for bottom 25% with high growth	2011-2012 ELA % of bottom 25% with high growth	2011-2012 bonus target for bottom 25% with high growth	2011-2012 ELA % of top 75% with high growth
A	42.5%	54.8%	36.2%	48.4%
B	42.5%	44.0%	36.2%	41.1%
C	42.5%	37.2%	36.2%	36.8%

Note. Schools received a bonus for surpassing the state average on the A-F accountability model. Students were placed in the top 75% or bottom 25% of their grade level within their school. That group was then compared to the state average to determine if a bonus point l (IDOE, 2014).

Table 7

Variables Used to Compare Research Sites to State Average to Establish the Research Site Fits

the Definition of High Growth in ELA 2012-2013

Site	2012-2013 bonus target for bottom 25% with high growth	2012-2013 ELA % of bottom 25% with high growth	2011-2012 bonus target for bottom 25% with high growth	2012-2013 ELA % of top 75% with high growth
A	42.5%	60.5%	36.2%	41.6%
B	42.5%	35.1%	36.2%	40.4%
C	42.5%	56.4%	36.2%	42.9%

Note. Schools received a bonus for surpassing the state average on the A-F accountability model. Students were placed in the top 75% or bottom 25% of their grade level within their school. That group was then compared to the state average to determine if a bonus point l (IDOE, 2014).

Research Site A

Research Site A was an elementary school located in central Indiana and had approximately 504 students enrolled in kindergarten through fifth grade. Thirty teachers were on staff and the student-to-teacher ratio was 19-1. Research Site A had a minority rate less than 17%. The race/ethnicity groups included White (81.3%), Hispanic (8.1%), Asian (1.6%), Black (3.0%), and multiracial (4.2%). During this study, the school had 10.5% of the students identified in special education and had 5% of the student population enrolled as English language learners. The school had 34.5 % of the student population on free or reduced lunch; 25.4% received a free lunch and 9.1% a received reduced rate. Site A had been an A-rated school in the state of Indiana for the past two years. Its growth data had surpassed the state for two consecutive years in English/language arts and mathematics (IDOE, 2014).

Research Site B

Research Site B was an elementary school located in southern Indiana and had approximately 851 students enrolled in kindergarten through sixth grades. Forty-five teachers were on staff and the student-to-teacher ratio was 19-1. Site B had a minority rate less than 7.4%. The race/ethnicity groups included White (92.6%), Hispanic (2.6%), Asian (1.1%), Black (.6%), and multiracial (3.2%). During this study, the school had 14.7% of the students identified in special education and had 1.1% of the student population enrolled as English language learners. The school had 48.2 % of their student population on free or reduced lunch—45.1% received a free lunch and 6.7% receive a reduced rate. Site B had been an A-rated school in the state of Indiana for the past two years. Its growth data had surpassed the state for two consecutive years in English/language arts and mathematics.

Research Site C

Research Site C was an elementary school located on the east side of Indiana and had approximately 1,017 students enrolled in preschool through fifth grade. Sixty-one teachers were on staff and the student-to-teacher ratio was 19-1. Site C had a minority rate less than 6.6%. The race/ethnicity groups included White (93.4%), Hispanic (2.9%), Asian (.5%), Black (.1%), and multiracial (2.7%). During this study the school had 16.3% of the student identified in special education and had 1.7% of the student population enrolled as English language learners. The school had 59.2% of the student population on free or reduced lunch—49.7% received a free lunch and 9.5% received a reduced rate. Site C had been an A-rated school in the state of Indiana for the past two years. Its growth data had surpassed the state for two consecutive years in English/language arts and mathematics.

After initial data analysis from the IDOE website for school data and research eligibility, each principal was sent an e-mail asking questions in regard to teacher leadership (IDOE, 2014). The elementary data had to verify high growth for the bottom 25% and top 75% in English/language arts and math for two consecutive years based on the IDOE A-F Accountability Report Card (IDOE, 2014). The principal had to answer favorably to all three questions in order to participate in the study (Table 8 and Appendix B). The first three schools that responded and agreed to participate were selected for the study. Then, the superintendent of the corporation was contacted to ascertain permission to conduct research (Appendix C). Purposive sampling was used to determine which schools participated in this qualitative study.

Table 8

Variables Used to Determine Participation in Research Study

Site	Do you believe teacher leaders positively impact student achievement?	Do you utilize teacher leaders in your building?	Would you be willing to participate in a research study on the identification, cultivation and utilization of teacher leaders?
A	Yes	Yes	Yes
B	Yes	Yes	Yes
C	Yes	Yes	Yes

The superintendent letter was confirmed and loaded to the Indiana State University's Institutional Research Board for permission to conduct research. Then, a date to conduct the document review and interviews was sent through e-mail to the school administrator. Documents were reviewed and each elementary principal was interviewed. The principal interviews lasted between 42 and 67 minutes. Two teachers were then randomly selected and interviewed from each of the research sites. The six teacher interviews lasted from 29 minutes to 48 minutes. A focus group that included a random selection of a primary, intermediate, special education, and/or related arts teachers representative took place at each research site. The three focus groups lasted from 43 minutes to 62 minutes.

The method of analysis utilized for this study included preset and emerging open coding to create labels and categories within the data where applicable. Open coding allowed data to be compared, conceptualized, and categorized to find patterns (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). To establish reliability, data were organized and analyzed for themes per site and cross analyzed.

The information from the interviews was transcribed by me and then coded using open coding. I began with a pre-set list of codes. The pre-set list included the following: principal role, teacher leader, identification, traits, utilization, training, barriers and impact. In addition to coding, notes were also placed in the margin as themes began to emerge and questions developed. I reviewed the coding repeatedly to find emerging themes within each site and a cross analysis was competed to include the central themes from all three research sites.

Resulting Data

This section outlines the data analysis generated from site-specific document reviews, principal interviews per research site, and combined teacher interviews and focus group data from all three sites. All textual data were coded to reveal common ideas, themes, and/or patterns that answered the study's research questions and accomplished the goals of the research.

Document Review School A

School A provided multiple documents for review including leadership team agendas, presentations created by leadership team members, information from the district in regard to a teacher leadership summit used to train building leadership teams, and a schedule of team meetings and student achievement data. These data sources provided evidence to support the cultivation and utilization of teacher leaders. The administrator believed that "the corporation retreat was a great starting place to get us centered and focused, but ongoing training and follow up is needed to keep us challenging ourselves and improving collaboration and ultimately instruction."

1. Leadership agendas included the objectives for the leadership meeting. The administrator was prepared and had a set amount of time for each objective and also allowed time for team members to add comments and concerns at each meeting. The

central focus for all leadership meetings revolved around their current book study:

Teach Like a Champion. Over the course of the year the agenda covered the

techniques from the book and allow the team time to discuss ways to share the ideas

with other staff members in the school to improve instruction and student

achievement.

Objectives:
➢ Teachers will learn Right is Right strategies to implement in the classroom.
➢ Teachers will discuss ways to implement these strategies in the classroom through "turn and talk" scenarios.
➢ Teachers will identify Right is Right strategies in use during video clips.
➢ Teachers will understand how to use Control the Game within all areas of instruction.
➢ Teacher will develop strategies that can be used to overcome potential challenges when using Control the Game during instruction.
➢ Teacher will learn about a summer retreat/work session for the 14-15 school year.

Figure 2. Learning objectives for school leadership team.

2. Leadership presentations were developed by team members throughout the year. The

   presentations were focused on the current book study and were in a variety if

   formants. Each teacher presented in the style that was most comfortable to them.

   Powerpoint was the most common format but Prezi. Videos and table top discussions

   were also used during the year to share the information from the leadership meetings

   and book study.

   Principal A shared, "I have really enjoyed the *Teach Like a Champion* Series. The

   book keeps us focused and is easy to implement. I can leave a meeting and use a

   technique that same day."

3. District level meetings were held in the summer for two days and once each semester.

   Building leadership members were required to attend all meetings.

4. Building level meetings were held each month and all members were required to attend. Each teacher leader left the meeting with information to share with their teams and also an assignment or presentation to prepare for the next month. All presentations were brought to the school leadership team before they were shared with the staff. The administrator attended all leadership meetings and facilitated the meeting a set agenda, time and resources. This time allowed the administrator to work with teacher leaders to help them grow professionally and to provide opportunities to lead others through team meetings and professional development.

Document Review School B

School B provided multiple documents for review including a schedule of teacher-led professional development, access to the school improvement plan that highlighted the use of teacher leaders to provide professional development.

Principal B shared her professional development focus for the year.

Job embedded ongoing professional development will be led at the building level weekly during the scheduled early release time. All teachers are required to attend and be active participants. Topic will include student data, trainings and a focus on improved instruction.

School B offered documents to support the identification, cultivation, utilization, and the evaluation of teacher leaders. The RISE document is not only an evaluation tool for teacher leaders, but it is also used as a training document to set the expectations for leadership within the school (IDOE, 2012). School B administrator used the RISE model to encourage all teachers to find an area where they could lead or support an area of the school community. Three early release professional developments were allotted to the document. The document was presented

at the first meeting and the discussion of school leadership was the primary focus. The next week, staff members came back with ideas for new committees, professional development topics, students programs and other ways to support the school community. The school leadership team recorded the ideas and narrowed down the list. The last meeting allowed each teacher to select an area to lead and participate.

One focus group participant shared, "Our principal is really good at helping us find our talent and passion. She seeks us out and asks us to help."

Document Review School C

School C provided multiple documents for review including leadership team agenda, access to the school improvement plan, book studies conducting with the school level, and handouts and agendas for the back-to-school leadership retreat for the grade level PLC chairs. These data sources provided evidence to support the cultivation and utilization of teacher leaders. This was the first year that the school hosted a training prior to the opening of school for the leadership team. Principal C wanted to dedicate time to make sure everyone was on the same page and prepared to start the year:

> During the year we meet monthly, but those meetings seems hurried or rushed. By taking the time in the summer when we were rested and focused we had the time to get to know each other, set our expectations and develop a plan to professional growth and learning.

Professional learning communities (PLCs) and the work of Richard and Rebecca DuFour in 2006 were used as the training model for this school leadership (DuFour, 2006). Each leadership team meeting agenda covered the three ideas of PLCs: ensuring student learning, building a culture of collaboration and a focus on results (DuFour, 2006). Each month the leadership team would bring data, questions, and concerns to the meeting. The administrator and

teachers would then discuss, plan, and leave with a set of weekly PLC topics to cover with their own team members.

Principal Interview School A

Principal A was a first-year principal at Research Site A. He was a former administrator and teacher in the district. The principal interview lasted for 42 minutes. The following themes emerged from the interview:

- Theme 1: A good leader must be transparent and well organized.

- Theme 2: In order to improve student achievement, the principal must allow time for collaboration and teacher-led professional development.

- Theme 3: A principal must share the leadership responsibility with trusted teacher leaders.

Theme 1: A good leader must be transparent and well organized. When Principal A was asked to define leadership and provide traits of successful teacher's leaders he shared that "a successful principal was transparent and embraced shared decision making that was based on a well planned vision and set of achievement goals." He went on to elaborate on the process of building professional learning communities in his school. The PLCs were determined by grade level. Then he looked at each grade level to identify a leader who would support the school vision and had the skills needed to lead the grade level.

After a teacher leader was assigned to the grade level, training was provided to create a team of teacher leaders that was supported and prepared. The principal shared that "modeling the expectation of collaboration start at the top, I run my leadership team PLC the same way I want them to lead their grade-level teams. We start with a plan and target an improvement goal or focus." After a plan is in place and everyone is working toward a common goal or target, then

high expectations and communication bind everyone together. He has found that "well-planned transparent leaders can drive the conversations towards a shared goal."

Communication and information dissemination are vital. Administrator A worked hard to keep everyone informed and focused. Information is shared with the school-level building leadership team and then filtered down to grade-level teams. The following month, time is allotted for teacher leaders to bring back team information, questions, and ideas. This allows the administrator an opportunity to plan and communicate the next steps to implementation or to clarify in order to keep the school moving toward the set goals.

Theme 2: In order to improve student achievement, the principal must allow time for collaboration and teacher led professional development. Principal A shared the amount of time he spent on identifying teacher leaders.

I look for teachers that can develop relationships with others teacher and are able to work with them and not judge or criticize. I observe their classroom and look for high-quality instruction and the ability to work with others.

After scouting for teacher leaders, Principal A then spent time scheduling collaboration and teacher-led professional development. "The key to our success is managing the time to allow our PLCs time to work together," and we "set aside time for grade level PLC to work together, our school PLC to work together and the corporation also allows time for the district level PLCs to meet." District A hosted a summer leadership institute to train teacher leaders to effectively work together and to collaborate with other teachers. "At the leadership institute, our building has time to schedule and discuss the amount of time we need to dedicate to collaboration and what topics of professional development are most important to help us reach our achievement

goals." Principal A shared his approach to cultivating teacher leaders in his school. He preferred to coach and support his teacher leaders instead of using a micromanaging approach.

> My job is to support the teacher leaders in my building, I am always available to listen to their ideas, worries. I try to listen first and then allow them to problem solve how to improve to build their capacity. Collaboration cannot be forced and if a team has an issue the teacher leader must have a skill set to help their team and not totally rely on administration to solve the problem or conflict.

District A also provides PLC leaders with training on how to be a leader, active participation within a PLC, and how to deal with friction within a team. Principal A shared,

> I appreciate the support from the district to train the teacher leaders in this building. By attending trainings to improve leadership skills we are more positive and work together instead of focusing on the obstacles and negative.

Theme 3: A principal must share the leadership responsibility with trusted teacher leaders. Principal A shared the importance of trust.

> A teacher leader must be trusted up and down the ladder, so to speak. They must be able to work with administration and keep issues confidential and at the same time be trusted by their colleagues to work with them.

Principal A shared that trust is not something that can be manufactured and that successful leaders are able to develop trust without false pretense or effort. Principal A stated, "Trust is the most important trait to being a successful teacher leader. If you are not trusted no one will follow your lead."

Teacher leaders are utilized in a variety of ways including "running grade-level PLC, serving on school committees, mentoring new staff, facilitating professional development, and

connecting to the community and school family." Principal A shared the importance of mutual trust and respect between teacher leaders and administrators. "In order for us to succeed we don't always have to agree but we have to be committed to working together to provide the best learning opportunities possible for our students."

Principal Interview School B

Principal B has been a principal at Research Site B for 12 years. She also worked at central office as an assistant superintendent for one year, as assistant principal, and was a former elementary teacher. The principal interview lasted for 67 minutes. The following themes emerged from the interview:

- Theme 1: A good leader must be able to go from good to great and lead others on that path.

- Theme 2: A principal must develop teacher leaders and provide them support and resources to be successful.

- Theme 3: A principal must establish a set schedule that provides time for collaboration.

Theme 1: A good leader must be able to go from good to great and lead others on that path. Principal B ended each school day with an announcement to her staff and students: "Do the right thing and treat people right." She shared that her definition of leadership and her leadership philosophy follow that motto. She believed, "Good leaders do the right thing and treat others with respect." Principal B identified the traits she believed were necessary to be a great teacher leader. "I look for confidence, the ability to listen to other, a person who is resourceful and is willing to grow as a professional." She believed,

Teacher leaders must be "good teachers" they must be knowledgeable, passionate, and understand students. If they are good, with the right resources and support, they can become great. I look for teachers who have a natural ability to lead and I work with them to make them great teacher leaders.

In addition to developing knowledge within teacher leaders, Principal B also models and coaches skills needed to effectively collaborate with others. "With support and training, good leaders can become great." Training does not have to be formal but sometimes it is. The goal is to become more effective and efficient with communication and collaboration. Principal B spent time modeling effective collaboration and active participation with her staff. She used the train-the-trainer approach with her teacher leaders and felt it helped build confidence and leadership skills within teacher leaders. "Teacher leaders in my building have impacted student achievement because they set a high expectation for themselves and their students, and everyone else follows that example or reflects on ways to become better at what they do."

Theme 2: A principal must develop teacher leaders and provide them support and resources to be successful. Principal B used the RISE evaluation tool for the state of Indiana to help all of her teachers work on leadership skills (IDOE, 2012). Every teacher in her building was evaluated on his or her leadership skills based on the competencies and categories of highly effective, effective, improvement necessary, or ineffective.

I had open conversation with my staff and my teacher leaders about what it takes to move from effective to highly effective. I then individually spoke with each teacher about their leadership strengths and passions and encouraged them to foster their talent.

Principal B believed that all teachers in her building must share a role in school leadership in some capacity but she also had identified a core group of teachers that are strong teacher leaders

and those teachers serve on school level committees, attend extra trainings, and lead school-level professional development.

> I am always looking for passion and confidence and do everything I can to support my teachers to help them become great leaders. This started by having a conversation and listening to their ideas and encouraging them to learn and share with others. I observe their classroom and provide feedback about the instructional strengths that I have observed. I then send them out to trainings and find resources to help them become experts in their area. Over time, they begin to share their new learning with their grade-level team and then school-wide professional development. I never send them to the 'wolves' without support and coaching. I am confident and they are confident in their ability before they are asked to lead or facilitate our early release professional development.

Theme 3: A principal must establish a set schedule that provides time for collaboration. Principal B shared that "time is an obstacle and time is a necessity in order to allow teachers to help each other." District B had implemented an early release time every Wednesday for students in the district. All students go home 30 minutes early on Wednesday afternoons to allow teachers an hour of collaboration time.

> This time is crucial to our success and we use the time wisely. We look at data and decide what we need to focus on to improve achievement. I then assign teacher leaders topics to cover with the staff. If we don't have a building expert then we create one by sending them to training, allowing them to visit other schools and by giving them resources to build capacity.

Every minute counts and the principal's role included scheduling topics, providing

resources, providing access to trainings and data sources. "I have to be organized and prepared,

in order for my teams to be able to efficiently use the collaborative time." Principal B shared

that she always had a timeline and goal for the weekly sessions but is also very flexible and

aware that her timeline might need to be altered. "In order to succeed, teacher leaders must set

high expectation and a sense of urgency. However, the pace cannot lead everyone behind or wait

for the slowest to catch-up."

Principal Interview School C

Principal C was a first-year principal at Research Site C. He had been an administrator in the

corporation for over 30 years and served as the assistant principal since the building opened 10

years ago. The principal interview lasted 48 minutes. The following themes emerged from the

interview:

- Theme 1: School leaders must understand the purpose of education is to serve kids.

- Theme 2: The role and relationship between teacher leaders and administrators had

  evolved.

- Theme 3: Effective teacher leaders need time to learn and be given opportunities to

  work with others.

Theme 1: School leaders must understand the purpose of education is to serve

students. Principal C really believed that putting students first was the difference maker. His

definition of leadership included the belief that school leaders must be student-centered in their

actions, words, and focus. Site C principal defined leadership as the ability to encourage and

educate people to meet the goals and expectation of your vision.

A leader is not a king or dictator but a person that shares the responsibilities and decision making to make improvements. Leaders need to lead by example with professionalism and people skills. They need to be able to support others and help them be successful. But more importantly, school leaders need to understand their purpose is to serve kids and to put kids first.

Principal C was a reflective leader and reflected on the interactions his teachers had with other students and during classroom instruction. He valued relationships and the ability to share knowledge and to motivate others.

Teacher leaders are identified by the administrator and must be able to relate to others. Over the course of my tenure I have seen that successful teacher leaders spark an energy level within their team, are trustworthy and understand the purpose of teaching and learning.

Theme 2: The role and relationship between teacher leaders and administrators has evolved. Principal C shared that he had really seen a change in the importance and necessity of teacher leaders. As his corporation changed from neighborhood schools to one large school to serve the district, he had to adapt to sharing the responsibility with others. Over the years, teacher leaders have become more important and valued in his opinion, and he is committed to helping his leadership team succeed and share the work and success of his school.

Our schools hosted a leadership team retreat. We were given two days to work together to make sure we were all working toward the same goals, knew each other, and understood their role as teacher leaders. It started with a session on the school mission and vision, then moved to grade-level expectations and included relationship building and collaborative training to set up successful teams.

Beyond the retreat, I made sure that I provided monthly meetings that allowed our PLC leads to share questions, concerns, and instructional needs for future professional development. I do not dictate the agenda but instead allowed everyone to guide the conversation.

Principal C shared,

Teacher leaders are vital to our PLC model. The teacher leader is in charge of running the weekly PLC meetings and must be organized, prepared, and knowledgeable in order to be successful. In turn, that requires me to be organized, prepared, and knowledgeable in order to help them so they can help others.

In addition to meetings, Principal C also took time to think through the obstacles teacher leaders faced and had open conversations with his team to prepare them before roadblocks occur. He also had an open door policy and encouraged his teachers to ask questions and ask for support when needed.

I think the biggest obstacle in the beginning for a teacher leader is learning to work with different person abilities and have the skills to help them teach work together and get in sync with the goals and expectations. Another obstacle is becoming comfortable with your role and confident in yourself as a teacher leader. It takes time, training, and a few mistakes to really figure out how to work with others and to be efficient with time and organization.

Theme 3: Effective teacher leaders need time to learn and be given opportunities to work with others. Each year all staff members are given a copy of the professional development calendar and expectations. Each grade level is required to meet at least once a week for 45 minutes as a PLC. These meetings are led by the building-level PLC teacher

leaders. Collaboration is a non-negotiable and a requirement, but also an instrumental part of the student achievement that has occurred in the past five years.

> We have always had good teachers, but since our PLCs began meeting regularly, I have seen better teaching and better instruction. By setting aside time for collaboration, I have proven the importance. Our PLCs are efficient with their time, have learned to use data, and spend time in meaningful discussion about kids making decision for kids.

Principal Interview Cross Analysis

The principal interviews all followed the same protocol questions and procedures. The same questions revealed similarities and differences for the definition of leadership, the identification process, training, and use of teacher leaders. However, all three interviews gave evidence and support of the need to identify, cultivate, and utilize teacher leaders to improve student achievement. All three principals believed that teacher leaders have made a positive impact on student achievement in their schools. Three themes are outlined bellowed that articulate the role of the principal in the identification, cultivation, and utilization of teacher leaders in effective schools.

Table 9

Principal's Role in Identifying, Cultivating, and Utilizing Teacher Leaders

Theme	Site A Principal	Site B Principal	Site C Principal
A principal must embrace shared leadership.	X	X	X
A principal must establish a schedule that provides collaboration time.	X	X	X
A principal must support teacher leaders with ongoing training and opportunities to lead.	X	X	X

The principal interviews allowed each administrator to share their approach to identifying teacher leaders, ways to train or support and the roles they serve. Principal A and C both used PLCs to allow teacher leaders an opportunity to lead and to also grow. Teacher leaders were members of the school PLC with the administrator and then the facilitator for their grade level PLC. The administrators selected the teacher leaders and looked for teachers that were committed and could work with others. Book studies were used at both schools at the building level to build leadership capacity as a team.

Principal B believed that all teachers could lead in some capacity. "Natural leaders" were given bigger roles in the school but all teachers were asked to lead. She used the RISE document as an anchor to set the leadership expectation that all teachers should actively participate and lead something (IDOE, 2012). She felt that every teacher had a passion or ability that they could share with others. She spent time observing and building relationships to hone in on the talent of each of her staff members.

School C embraced the train the trainer model and sent school leadership team members to state and national conferences to learn, study and bring back training information for the rest of the staff. Each week early release time was designated to professional development and covered a variety of topics and formats. The school used the RISE document as the central focus to make sure all teachers were trained in planning, instruction, leadership and professionalism (IDOE, 2012).

Teacher Interview and Focus Groups Data Analysis

At each research site, two teachers were randomly selected to be interviewed. The six individual interviews lasted from 29 to 48 minutes. In addition, a focus group was held at each site. The focus group consisted of four randomly selected teachers from primary, intermediate, special education, and/or related arts teacher. The focus group interviews lasted from 43 to 62 minutes. The standard protocol questions for the interviews and focus group can be found in Appendix F.

The teacher interview and focus group responses were analyzed and coded to reveal themes that were common across the spectrum of schools. The interview and focus group data gave two different types of information to analyze. The private interviews allowed open responses that were from one teacher's viewpoint. In contradiction, the focus group allowed the four teachers to agree, disagree, and add to each other's response. All participants were provided a degree of confidentiality, and each were active participants in the interview process.

This section shares the themes discovered from cross-analyzing textual data collected from teacher interviews and focus group transcriptions. This textual data is a summary of six individual teacher interviews and four focus groups that included 12 teachers from the three research sites. All participants were given the questions in advance. Collectively this analysis

supported the principal's role in identifying, cultivating, and utilizing teacher leaders from a teacher's perspective.

Four central themes emerged from the textual data:

> Theme 1: A good leader must be knowledgeable and prepared.
>
> Theme 2: A good leader must have strong communication skills.
>
> Theme 3: A good leader must be trusted or have the ability to get others to follow.
>
> Theme 4: A good leader shares leadership and decision making.

Theme 1: A Good Leader Must be Knowledgeable and Prepared

The definition of leadership varied from person to person and by site. Some teachers shared their ideal leader and others shared their experiences with good leaders. A teacher at School B shared, "Ideally, a leader should be a person who is always learning and growing as a professional and wants to help others improve as well." A teacher at School A defined leadership, "In my opinion, I think our school has a great leader. He is knowledgeable, approachable and has helped us improve." Preparation and knowledge redundantly appeared as assets to being a good leader. A teacher from School C agreed, "A leader doesn't have to know everything, but needs to be willing to learn or be able to find a person that can be the expert." Another teacher shared, "A leader needs to have all types of intelligence that includes information but also the ability to work with others." Overall, the teachers shared the need to be confident in the information and plan that their leader could provide to help them improve.

Time was the most unanimous obstacle articulated throughout this study. A school administrator needs to have a plan that allocates time and foster a culture of shared leadership opportunities. Teacher leaders are actively involved in their school and classrooms and time is a valuable commodity. The focus group from school C stated, "Time is the biggest obstacle, I feel

like every minute is a choice. I have to prioritize and make sure that my students don't suffer because I have taken on more to support the school." School A's focus group shared a similar response "I struggle to find balance with all the demands on my time." Another teacher from school C shared a similar response, "Time is an issue, there is just never enough to do everything required let alone adding more to help other."

Theme 2: A Good Leader Must Have Strong Communication Skills

A teacher from School A shared that "A leader can't just be the ideas man. They must have a plan to get everyone on board with the ideas and to see his vision. That requires a plan that can be communicated and followed." Communication was a constant strand across all definitions. School B shared that "Communication is the key to leadership. If I don't know where you are going how I am supposed to get there"?

Communication stretches beyond weekly memos and schedules. One focus group shared "A leader needs to communicate and resonate confidence and motivation." This implied that communication went beyond verbal and listening skills but also included an energy that led others.

The focus group from School A shared that teacher leaders and communication has made a positive impact on student achievement. "Our administrator and PLC leaders have made all of us better teachers because they keep pushing us to use our data and to make informed decisions in our classrooms." "Our PLC groups have helped us succeed. We are on the same page and know time is working against us and that we have to use data to meet the needs of our students."

Site B interviews also shared that communication and leadership positively impacted student achievement. "There is so much to do and know and by sharing the work, we have time to improve. Our early release time allows us the opportunity to learn from each other and to see

why we need to change." "I can leave a meeting and have new ideas that I can use in my classroom the next day. I want to improve my instruction and have made several improvements based on the early release time that I have attended."

Theme 3: A Good Leader Must be Trusted or Have the Ability to Get Others to Follow

Trust was the most common used word across all definitions of leader. However, the scope of the word trust expanded across ability, capabilities, loyalty and knowledge. "A leader must be trustworthy and capable of leading a school." "I need a leader that I can trust and believe in."

Trust is important between a principal and teachers. There needs to be respect and loyalty both ways. I need to be trusted that I can do what is asked of me and I need to know that I can mess up or ask questions if I need help.

A vast list of leadership traits were presented and a frequency table was constructed to compare similarities and differences (Table 10). The following traits were compiled from 12 interview or focus group responses: three principal interviews, six teacher interviews and three focus group interviews.

Table 10

Leadership Trait Frequency Table

Trait	Frequency
Has Flexibility	9
Is Enthusiastic	8
Is Passionate	7
Has Perseverance	5
Cares for Others	11
Puts Others First	9
Is Resourceful	8
Is Ethical	10
Is Trustworthy	12
Is Intelligent	9
Has a Positive Attitude	12
Is a Servant Leader	7
Is Idea Oriented	6
Is People Oriented	9
Is Data Oriented	10
Is Good Communicator	12
Is Approachable	12
Is Supportive	11
Puts Kids First	5
Loves Their Jobs	4

The most common traits for a leader included the leader's ability to be trustworthy, positive, approachable, and a good communicator. A leader must embrace a culture that openly communicates with and supports each other in order for teachers to buy in and follow. The interview participants shared that a leader needed to be trusted and supportive. A teacher from

the focus group at School A shared, "His door is always open and I know that I can vent, question or share whatever is on my mind. I try not to take advantage and appreciate the time."

Theme 4: A Good Leader Shares Leadership and Decision Making

School leadership is complex and requires a leader to delegate and share responsibilities and include input and involvement from others. A teacher from School C believed, "A leader doesn't have to be in charge of everything or do everything themselves, leaders can see the talent in others and delegate and share the work load." Shared leadership and decision making required an administrator to create a culture that identifies, cultivates and uses teacher leaders to improve student achievement.

Fighting perceptions was a common obstacle at each school. The focus group at School C voiced concerns about perception. "Teacher leaders aren't the administrator's pets or favorites. I hate when snide remarks are popped off about what we do to help our school." A teacher from School A shared insight on teacher leaders, "Teacher leaders aren't administrators, but sometimes are asked to do things that give them temporary power or control and that can cause issues." "I think teacher leaders have to overcome what other people say and think. Focus group members from School C said that their administrator said that "We should never become immune to people's comments but also never let it slow us down." An administrator must provide a culture that can motivate, inspire and support teacher leaders. A school culture must embrace leadership at all levels and create a sense of shared responsibility that is optimistic and focused on improvement.

When asked how teacher leaders were identified the level of responses varied. Some teachers were confident in their answer and others were unsure of the response but shared what they thought. One teacher responded,

I am not 100% sure that I know how they are chosen, but I know he has picked the right

ones. As a new teacher, I have been directed to several teacher leaders in the building

and been given the chance to observe and work with them; to be honest they helped me

survive my first year.

Other teachers and groups shared that the administrator selected teacher leaders for various

committees and responsibilities in the school.

All three sites stated that if teachers were interested in trying something new, attending a

training, or if they had an idea, they felt they could go to their administrator and have a chance to

pursue their idea and share with others. The focus group at school B elaborated and shared that

their administrator really looked for the passion and ability within each teacher and had

conversations with each teacher about their strengths and weaknesses. A teacher from School B

shared that "I know that I was chosen to attend writing conferences because our principal

observed a lesson and was impressed. That sparked a conversation and three years later I am the

writing trainer for the building."

Several participants from the focus groups expressed the idea that teacher leaders were

identified based on their abilities, passions, and success at the leadership opportunities given.

Everyone at our school is in charge or on something, and I think the principal seeks out

teachers that go above and beyond the assignment or task. I think she looks at our

attitude, work ethic, and the way we treat others.

Shared leadership goes beyond indentifying the right people; it also requires an administrator

to cultivate leaders by providing training and support. An administrator must provide a culture

focused on continued learning and growth. When asked how teacher leaders were supported

across the three schools the following commonalities prevailed that reinforced the idea of a culture of coaching and learning.

    Training is provided. That training could come from a variety of sources including: modeling observing other teachers; administrator-directed training; district-level training; building-level training; attending local, state and national conferences; and training, coaching by a peer or administrator which can include frank conservations about strength and weaknesses.

Figure 3. Training needs for teacher leaders.

    This research study revealed three categories of training recommended by the combined peer group of participants in this study. Training needs for teacher leaders included communication, knowledge and people skills.

    Teacher leaders must be able to communicate. Teacher leaders need to know how to communicate with administrators and teachers. Communication training included training needs in written, verbal and presentation format.

    A veteran teacher at School A shared,

Teacher leaders need to know how to communicate in a variety of ways. The expectations for us to write school improvement plans, lead professional development, and run a grade-level force us to stretch our abilities, and training would be nice.

Teacher leaders build knowledge through professional growth and opportunity. Training needs include the opportunity to access resources include books, webcast, blogs, and other written mediums. Training needs also revealed building leadership capacity through job-embedded professional development that included leading committees, grade levels, professional development, and community events. Several teachers expressed the desire to grow in both areas and that opportunities were a better learning ground than attending workshops.

The focus group at School A believed that training for teacher leaders is job embedded. "When we are asked to lead a professional development we are given the topic and we run with it. We have to come up with a plan and prepare the presentation to make sure it is worth everyone's time." Another teacher from School C shared a similar belief,

> The best teacher training comes from learning from one another and our principal. I am inspired to do better after I see another teacher do a fantastic job presenting. I also try to model my grade-level meetings after the principal building-leadership team. He always has an agenda, requires everyone to be involved and uses the time wisely.

Leadership training is not limited to scholarly learning but also includes a need to learn to work with others, overcome obstacles and the ability to build relationships was a belief of the focus group participants at School B. "Teacher leaders need help learning to work with a different personality. I get really frustrated when I am doing all the work and others are just skating by. I would like to know how to motivate my team." Another teacher shared, "I would

like to learn more ways to motivate other teachers to see the sense of urgency and to appreciate the opportunities that we have."

The opinion that a teacher leader is not made overnight was shared among the three sites. The cultivation of teacher leaders requires time. Teacher leaders need to be identified, supported and given a chance to learn and grow in a culture that allows mistakes and does not expect the teacher leaders to know everything. But have the ability to find answers.

Teacher leaders served in a variety of roles from site to site. Table 11 documents the combined responses for the uses of teacher leaders collectively among the three sites.

Table 11

Leadership Utilization Frequency Table

Role	Frequency
Lead professional development	3 sites
Lead PLC or grade level team	2 sites
Serve on school level committees	3 sites
Lead school level committees	3 sites
Coordinate school events	3 sites
Serve on district committees or teams	2 sites
Building level coaches or trainers	2 sites
Mentors	3 sites
Classrooms used to model instruction	3 sites
Lead book talks or book studies	3 sites
Conduct data mining and data collection for the school or grade level	3 sites
Write and support school improvement plans	3 sites

Summary

The purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate how elementary principals identify, cultivate, and utilize teacher leaders within high-growth elementary schools. For the purpose of this study, high-growth schools are schools that surpassed the state average of high growth for the bottom 25% and top 75% in English/language arts and math for two consecutive years based on the IDOE A-F Accountability Report Card (IDOE, 2014). Through this qualitative study, the role of the principals in three similar Indiana elementary schools were analyzed in regard to the commonalities of the identification of teacher leaders, cultivating talent and leadership, and the utilization of teacher leaders to improve student achievement.

The literature review provided an overview of studies and ideas that included the identification of teacher leaders, cultivation of leadership, and the utilization of teacher leaders to improve student achievement. This study looked at all three aspects across research sites. Although the sites had subtle differences in the identification, training, and utilization of teacher leaders, commonalities were evident that the principal's role is instrumental in identifying, creating, and using teacher leaders to impact student achievement.

Three themes emerged from the interviews with the elementary principals across all three sites:

- Theme 1: A principal must be embrace shared leadership.

- Theme 2: A principal must establish a schedule that provides collaboration time.

- Theme 3: A principal must support teacher leaders with ongoing training and opportunities to lead.

All research locations believed that teacher leaders positively impacted student achievement. The sites also provided documents to support the use of teacher leaders in their schools and provided beliefs and testimonies to explain the identification, cultivation, and utilization of teacher leaders within their school.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Discussion

This chapter provides an overview of the resultant data from document reviews, principal interviews, teacher interviews, and focus groups from three elementary schools in Indiana. I conducted a document review of each site and the scheduled interviews and focus groups to allow the principals and teachers the opportunity to share their thoughts on the principal's role to identify, cultivate, and utilize teacher leaders within high-growth elementary schools.

The purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate how elementary principals identify, cultivate, and utilize teacher leaders within high-growth elementary schools. Through this qualitative study, the roles of the principals in three similar Indiana elementary schools were analyzed in regard to the commonalities of the identification of teacher leaders, cultivation of talent and leadership, and the utilization of teacher leaders to improve student achievement. The driving question in this study was, What is the role of the elementary principal in identifying, cultivating, and utilizing teacher leaders to improve student achievement? The following research questions were the focal point of inquiry for this study.

1. What is the role of the elementary principal in identifying, cultivating and utilizing teacher leaders to improve student achievement?

2. How are teacher leaders identified or recruited?

3. What training is needed to cultivate teacher leaders for the administrator and teacher leaders?

4. How are teacher leaders utilized within the school?

The research followed the methodology defined and outlined in Chapters 3 and 4. I followed the methodology outline and the requirements of IRB. I conducted the document review, principal interviews, teacher interviews, and focus group interviews for each site. The information was collected, transcribed, and analyzed to find themes that had implications for elementary principals and recommendations for future research. Three different data sources were used to conduct this study including document data, interviews, and focus groups. I utilized triangulation to converge multiple data sources of information to form themes (Creswell & Miller, 2000). I also provided narratives in Chapter 4 that included multiple sources and went beyond a single event or data point to show validity (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

The Principal's Role

A principal committed to working within a learning organization needs to rethink the assumption that a principal is the single source for instructional leadership and set up the conditions for change. The principal's role is to ensure that the necessary conditions for leadership are evident within the school. A principal's perspective must see teacher leaders as people who set the direction, make the key decisions, and energize others (Schoetzau, 1998).

The research targeted interview questions to ask administrators and teachers about the role of the principal in the identification, cultivation, and utilization of teacher leaders within their schools. The study began by asking the administrators three questions:

1. Do you believe teacher leaders positively impact student achievement?

2. Do you utilize teacher leaders in your building?

3. Would you be willing to participate in a research study on the identification, cultivation and utilization of teacher leaders?

Only three administrators answered all three questions in a way that opened the door for research to be conducted at their schools. All three sites provided a detailed account of how the principal selected, trained, supported, and utilized teacher leaders to improve student achievement. Three themes emerged from the interviews with the elementary principals across all three sites.

- Theme 1: A principal must embrace shared leadership.

- Theme 2: A principal must establish a schedule that provides collaboration time.

- Theme 3: A principal must support teacher leaders with ongoing training and opportunities to lead.

Theme 1: A principal must embrace shared leadership. The evolution of teacher leadership has required administrators to share leadership responsibilities (Kendall, 2011). This idea of shared leadership can take shape in a variety of formats including the creating of leadership teams, cabinets, or PLCs. The structure or titles are not the concern. The words, actions, and responsibilities must also align with the statement that the principal embraces shared leadership. In order for administrators to be effective in building teacher leaders, they must understand that leadership is influenced not only by the organizational structure but also by the interactions and commitments between the administrator and teacher leaders (Danielson, 2007). Three protocol questions were used for each interview and focus group to explain the identification process used to identify teacher leaders (Appendix F). The questions included defining leadership, listing traits of teacher leaders, and the identifying process used by the

principal to select teacher leaders. The administrators, teachers, and focus groups were all asked the same questions and each site had parallel responses.

Leadership requires the ability to talent search and to identify good teachers that can become great leaders (Dozier, 2007). Administrators play a role in identifying teacher leaders. Leadership is a necessity and requires a person to be knowledgeable, trustworthy, and willing to lead, follow, and learn. Leaders not only organize materials and resources, but they also organize people and structures to work efficiently and produce results. Participants at each research site provided a similar definition that went beyond the person and into the role of a leader. The second question expanded to include the traits of a leader and embraced the definition of leadership. A variety of adjectives and descriptors were presented and outlined in Chapter 4, but again, the traits encompassed the person, the role, and the requirements needed to be successful. Both questions led the conversation to the identification process.

Administrators were able to clearly articulate their definition of leadership, what traits they looked for, and how they selected teacher leaders. The crucial piece was knowing their teachers, the teachers' abilities, and then tapping on the strengths of individual teachers to improve student achievement. Each principal looked for individual strength and confidence in the selection process. They looked for intelligence and the ability to work with others.

Principal A shared,

I look for a person who has the desire to lead. They must have the energy and skills to lead their team. Leaders can always improve, but they must have the disposition to serve others in order to make a difference.

82

In the interviews, the three principals gave explanations and evidence to support their beliefs that shared leadership is a necessity in order to keep up with the accountability demands and the educational trends and changes that effective their schools.

Principal C explained,

During my tenure as an administrator, I have seen a shift from the principal as the boss to the principal as an instructional leader. So much has changed that I am no longer an expert at everything, so in order to keep us focused and improving I look to others to support the leadership and decision making in this school.

Another principal echoed the need for shared leadership and shared in limited perspective without the voice of teacher leaders within his building.

Principal B concurred,

A good leader doesn't have to have all the answers all the time. By establishing a leadership team, I can share the responsibilities and utilize the expertise of the team to answer questions and provide professional development in my school. Education is always changing, and I am always reading and following blogs, but books alone give me a narrow perspective on how to improve instruction. The PLC leaders not only attend the books studies but also bring job embedded implications, questions, and suggestions to the table that I could not. By sharing the leadership responsibility, I am more realistic with my goals, demands, and time.

Theme 2: A principal must establish a schedule that provides collaboration time. Time constraints and scheduling can be altered to allow teachers the opportunity to collaborate and problem solve (DuFour, 2008). In order for teacher leaders to have a chance to work with others, time must be devoted to collaboration. The definition of time is not a number but instead

a non-negotiable. The time is for professional growth and learning. One teacher shared how her grade-level team used the collaboration time.

> Principal C believed that PLCs have been a turning point for his school.
>
> In the past, we attended faculty meetings or met as grade levels to discuss things we needed to do or upcoming due dates. Now when we meet, we are focused on data and instruction. The PLC leader comes prepared with a school-wide agenda, and we work as a team to make sure our instruction meets the needs of our students. I feel like I have a voice and can safely express my reservations, concerns, or questions and that the PLC leader for our grade level will not judge or tattle but will listen and spend time to help me through my frustration or questions.

At each research site, teachers and administrators gave insight into effective collaboration time. Although time was listed as an obstacle for all three research sites, each site was still able to carve out time to collaborate as a school leadership team or PLC and per grade level. Two sites also had a system in place at the district level for teacher leaders to collaborate across buildings or locations. One principal shared the importance of collaboration and time management.

> Every minute is a choice. I never have enough time to get everything done that I want to accomplish. I have learned to delegate and share responsibility. I have also set time aside for the things I value. Professional development and collaboration are game changers in this building. I have great teachers who are motivated to share and help others. I not only give them time to work with their grade-level teams, but we also have time to work together.

Theme 3: A principal must support teacher leaders with ongoing training and opportunities to lead. Administrators who develop leadership teams and who support learning

find the stresses of change and accountability easier to manage (Gregory & Kuzmich, 2007). It appears that teacher leaders and principals are interdependent on each other for support and accountability. The literature review outlined in Chapter 2 expressed the need for teacher leaders to support the principal, but this research also articulated a need to support teacher leaders.

Lieberman (1992) identified essential skills needed to support the success of teacher leaders. Teacher leaders need time to discuss, cultivate, and collaborate with peers and time that allows them to prepare, problem solve, create, and share the leadership responsibilities within the school.

The document review was conducted at each research site. The documents reviewed offered insight into the training, frequency and school plan to support teacher leader. Although the amount of training time or format differed, all three shared a district-level, school-level, and grade-level plan to support teacher leaders. Principal B shared her view point,

> Job embedded training has been the most beneficial training that I have received and the train the trainer model seems to be the best training system I have found. I have attended countless classes, workshops, and professional development at a national, state, and district level over the years. Those opportunities provide ideas, networks, and resources that I can use but do not always fit the needs of my school. Our district provides training for administrators, that I can use for the leadership team, and they can use to support their teams. We have also sent our best teachers and administrators out to be trained so they can return to our buildings and train others.

Not only was training an essential element across all principal, teacher, and focus group interviews but leadership opportunities was also a commonality. A teacher from School A shared her perspective on school leadership opportunities.

Every teacher in this building cares about kids and can help support our school. We are

not all outward leaders but we all work hard and care. Our principal knows our talents

and strengths and personally gives up opportunities to help our school. I feel that I can

contribute and have done my part to help. I feel that she respects me and gives me

opportunities to share with others.

Two protocol questions were used for each interview and focus group to explain the

identification process used to cultivate and train teacher leaders (Appendix F). The questions

included how the principal cultivated teacher leaders within their schools and what training

teacher leaders needed to be successful.

Training needs never included a workshop title, a program, or a set curriculum. Each site

instead interpreted the questions with a more generalized view point. One teacher from School C

shared her sentiment.

Our leadership team could benefit from training that shows us how to better communicate

and understand the difference between people's work ethic. We could also benefit from

fresh ideas from other schools to take the monotony out of our meetings. I would love

fresh ideas and creative ways to revitalize our team meetings.

Two protocol questions were used for each interview and focus group to explain the

identification process used to cultivate and train teacher leaders. (Appendix F). Teachers leaders

can make an impact; within a department, across the school, and beyond the school (Danielson,

2007). All three sites provided examples in support of the utilization of teacher leaders to make

an impact on student achievement. Assigning roles, tasks, and committees is not the most

effective way to use a teacher leader. This research found that the utilization of teacher leaders is

not a standalone indicator of improvement. All three sites shared the need for the right people to

be given the opportunities. The principal from School B explained,

> Our leadership team just finished a book study from Jim Collins, about getting the right
>
> people in the right seats on the bus. Our leadership team really took time to talk about
>
> how we are doing things and who is in charge of what. As a group we redistributed a few
>
> responsibilities and tried to help our team find balance.

Ultimately, this research found that by first identifying a person's strength or talents, then

supporting their ideas and learning, teacher leaders could then be utilized to their maximum

potential. All three sites shared the importance of the teacher leader having a vested interest in

the topic, training, or area. Teacher leaders served in different capacities and roles but a central

theme included finding the right person, with the passion and skill set to motivate others in that

area of professional development or change.

> The focus group from school A shared,

> Our building leadership team supports this school in hundreds of ways. They work hard
>
> to help us improve and keep challenging us to make a difference for our students. As a
>
> second year teacher, I admire their passion, energy, and drive and have learned so much
>
> from them in the past year.

Implications

This research examined the principal's role in the identification, cultivation, and

utilization of teacher leaders within high growth elementary schools. The principal holds the

cards to the success of teacher leaders impacting student achievement. The principal must

believe in shared leadership and be willing to embrace the talent and expertise of teachers to

support the school community. Elementary principals would benefit from this research and

could utilize the protocol questions to examine their own practices and beliefs in regard to teacher leaders. First the administrators should reflect on their personal beliefs and responses to this central question: Do you believe teacher leaders positively impact student achievement? If they concur, then the following questions can help his or her team members explore their current methods and practices and potentially improve their effectiveness from the literature review and research findings of this qualitative study.

1. Define leadership.

2. What traits do you think teachers leaders need to be successful?

3. How does the principal identify teacher leaders within your school?

4. How does the principal cultivate teacher leaders within your school?

5. What training do teacher leaders need to be successful?

6. How does the principal utilize teacher leaders within your school?

7. What obstacles do teacher leaders face?

8. Do teacher leaders impact student achievement?

This study's findings have implications for school practitioners. Teacher interviews and focus groups shared that the identification, cultivation and utilization of a teacher leaders was not only important but did positively impact student achievement. The teachers valued their principals' ability to use teacher leaders and to provide opportunities for collaboration and training. Teachers also believed they benefited from the opportunity to collaborate and from the professional development led by teacher leaders. The goals of this study were to identify the role of the principal in identifying, cultivating and utilizing teacher leaders. Principals' selection of teachers for various leadership roles varied, but consistently, teachers were able to articulate how their administrator did actively recruit, train and use teacher leaders across a variety of school-

based and/or district leadership roles. Principals shared how their selection of teacher leaders was based on leadership traits and a disposition that supported the vision of the leadership and included a skill set that allowed them to effectively work with others.

Shared leadership resonated as another theme throughout the literature and the findings from this study; principals utilized teacher leaders in a variety of roles within their schools. The ability to develop teacher leaders is crucial for today's administrator (Danielson, 2007). The administrators in this study involving teachers in the decision-making process and provided leadership opportunities and training.

As teacher leaders become more involved in decision making, the role of the principal shifts from sole leadership to a shared leadership model. A principal committed to working within a learning organization will need to rethink the assumption that a principal is the single source for instructional leadership and set up the conditions for change (Schoetzau, 1998). School leaders should focus greater attention on understanding how teacher leaders can positively impact student achievement. Time is a constraint felt from all stakeholders in education. The accountability on principals, teachers and educational institutions is increasing and evolving. School administrators need to identify, train, support and use teacher leaders.

Future Research

In addition to practitioner implications, further research could expand upon the number of participants and find schools outside the high growth parameters to find similarities and differences among the identification, cultivation, and utilization of teacher leaders. For the purposes of this qualitative study, demographics were not a constant variable and each site differed in demographics including: geographical location, enrollment, ethnicity, and at-risk

population subgroups. Additional research could examine research sites with the same demographics in comparisons to this study.

This research contributes to the current literature by adding insights into the principal's role in the identification, cultivation and utilization of teacher leaders. The administrator's role includes all three components in regards to teacher leaders. Future studies could explore teacher retention and turnover based on the level of support, training and leadership opportunities available to them at in their school.

University educator preparation programs could also explore coursework for aspiring principals and school administrators that explore ways to scout talent, train, and use teacher leaders. Superintendent coursework could also explore ways to help administrators become more effective in the identification, training, and use of teacher leaders.

Conclusions

The impact that teacher leaders can have on student achievement starts and stops with the core beliefs of the building-level administrator. The principal's role goes beyond just selecting, training, and using teachers to help "them" with the workload. An instructional leader must be committed to the belief that teacher leaders share the leadership responsibilities for the school community. They must not only establish teacher leaders or teams but also provide a culture that allows teacher leaders to flourish. Setting high expectations and professional goals for teachers creates a culture of professional learners that trust, respect, collaborate, and learn from one another.

A school leader cannot depend solely on his/her knowledge base and ability to lead every decision, initiative, and program. Shared leadership and decision making are vital to the health of the school community and require the use of teacher leaders. Building relationships with staff

and learning about teacher's strengths and expertise is a precursor to the identification process. Further, developing teacher leaders' communication skills, ability to problem solve, and ability to work with others are critical components to ensure that teacher leaders build self-efficacy.

The principal's role is reflected in their ability to share a vision and belief system that includes the utilization of teacher leaders. The responsibility of selecting, supporting, and using teacher leaders falls on the building-level principal.

Currently, elementary schools in the state of Indiana are measured on one accountability model that only looks at student achievement on ISTEP+ scores. This makes it difficult to prove the impact of teacher leaders on student achievement with statistical data. However, the stories, testimonies, and beliefs of this study are all in favor that teacher leaders could be the difference makers. They are the planners, implementers, supporters, cheerleaders, and change agents that seem to contribute to improved student achievement.

REFERENCES

Ash, R. C., & Persall, J. M. (1999). The principal as chief learning officer. *National Association of Secondary School Principals, 84*(616), 15-22. Retrieved from http://bul.sage.pub.com

Barn, L. A. (1947). Releasing teacher leadership. *Educational Leadership, 4*(3), 155-158. Retrieved from http://www.ascd.org

Barth, R. S. (1999). *The teacher leader.* Providence, RI: Rhode Island Foundation.

Barth, R. S. (2001a). *Learning by heart.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Barth, R. S. (2001b). Teacher leader. *Phi Delta Kappan, 82*(4). Retrieved from http://www.kappanmagazine.org

Beerens, D. (2010). *A poem about leadership.* Retrieved from http://nurturingfaith.wordpress.com/2010/02/22/a-poem-about-leadership/

Belasco, J. A., & Stayer, R. C. (1993). *Flight of the buffalo: Soaring to excellence, learning to let employees lead.* New York, NY: Warner Brothers.

Blake, R., & Mouton, J. (1966). *The managerial grid.* Houston, TX: Gulf.

Block, P. (1993). *Stewardship.* San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler.

Boyd-Dimock, V., & McGree, K. (1995). *Leading change from the classroom: Teachers as leaders.* Retrieved from http://www.sedl.org/change/issues/issues44.html

Burns, J. M. (1978). *Leadership.* New York, NY: Harper & Row.

Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy. (1986). *A nation prepared: Teachers for the twenty-first century: The report of the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy's Task Force on Teaching as a Profession.* Washington, DC: The Carnegie Forum.

Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement. (2008). *District support of school improvement.* Retrieved from http://www.ldonline.org/article/24932/?theme=print

Center for Teacher Leadership. (2003). *Teacher leaders: Self-perceptions and training needs.* [Survey]. Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, VA. Retrieved from http://www.ctl.vcu.edu/tl_surveryresults.htm

Coggins, C., & Diffenbaugh, P. K. (2013). Teachers with drive. *Educational Leadership, 71*(2), 42-45. Retrieved from http://www.ascd.org

Collins, J. C., & Porras, J. I. (1994). *Built to last: Successful habits of visionary companies.* New York, NY: HarperCollins.

Concordia University. (2009). *Five school leadership qualities every teacher possesses.* Retrieved from http://education.cu-portland.edu/blog/ed-leadership/5-school-leadership-qualities-every-teacher-possess/

Covey, S. R. (1989). *The 7 habits of highly effective people.* New York, NY: Simon & Shuster.

Creswell, J. W. (1998). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five designs*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Creswell, J. W. (2003). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Creswell, J. W., & Miller, D. L. (2000). *Determining validity in qualitative inquiry: Theory into Practice, 39*(3), 124-131. Retrieved from http://www.tip.ehe.osu.edu

Danielson, C. (2007). The many faces of leadership. *Educational Leadership, 65*(1), 14-19. Retrieved from http://www.ascd.org

Darling-Hammond, L., & Bransford, J. (2005). *Preparing teachers for a changing world.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Day, C., & Harris, A. (2003). Teacher leadership, reflective practice, and school improvement. In K. A. Leithwood & P. Hallinger (Eds.), *Second international handbook of educational leadership and administration* (pp. 957-978). Norwell, MA: Kluwer Academic.

Deal, T. E., & Peterson, K. D. (2009). *Shaping school culture: Pitfalls, paradoxes, and promises.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Dierks, K., Dillard, S., McElliot, K., Morgan, J., Schultz, B., Tipps, L., & Wallentine, K. (1988). *Teacher leadership: Commitment and challenge.* Seattle, WA: University of Washington, Puget Sound, Educational Consortium.

Donaldson, G. A. (2001). *Cultivating leadership in schools: Connecting people, purpose, and practice.* New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Dozier, T. (2007). Turning good teachers into great teachers. *Educational Leadership, 65*(1), 54-59. Retrieved from http://www.ascd.org

DuFour, R. (2006). *Learning by doing: A handbook for professional learning communities.* Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree.

DuFour, R. (2008). *The collaborative administrator: Working together as a professional learning community.* Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree.

Easterby-Smith, M., Burgoyne, J., & Araujo, L. (1999). *Organizational learning and the learning organization.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Elmore, R. (2000). *Building a new structure for school improvement.* New York, NY: Albert Shanker Institute.

Flath, B. (1989)*.* The principal as instructional leader. *ATA Magazine, 69*(3), 19-22, 47-49. Retrieved from http://www.albertamagazines.com

Fullan, M. (2001). *The new meaning of educational change.* New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Fullan, M. (2007). *Leading in a culture of change.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Gabriel, J., & Farmer, P. (2009). *How to help your school thrive without breaking the bank.* Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Goleman, D., Boyatzis, R., & McKee, A. (2002). *Primal leadership: Realizing the power of emotional intelligence.* Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.

Gregory, G. H., & Kuzmich, L. M. (2007). *Teacher teams that get results: 61 strategies for sustaining and renewing professional learning communities.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Hallinger, P., & Heck, R. (2002). What do you call people with visions? The role of vision, mission, and goals in school leadership and improvement. In K. Leithwood & P. Hallinger (Eds.), *Second international handbook of educational leadership and administration* (pp. 9-40). Norwell, MA: Kluwer Academic.

Helterbran, V. (2008). Teacher leadership: Overcoming 'I am just a teacher' syndrome.'
Education, 131, 363-371. Retrieved from http://www.eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ930607

Hickey, W. D., & Harris, S. (2005). Improved professional development through teacher
leadership. *The Rural Educator, 26*(2), 12-16. Retrieved from
http://www.ruraleducator.net/archive/26-2/26-2_Hickey.pdf

Indiana Department of Education. (2012). *Principal effectiveness rubric.* Retrieved from
http://www.doe.in.gov/evaluations

Indiana Department of Education. (2014). *DOE compass.* Retrieved from
http://compass.doe.in.gov/dashboard/overview.aspx

Institute for Educational Leadership. (2001). *Leadership for student learning: Redefining the
teacher as leader.* Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from
http://www.iel.org/programs/21st/reports/teachlearn.pdf

Katzenmeyer, M., & Moller, G. (2001). *Awakening the sleeping giant: Helping teachers develop
as leaders* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Kendall, J. (2011, November 9). *Common core 101.* [Webinar]. Retrieved from
http://www.ascd.org/professional-development/webinars/john-kendall-webinar.aspx

Killion, J. (2001). *What works in elementary schools: Results-based staff development.* Oxford,
OH: National Staff Development Council.

Kuntz, B. (2012). Create a positive school culture. *Educational Leadership, 54*(9), 8. Retrieved
from http://www.ascd.org

Krisko, M. E. (2001). *Teacher leadership: A profile to identify the potential*. (Report No.
SP040365), Paper presented at the Biennial Convocation of Kappa Delta Pi, Orlando, FL.
(ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED459147)

Lambert, L. (2003). *Leadership capacity for lasting improvement.* Alexandria, VA: Association

    for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Leithwood, K., Louis, K., Anderson, S., & Wahlstrom, K. (2004). *How leadership influences*

    students. New York, NY: Wallace Foundation. Retrieved from

    http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/school-leadership/key-

    research/Documents/How-Leadership-Influences-Student-Learning.pdf

Leithwood, K., Louis, K., Anderson, S., & Wahlstrom, K. (2012). *The school principal as*

    leader: guiding schools to better teaching and learning. New York, NY: Wallace

    Foundation. Retrieved from http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/school-

    leadership/effective-principal-leadership/Documents/The-School-Principal-as-Leader-

    Guiding-Schools-to-Better-Teaching-and-Learning.pdf

Lieberman, A. (1992). Teacher leadership: What are we learning? In C. Livingston (Ed.),

    Teachers as leaders: Evolving roles (pp. 159-165). Washington, DC: National Education

    Association.

Lieberman, A., & Miller, L. (2004). *Teacher leadership.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Lieberman, A., Saxl, E. R., & Miles, M. B. (1988). Teacher leadership: Ideology and practice. In

    A. Lieberman (Ed.), *Building a professional culture in schools* (pp. 148-166). New York,

    NY: Teachers College Press.

Lortie, D. C. (1975). *Schoolteacher: A sociological study.* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago

    Press.

Manthey, G. (2012). How leaders create schools with high collective efficacy. *Leadership, 41*(4).

    Retrieved from http://www.uk.sagepub.com/journals/Journal201698

Martin, B. (2007). Teacher leaders: Qualities and roles. *The Journal for Quality and Participation, 30*(4), 17-18. Retrieved from http://asq.org

Maxfield, C. R., Jr., & Flumerflet, S. (2009). The empowering principal: Leadership behaviors needed by effective principals as identified by emerging leaders and principals. *International Journal of Teacher Leadership, 2*(2). Retrieved from https://www.csupomona.edu/~ceis/education/international-journal-teacher-leadership/index.shtml

McGregor, D. (1960). *The human side of enterprise.* New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

Meredith, E. (2007). *Leadership strategies for teachers.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Merriam, S. B. (2001). *Qualitative research and case study application in education.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Muhammad, A. (2009). *Transforming school culture: How to overcome staff division.* Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree Press.

Murphy, J. (2005). *Connecting teacher leadership and school improvement.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

National Commission on Excellence in Education. (1983). *A nation at risk: The imperative for educational reform.* Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Newmann, F., King, B., & Youngs, P. (April, 2000). *Professional development that addresses school capacity.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA. Retrieved from http://www.aera.net

O'Donohue, W., & Nelson, L. (2009). The role of ethical values in an expanded psychological contract. *Journal of Business Ethics, 90,* 251-263. Retrieved from http://www.springer.com

Patterson, J., & Patterson, J. (2004). Sharing the lead: Teacher leaders can play a vital role in creating a resilient school culture. *Educational Leadership, 61,* 74-78. Retrieved from http://www.ascd.org

Patton, M. Q. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods* (2nd ed.). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Peterson, K. (2002). *Effective teacher hiring: A guide to getting the best.* Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Pillars, W. (2013). *The seven verbs of teacher leadership.* Retrieved from http://www.edweek.org/tm/articles/2013/10/15/ctq_pillars_verbs.html

Rabinowitz, P. (2013). *Recognizing the challenges of leadership.* Retrieved from http://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/leadership/leadership-ideas/leadership-challenges/main

Reeves, D. (2008). *Reframing teacher leadership to improve your school.* Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Richardson, V. (1996). *Teacher change and the staff development process: A case in reading instruction.* New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Sacks, A. (2013). The problem-solving power of teachers. *Educational Leadership, 71*(2), 18-22. Retrieved from http://www.ascd.org

Schein, E. H. (1996). Culture: The missing concept in organizational studies. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 41,* 229-240. Retrieved from http://asq.sagepub.com

Schoetzau, E. (1998). *Principals' support for teacher leaders at elementary schools in a large suburban school district in Virginia* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/theses/public/etd-22298-16523/materials/drellen.pdf

Searby, L., & Shaddix, L. (2008). Growing teacher leaders in a culture of excellence. *The Professional Educator, 32*(1). Retrieved from http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ802011.pdf

Senge, P. (1990). *The fifth discipline: The art and practice of the learning organization.* New York, NY: Doubleday Currency.

Sergiovanni, T. J. (1996). *Leadership for the schoolhouse: How is it different? Why is it important?* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Smylie, M. A., & Denny, J. W. (1990). Teacher leadership: Tensions and ambiguities in organizational perspective. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 26,* 235-259. Retrieved from http://www.eaq.sagepub.com

Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1990). *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

VanDover, T. (2009, December 1). *Cultivating teacher leaders.* Retrieved from http://education.missouri.edu/news/articles/tdp/2009_12_01-cultivating-teachers.php

Vernon-Dotson, L. J. (2008). Promoting inclusive education through teacher leadership teams: A school reform initiative. *Journal of School Leadership, 18,* 543-554. Retrieved from https://www.rowman.com/page/JSL

Wagner, T., Kegan, R., Lahey, L., Lemons, R., Garnier, J., Helsing D., Howell, A., & Rasmussen, H. (2006) *Change leadership: A practical guide to transforming our schools.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Wald, P. J., & Castleberry, M. S. (2000). *Educators as learners: Creating a professional learning community in your school.* Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Wasley, P. (1991). *Teachers who lead: The rhetoric of reform and realities of practice.* New

    York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Welch, M. (1998). Collaboration: Staying on the bandwagon. *Journal of Teacher Education,*

    49(1), 26-37.

Wetzler, J. (2010). *Developing teachers as leaders.* Retrieved from http://www.changemag.org/

    Archives/Back%20Issues/November-December%202010/developing-teachers-leader-

    abstract.html

Yin, R. (2011). *Qualitative research from start to finish.* New York, NY: Guilford Press.

York-Barr, J., & Duke, K. (2004). What do we know about teacher leadership? Findings from

    two decades of scholarship. *Review of Educational Research, 4,* 255-316. Retrieved from

    http://www.aera.net

APPENDIX A: INDIANA STATE INSTRUCTIONAL RESEARCH REVIEW BOARD

Indiana State University
More. From day one.

Institutional Review Board

Terre Haute, Indiana 47809
812-237-3092
Fax 812-237-3092

DATE:	July 25, 2014
TO:	April Holder
FROM:	Indiana State University Institutional Review Board
STUDY TITLE:	[589640-3] IDENTIFYING, CULTIVATING, AND UTILIZING ELEMENTARY TEACHER LEADERS
SUBMISSION TYPE:	Amendment/Modification
ACTION:	APPROVED
APPROVAL DATE:	May 29, 2014
EXPIRATION DATE:	April 17, 2015
REVIEW TYPE:	Expedited Review
REVIEW CATEGORY:	Expedited review category #

Thank you for your submission of Amendment/Modification materials for this research study. The Indiana State University Institutional Review Board has APPROVED your submission. The approval for this study expires on **April 17, 2015.**

Prior to the approval expiration date, if you plan to continue this study you will need to submit a continuation request (Form E) for review and approval by the IRB. Additionally, once you complete your study, you will need to submit the Completion of Activities report (Form G).

This approval is based on an appropriate risk/benefit ratio and a study design wherein the risks have been minimized. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

This submission has received Expedited Review based on the applicable federal regulation.

Informed Consent: Please remember that informed consent is a process beginning with a description of the study and insurance of participant understanding followed by a signed consent form. Informed consent must continue throughout the study via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. **NOTE: You must use the electronically stamped informed consent document that has been uploaded into IRBNet.**

Reporting of Problems: All SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported. Any problems involving risk to subjects or others, injury or other adverse effects experienced by subjects, and incidents of noncompliance must be reported to the IRB Chairperson or Vice Chairperson via phone or e-mail immediately. Additionally, you must submit Form F electronically to the IRB through IRBNet within 5 working days after first awareness of the problem.

Please note that any revision to previously approved materials must be approved by the IRB prior to initiation. Please use the appropriate revision forms for this procedure.

Modifications: Any modifications to this proposed study or to the informed consent form will need to be submitted using Form D for review and approval by the IRB prior to implementation.

Please note that all research records must be retained for a minimum of three years. If those research records involve health information, those records must be retained for a minimum of six years.

If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Kim Bodey within IRBNet by clicking on the study title on the "My Projects" screen and the "Send Project Mail" button on the left side of the "New Project Message" screen. I wish you well in completing your study.

APPENDIX B: LETTER TO ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL

March 2014

Dear Elementary Principal:

My name is April Holder, and I am the principal at Wilson Elementary School in Jeffersonville, Indiana. I am a doctoral candidate at Indiana State University. For my dissertation, I am studying the principal's role in identifying, cultivating and utilizing teacher leaders in high growth elementary schools. As a part of this study, I am contacting you in the hopes you will volunteer to participate in this qualitative study.

If you volunteer to participate in this study, I would like to visit your school to learn how teacher leaders have impacted student achievement by conducting a document review, interviews and a focus group interview. This study will analyze documents pertaining to teacher leaders and leadership opportunities. These documents can provide a timeline or evidence of teacher leaders and opportunities prior to the study. These documents will include school improvement plans, meeting record forms and student achievement. These documents will be used to determine the importance of teacher leadership. In addition to documents review, an individual interview with the principal and a teacher leader from each building will be conducted. A focus group interview will also be held with a select group of teachers to allow participants to piggy back off of each other's responses and thoughts to create a collective story of the role of the principals in identifying, cultivating teacher leaders and utilizing teacher leaders.

Any information obtained from the document review, interviews, and focus group will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. All information will be kept confidential.

Your participation is voluntary. If you volunteer, you may withdraw at any time without consequence of any kind. You may also feel free to refuse to answer any questions you do not wish to answer. I will provide a list of questions in advance for your review and reflection.

Thank you in advance for your assistance with my study. Please answer the following selection questions:

Question	Yes	No
Do you believe teacher leaders positively impact student achievement?		
Do you utilize teacher leaders in your building?		
Would you be willing to participate in a research study on the identification, cultivation and utilization of teacher leaders?		

Please feel free to contact me for clarification if needed or send your responses to the e-mail provided. My email address is aholder@gcs.k12.in.us, my school number is (812) 288-4888 ext. 262, and my home number is (812) 941-1910. Dr. Steve Gruenert, dissertation Committee Chairman, may also be contacted at Steve.Gruenert@indstate.edu or at Indiana State University at (812) 237-8398. If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you may contact the Indiana State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) by mail at 114 Erickson Hall, Terre Haute, IN 47809, by phone at (812)237-8217, or by email at irb@indstate.edu.

Thank you in advance for your assistance with my study.

Sincerely,

April Holder   Dr. Steve Gruenert
Doctoral Candidate   Committee Chairman

APPENDIX C: LETTER TO SUPERINTENDENT

Letter to Superintendents

Dear Superintendent:

My name is April Holder, and I am the principal at Wilson Elementary School in Jeffersonville, Indiana. I am a doctoral candidate at Indiana State University. For my dissertation, I am studying the principal's role in identifying, cultivating and utilizing teacher leaders in high growth elementary schools. As a part of this study, I am contacting you in the hopes you will allow an elementary school from your district to participate in this qualitative study.

With your permission, an elementary school from your corporation will be selected for document review, interviews and a focus group interview. This study will analyze documents pertaining to teacher leaders and leadership opportunities. These documents can provide a timeline or evidence of teacher leaders and opportunities prior to the study. These documents will include school improvement plans, meeting record forms and student achievement. These documents will be used to determine the importance of teacher leadership. In addition to documents review, an individual interview with the principal and two teachers will be conducted. A focus group interview will also be held with a select group of teachers to allow participants to piggy back off of each other's responses and thoughts to create a collective story of the role of the principals in identifying, cultivating teacher leaders and utilizing teacher leaders.

Any information obtained from the document review, interview and focus groups will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. All information will be kept confidential.

I am asking for an approval letter to grant permission to conduct the study in your district. This letter is required by IRB before research can begin. The letter must be written on district letter head and must grant permission to conduct the study.

Please feel free to contact me for clarification if needed. My email address is aholder@gcs.k12.in.us, my school number is (812) 288-4888 ext. 262, and my home number is (812) 941-1910. Dr. Steve Gruenert, dissertation Committee Chairman, may also be contacted at Steve.Gruenert@indstate.edu or at Indiana State University at (812) 237-8398. If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you may contact the Indiana State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) by mail at 114 Erickson Hall, Terre Haute, IN 47809, by phone at (812)237-8217, or by email at irb@indstate.edu.

Sincerely,

April Holder   Dr. Steve Gruenert
Doctoral Candidate   Committee Chairman

APPENDIX D: LETTER TO TEACHER INTERVIEW PARTICIPANT

Dear Participant:

My name is April Holder, and I am the principal at Wilson Elementary School in Jeffersonville, Indiana. I am a doctoral candidate at Indiana State University. For my dissertation, I am studying the principal's role in identifying, cultivating and utilizing teacher leaders in high growth elementary schools. As a part of this study, I am contacting you in the hopes you will volunteer to participate in this qualitative study.

 If you volunteer to participate in this study, I will conduct an individual interview with you in regards to teacher leaders. This interview will occur in person and I will provide a copy of the interview questions in advance for your review and reflection. Any information obtained from the interviews will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. All information will be kept confidential.

Your participation is voluntary. If you volunteer, you may withdraw at any time without consequence of any kind. You may also feel free to refuse to answer any questions you do not wish to answer. I will provide a list of questions in advance for your review and reflection.

Please feel free to contact me for clarification if needed. My email address is aholder@gcs.k12.in.us, my school number is (812) 288-4888 ext. 262, and my home number is (812) 941-1910. Dr. Steve Gruenert, dissertation Committee Chairman, may also be contacted at Steve.Gruenert@indstate.edu or at Indiana State University at (812) 237-8398. If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you may contact the Indiana State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) by mail at 114 Erickson Hall, Terre Haute, IN 47809, by phone at (812)237-8217, or by email at irb@indstate.edu.

Thank you in advance for your assistance with my study.

Sincerely,

April Holder   Dr. Steve Gruenert
Doctoral Candidate   Committee Chairman

APPENDIX E: LETTER TO FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT

March 2014

Dear Participant:

My name is April Holder, and I am the principal at Wilson Elementary School in Jeffersonville, Indiana. I am a doctoral candidate at Indiana State University. For my dissertation, I am studying the principal's role in identifying, cultivating and utilizing teacher leaders in high growth elementary schools. As a part of this study, I am contacting you in the hopes you will volunteer to participate in this qualitative study.

 If you volunteer to participate in this study, I will conduct a focus group interview with you and other teachers in the building in regards to teacher leaders. This focus group interview will occur in person and I will provide a copy of the interview questions in advance for your review and reflection. Any information obtained from the focus group will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. All information will be kept confidential.

Your participation is voluntary. If you volunteer, you may withdraw at any time without consequence of any kind. You may also feel free to refuse to answer any questions you do not wish to answer. I will provide a list of questions in advance for your review and reflection.

Please feel free to contact me for clarification if needed. My email address is aholder@gcs.k12.in.us, my school number is (812) 288-4888 ext. 262, and my home number is (812) 941-1910. Dr. Steve Gruenert, dissertation Committee Chairman, may also be contacted at Steve.Gruenert@indstate.edu or at Indiana State University at (812) 237-8398. If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you may contact the Indiana State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) by mail at 114 Erickson Hall, Terre Haute, IN 47809, by phone at (812)237-8217, or by email at irb@indstate.edu.

Thank you in advance for your assistance with my study.

Sincerely,

April Holder   Dr. Steve Gruenert
Doctoral Candidate   Committee Chairman

APPENDIX F: STANDARD PROTOCOL QUESTIONS FOR INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS

GROUP

	Key Word
Research Cite:	
Date and Time:	
Interviewer:	
Interviewee:	
Question #1: Define leadership?	Leadership
Question #2: What traits do you think teachers leaders need to be successful?	Traits
Question #3: How does the principal identify teacher leaders within your school?	Identification
Question #4: How does the principal cultivate teacher leaders within your school?	Cultivate
Question #5: What training do teacher leaders need to be successful?	Training
Question #6: How does the principal utilize teacher leaders within your school?	Utilize
Question #7: What obstacles do teacher leaders face?	Obstacles
Question #8 Do teacher leaders impact student achievement?	IMPACT

APPENDIX G: CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

IDENTIFYING, CULTIVATING, AND UTILIZING ELEMENTARY TEACHER LEADERS

You are being asked to participate in the research study conducted by April Holder, a doctoral candidate in the Department of Education Leadership at Indiana State University. Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Please read the information below and feel free to ask questions for clarification, before deciding whether or not to participate.

The purpose of this qualitative study is to investigate how elementary principals identify, cultivate and utilize teacher leaders within high growth elementary schools. Through this qualitative study, the role of the principals in three similar Indiana elementary schools will be analyzed in regard to the commonalities of the identification of teacher leaders, cultivating talent and leadership and the utilization of teacher leaders to improve student achievement. The author's intent is to find similarities amongst high growth schools in regards to teacher leaders.

If you choose to participate in this study, I will conduct an individual interview with you in regards to teacher leaders. This interview will occur in person and I will provide a copy of the interview questions in advance for your review and reflection. Any information obtained from the interviews will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. All information will be kept confidential and your information will be coded and not entered by name. One copy of the list of names will be kept secure in the home office of April Holder.

Risks of participation:

This interview style will allow you the freedom to share your thoughts and comments on teacher leaders. There is a chance that confidentially can be breeched, but the use of coding will be used to ensure protection. Interviews will be conducted in a secure room, but other staff members may become aware of your participation.

Benefits of participation:

Your information will be combined with information obtained from a document review, other interviews and focus groups to inform others about similarities amongst high growth schools in regards to the identification, cultivation and utilization of teacher leaders.

Opting Out:

Your participation is voluntary. If you volunteer, you may withdraw at any time without consequence of any kind. You may also feel free to refuse to answer any questions you do not wish to answer. I will provide a list of questions in advance for your review and reflection.

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

_____ _____ _____

Printed Name of Participant   Signature   Date