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Examining Teacher Leadership: The Perceived Challenges of Being a Teacher Leader

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EXAMINING TEACHER LEADERSHIP: THE PERCEIVED CHALLENGES OF
BEING A TEACHER LEADER

by

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A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the

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DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my children, Molly and Henry, who bring me more joy than anything else and whom I love with my whole being.

I dedicate this dissertation to my husband, Jim, who made countless sacrifices to see me achieve my dream. Thank you for always being a supportive partner and for putting up with all my craziness.

I dedicate this dissertation to my parents, who have never stopped inspiring me and pushing me to use the talents God gave me. Thank you for instilling in me the importance of education, growth, hard work, strength of character, and faith. I especially thank you for never taming me when I was stubborn and strong-willed. I relied on these traits to complete my dissertation journey.

I dedicate this dissertation to my brothers, who I like to think were my first, and most difficult, students. Thank you for teaching me the importance of patience.

Lastly, I dedicate this dissertation to all the teachers that I have had the pleasure of working with throughout the years. Thank you for your guidance and mentorship. Thank you for always striving to make education come to life for our students and for loving each student as if they were your own child. I know the difference you make in the lives of your students. Someday, your students will realize it, too.

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ABSTRACT

Today's school leaders recognize that one person, mainly the principal, cannot adequately address the needs of all members of the school community. Many principals rely on teacher leaders to lead alongside them to further school improvement, knowing that the traditional way of thinking of school leadership as being the sole role of the principal is no longer effective or efficient. While K-12 teachers typically have a strong background in child development, psychology, and pedagogy, many lack experience in leading and facilitating adults and have little background in adult learning theory.

The purpose of this research is to determine how K-12 teacher leaders perceive the challenges of leading and facilitating adults. Working within Knowles Adult Learning Theory of Andragogy, this phenomenological qualitative study will analyze eight teacher leaders in rural, North Dakota school districts. Data will be collected through semi-structured interview questions and be analyzed through coding the transcriptions of the interviews. My goal is that this study can be utilized to inform further research in the area of teacher leader development for both school districts and higher education institutions.

CHAPTER 1.   INTRODUCTION

About a year ago, a teacher colleague of mine asked if I would be willing to write a letter of recommendation for him as he was applying for online graduate programs. Being that he was the department Professional Learning Community (PLC) leader, as well as a grade-level lead teacher and mentor, I naturally assumed he was applying to an educational leadership program. Instead, he scoffed and said, "I have no interest in being an administrator." His answer took me by surprise, first because I thought he would make a good administrator, but mostly because I did not associate educational leadership with the idea that it automatically means one will jump into administration. What was most intriguing to me is that although many, if not all, of his colleagues saw him as a school leader, he certainly did not see that in himself. It appears this is not a new concept and that many in education, whether it be teachers, board members, or policy makers, seem to think that educational leadership lies solely in the hands of administrators.

The term *teacher leadership* is one that has become increasingly popular in education. "The concept of teacher leadership suggests that teachers rightly and importantly hold a central position in the ways schools operate and in the core functions of teaching and learning" (York-Barr & Duke, 2004, p. 255). Most people familiar with the topic would agree that teacher leaders are educators who take on leadership roles in school but remain in the classroom with their students. Some responsibilities of teacher leaders include PLC leaders, department chairs, school improvement members, or mentors (Angelle, 2007; Angelle & DeHart, 2011; York-Barr & Duke, 2004). Researchers widely agree on the need and benefits of teacher leaders. The opportunity for professional growth, the benefits on student achievement, and the need for teacher leaders due to the complexity and

accountability of a principal's job are consistently discussed in the research (Angelle, 2007; Coquyt & Creasman, 2017; Muijs & Harris, 2007; Wilhelm, 2013; York-Barr & Duke, 2004).

In addition, research widely agrees upon several challenges that teacher leaders face. For example, lack of time and resources, difficulty balancing roles, frustrations, and burnout are barriers that many teacher leaders face (Angelle, 2007; Berry, 2014; Harris, 2003; Margolis & Deuel, 2009). Other factors that inhibit teacher leadership include poor relationships with peers or administration, poor communication, school climate, and resistance to change (Angelle, 2007; Muijs & Harris, 2007). Researchers also commonly agreed on teacher leaders being chosen by principals, but some warn to use caution (Angelle, 2007; Angelle & DeHart, 2011; Harris & Kemp-Graham, 2017). Teacher leaders should be chosen by skill and ability, not tenure. Administrators must choose teacher leaders based on the skills of each individual and how it aligns with the needs of the school, rather than on tenure alone (Angelle, 2007; Coquyt & Creasman, 2017). Additionally, principals must be careful not to run to the same teachers for leadership opportunities, as it limits leadership opportunities to only a few individuals and can lead to burnout for the teacher leaders.

When analyzing the literature, there were three main themes that described teacher leadership. The first theme is that teacher leaders should support professional learning in their schools, such as leading PLCs, conducting professional development, or assisting other teachers in classrooms. A second theme is that teacher leaders should be involved in school-wide decision making, specifically involving school-improvement initiatives. The third theme that arose from the literature is that the ultimate goal of teacher leadership is improving student learning and success.

Statement of the Problem

Today's school leaders recognize that one person, mainly the principal, cannot

adequately address the needs of all members of the school community. Many principals rely

on teacher leaders to lead alongside them to further school improvement initiatives (Angelle,

2007), knowing that the traditional way of thinking of school leadership as being the sole role

of the principal is no longer effective or efficient. Leadership must be distributed among

administrative leaders, teachers, and policy makers (Devine & Alger, 2011). Principals' and

teachers' roles as instructional leaders are interdependent and imperative to the success of

schools (Angelle, 2007; Kurtz, 2007).

Theoretical Framework

A frequent mistake made by teacher leaders is teaching adults like they would teach

their students. Teachers naturally have an immense background in classroom teaching

pedagogy but have had little to no training in adult learning theory (Coquyt, 2019). This

situation is frustrating for adult learners and can create a roadblock to adult students'

motivation for change. One adult learning theory that has garnered a considerable amount of

attention over the past few decades is Malcolm S. Knowles' Adult Learning Theory of

Andragogy (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2005).

Knowles' Adult Learning Theory of Andragogy focuses on six assumptions, which

include needing to know why they need to learn something, having a self-concept of being

responsible for their own decisions, the role of their learned experiences, the readiness to

learn, a problem- or task-centered orientation to learning, and an internal motivation to learn

(Knowles et al., 2005). The six assumptions of Andragogy will be explained in greater detail

in Chapter Two.

Knowles' Adult Learning Theory of Andragogy will be utilized in this study because

of its use throughout the seven Domains contained in the Teacher Leader Model Standards

(TLMS), shown in Table 1. The TLMS were developed in 2008 by the Teacher Leader

Consortium to provide a conceptual framework for aspiring and experienced teacher leaders

(Creasman & Coquyt, 2016). The TLMS serve as guiding practices for effective teacher

leadership and provide strategies for teachers who wish to assume leadership positions. The

TLMS are divided into seven domains, with each domain being further expanded into

functions for teacher leaders to utilize. Each teacher leader model standard is unique and the

functions act as a guide for different situations and needs of the school. The application of

the TLMS assists in professional growth and growing teacher leadership in schools and

school districts, resulting in continuous improvement (Creasman & Coquyt, 2016).

Table 1

Seven Domains of the Teacher Leader Model Standards

Domain 1	Fostering a Collaborative Culture to Support Educator Development and Student Learning
Domain 2	Accessing and Using Research to Improve Practice and Student Learning
Domain 3	Promoting Professional Learning for Continuous Improvement
Domain 4	Facilitating Improvements in Instruction and Student Learning
Domain 5	Promoting the Use of Assessments and Data for School and District Improvement
Domain 6	Improving Outreach and Collaboration with Families and Community
Domain 7	Advocating for Student Learning and the Profession

Note. Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium, 2008

Knowles' Adult Learning Theory of Andragogy is often discussed and cited in

literature on adult education, mostly because teaching adults is drastically different than

teaching students, such as a need to find relevance and the role of their learned experiences.

However, there is also a large shift in working with adults as colleagues to moving into a role

of teaching adults. Andragogy is often used in these situations because it recognizes the

equality that exists between the teacher and learner (Coquyt, 2019; Coquyt & Creasman,

2017). While the transition from teacher to teacher leader is of great importance, this study

focused on a teacher leader's current reality in their role as a teacher leader rather than on the

transition from teacher to teacher leader. It is for this reason that this study focused on

Knowles' Adult Learning Theory of Andragogy.

Need for Study

While there is an abundance of literature describing the concept of teacher leadership

and associated frameworks, there are still questions to be answered and research to be

conducted in the area of teacher leadership practices. One of the most common themes found

in the existing literature is that the ultimate goal of teacher leadership is improving student

learning and success. While student success will always be of utmost importance to

educators, regardless of their role, there are many other important aspects needed to be a

successful teacher leader. One of these aspects of which scant literature can be found is the

importance of having knowledge of and a good working definition of Adult Learning Theory.

When researching teacher leadership, the literature frequently describes the benefits

for teachers, students, or the school in regard to Domains 4 and 5 of the Teacher Leader

Model Standards, which will be discussed further in Chapter 2. These Domains focus heavily

on improvements in instruction, the use of assessments, and the use of data to drive

instruction (Appendix A). While Domains 4 and 5 are vitally important, there is little

literature found that focuses on Domain 1 and Domain 3. Domain 1 focuses on fostering a

collaborative culture to support educator development and student learning, while Domain 3

focuses on promoting professional learning for continuous improvement (Teacher Leadership

Exploratory Consortium, 2008). Although Domain 1 and Domain 3 of the TLMS have many

functions embedded, in order to be successful, the knowledge of and use of adult learning

theory by teacher leaders is of great importance.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research is to examine how K-12 teacher leaders experience the

challenges of leading and facilitating adults. The study provides administrators and aspiring

teacher leaders with the knowledge of how teacher leaders perceive the challenges of

working with adult learners. The data collected in this qualitative study provides useful

information that can benefit not only the participants, but school administrators and higher

education institutions. This study is unique from most research on teacher leadership in that

the content focus is on describing the experiences of current teacher leaders, rather than on

the transition from classroom teacher to teacher leader. A major premise of this study is that

school systems have a responsibility to promote, enhance, and support teacher leaders to

attain a positive school culture, improvements in instructional practices, and increased

student success.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant because of its direct application into K-12 school systems.

The data gathered from the interview participants gives insight to school administrators,

school board members, and higher education institutions on the perspectives and needs of

teacher leaders. The increased understanding of the needs of current teacher leaders may lead

to improved job satisfaction and better teacher retention rates, which is a major area of

concern in many western North Dakota school districts (Hall & Clapper, 2016).

Research Questions

The central question within my research is:

1. How do teacher leaders perceive the challenges of working with adults in comparison to teaching students?

Definition of Terms

Andragogy focuses on the education of adults and has been made well-known through the work of Malcolm S. Knowles (1980). The andragogical model is based on six assumptions: the need to know, the learners' self-concept, the role of the learners' experiences, readiness to learn, orientation to learning, and motivation to learn (Knowles et al., 2005).

Pedagogy is the "art and science of teaching children" (Knowles et al., 2005, p. 36). The model of pedagogy involves the set of assumptions about learning and strategies for teaching that was the basis of organization of the educational system in the United States. Pedagogy assigns the teacher full responsibility for all decision making about the content, method, timing, and evaluation, while learners play a submissive role (Knowles et al., 2005).

Teacher Leader, for the purposes of this study, will refer to participants who currently serve their school as grade level lead teachers, PLC leaders, mentors, school improvement team members, or department chairs, while being a full-time classroom teachers.

Teacher Leader Model Standards (TLMS), developed by the Teacher Leader Consortium in 2008, provide a conceptual framework for teacher leaders. The TLMS serve as guiding practices for effective teacher leadership and provide strategies for leadership opportunities (Creasman & Coquyt, 2016).

Research Design

A qualitative, interpretivist paradigm was used in this study with the perspective that "all human life is experienced and constructed from a subjective perspective" (Briggs, Coleman, & Morrison, 2012, p. 23). It is through the lens of a social constructivism

framework that multiple realities are constructed through one's lived experiences and

interactions with others (Creswell & Poth, 2018). While a quantitative research design

method was considered, the desire for a detailed understanding about the subjective, lived

experiences of the participants required a qualitative approach. The phenomenological

approach is used in this study, as the study focuses on describing what challenges teacher

leaders have in common. A case study approach was considered but discarded as this study is

not bounded by any certain parameters, such as location or timeframe (Creswell & Poth,

2018).

        The participants of the study are current teacher leaders working in schools in North

Dakota. The roles they serve vary from PLC leaders, department chairs, grade level lead

teachers, mentors, and school improvement team members. Each teacher leader volunteered

to be a participant in this study. Data collection was done through semi-structured interviews.

Assumptions

        One integral methodological assumption in this qualitative research involves the use

of interviews to gather information from teacher leaders. Thus, the study assumes that the

teacher leaders are telling the truth and expressing reality as they perceive it. From an

ontological perspective, this study assumes that one person's reality may be independent,

socially constructed, or different from another person's reality, as demonstrated through their

interview responses. Epistemologically, the study assumes the interviewer and interviewee

lessen the distance between them and mutually influence each other in their conversations.

        Another set of assumptions concern my values as they pertain to the research topic.

As a current administrator my top priority will always be the academic and social growth of

my students. However, as a former classroom teacher and instructional coach, I know the

importance of investing in teachers to extend one's reach of influence to impact as many

students as possible. I believe that teacher leaders have a unique role in school improvement, and this belief is the driving force behind this study.

A final methodological assumption concerns the choice of Knowles' Adult Learning Theory of Andragogy as the theoretical framework that describes the six assumptions of adult learning. Knowles' extensive research in the domain of adult learning theory conveys the assumption of reliability with the application of this framework to the study. As described in greater detail in Chapter Two, the andragogical model is the backbone of many of the current studies in scholarly literature involving adult learning theory.

Delimitations

Delimitations for the research study were established prior to research study implementation. These delimitations include:

1. The study is delimited to public school teacher leaders in North Dakota.

2. The study focuses only on a relatively small group of teacher leaders.

3. The participants included in the study are volunteers.

Summary

Chapter One provides the reader with a brief background of teacher leadership. The theoretical framework that supports the study is described along with identification of the research study and participants. The remaining content of the dissertation is followed by Chapter Two, the Literature Review, which provides greater detail and understandings from current scholarly literature on teacher leadership and the barriers schools and teacher leaders face. The process for conducting this qualitative phenomenological study is described in Chapter Three, Research Methods, and includes interviews of teacher leaders. Chapter Four highlights the findings of the study, and Chapter Five summarizes the research process, conclusions, and recommendations. References and appendices conclude the study.

CHAPTER 2.   LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to examine how K-12 teacher leaders experience the challenges of leading and facilitating adults. To lay the foundation for this work, an overview of literature on adult learning theory and teacher leadership is included. The review begins with a historical context of teacher leadership in schools and how the roles of teacher leaders have evolved over time. Empirical evidence is reviewed that reveals the need and benefits of teacher leadership in schools as well as common barriers that hinder teacher leaders or discourage teachers from accepting leadership roles. Andragogy and adult learning theory have a place in this discussion as it plays an important role in understanding the unique characteristics of adult learners.

Methods of Searching

The research sources were found through multiple journal article databases, including Education Research Complete, Academic Search Complete, and the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC). Some of the search terms used include teacher leadership, teacher leaders, adult learning theory, andragogy, distributed learning, and mentor. In addition to using the journal article databases, the Proquest Dissertations International Open Access (PDQI) was used to read dissertations in the area of teacher leadership and adult learning theory to gather additional resources and to research possible theoretical frameworks to use for this study. Finally, many books were used to gather research, especially books authored by Malcolm S. Knowles regarding adult learning theory and by Brian Creasman, Michael Coquyt, Marilyn Katzenmeyer, and Gayle Moller on the subject of teacher leadership.

Theoretical Orientation for the Study

Knowles' Adult Learning Theory

This qualitative research adapted Knowles' Adult Learning Theory to guide the phenomenological study of the experiences of teacher leaders. Adult Learning Theory is the theoretical framework that provides the context for the teacher leader interview questions for the eight North Dakota teacher leaders. Adult Learning Theory has been widely used in the education field, often regarding higher education, adult or community education, and professional development.

Using the principal of andragogy, the art and science of adult learning, Knowles (1980) made four assumptions of critical considerations for learners. This model, known as Adult Learning Theory, has since been expanded to six ideas that focus on adults as the learner rather than the teacher (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2005).

Many teachers have a thorough understanding of pedagogy, the art and science of teaching children. Historically, the pedagogical model was the only existing educational model. Therefore, the entire educational system of schools, including higher education, was stuck in this model, meaning that adults were mainly taught as if they were children (Knowles et al., 2005). In the pedagogical model, the teacher takes full responsibility for making all decisions about what is learned, how it is learned, when it is learned, and if it has been learned. This left the learner in a submissive role, simply following the teacher's instructions (Knowles et al., 2005). The problem with practicing pedagogy with adults is that natural maturity decreases the need for dependency, creating a gap between the need and the ability to be self-directing. This gap produces tension, resistance, resentment, and rebellion in the adult learners (Knowles et al., 2005).

The andragogical model (Knowles et al., 2005) is based on the following six assumptions.

1. *The learners' need to know*. Adult learners need to know why they need to learn something before beginning to learn. The facilitator of adult learners must help the learners become aware of the need to know and the value of what is to be learned.

2. *Self-concept of the learner*. Adult learners want to be responsible for their own decisions. Facilitators must avoid requiring dependency and treating adult students as children to avoid resentment or resistance. Adult educators must create learning experiences that help adults transition from dependant to self-directing learners.

3. *Prior experience of the learner*. Adults bring a greater volume and a different quality of life experiences to educational activities compared to children. "Any group of adults will be more heterogeneous in terms of background, learning style, motivation, needs, interest, and goals than is true of a group of youths" (Knowles et al., 2005, p. 66). Therefore, the emphasis in adult education is placed on the individualization of teaching and learning strategies.

4. *Readiness to learn*. Unlike younger learners who may be at different stages of development, adult learners become ready to learn. This is especially true of things they need to know and be able to do in order to effectively cope with their real-life situations.

5. *Orientation to learning*. While children view learning with a subject-centered orientation to learning, adults are life-centered. Adults will be more motivated to learn if it will help them deal with problems they experience in their life or if it will

help them better perform their tasks. Additionally, adults will learn new knowledge

more effectively when presented through real-life situations (Knowles et al., 2005).

6. *Motivation to learn*. Some adult learners respond to external motivations, but the

primary source of motivation in adults is intrinsic. Three notable intrinsic motivators

include job satisfaction, self-esteem, and quality of life.

Figure 1 below provides a summary, displaying the six core adult learning principals

surrounded by the context of individual and situational differences, as well as the goals and

purposes for learning.
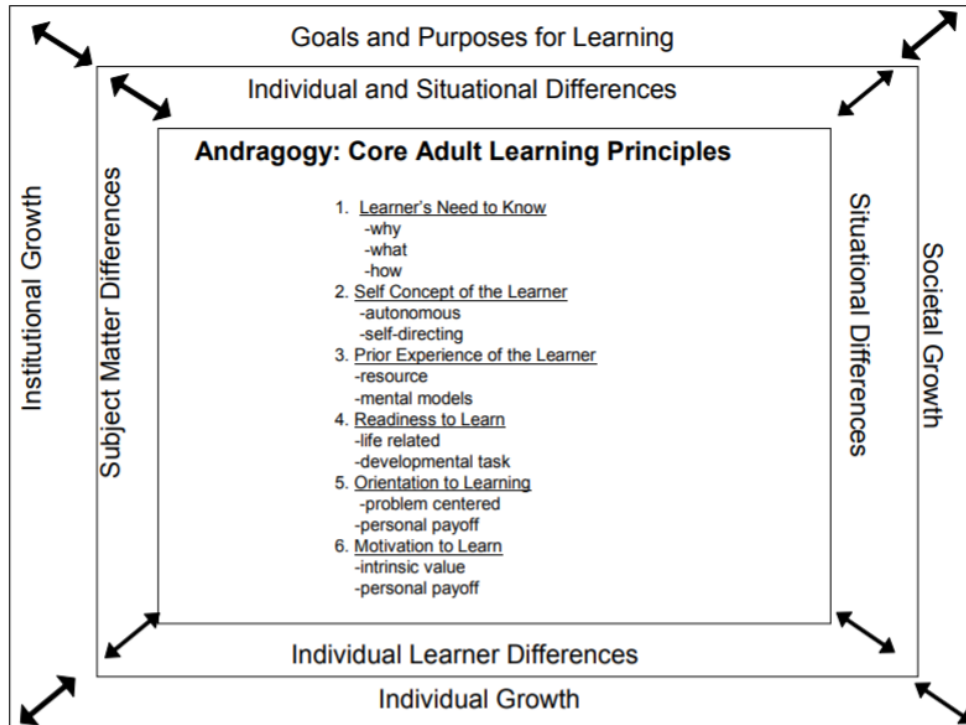
Figure 1. Andragogy in practice. (Knowles et al., 1998) as cited in Knowles et al., 2005

Theorist Carl Rogers (as cited in Knowles et al., 2005) explained that teaching as the

imparting of knowledge only makes sense in an unchanging environment. However, adults

live in an ever-changing environment; therefore, the aim of education must be the facilitation

of learning. It is imperative that the teachers of adults take on the role of facilitator of

learning with an emphasis on the personal relationship between the facilitator and the learner. This relationship is dependent on three attitudinal qualities: (1) realness or genuineness, (2) nonpossessive caring, prizing, trust, and respect, and (3) empathetic understanding and sensitive and accurate listening (Knowles et al., 2005). Rogers (as cited in Knowles et al., 2005) developed the following guidelines for a facilitator of learning:

1. The facilitator has much to do with setting the initial mood or climate of the group or class experience.

2. The facilitator helps to elicit and clarify the purposes of the individuals in the class as well as the more general purposes of the group.

3. The facilitator relies on the desire of each student to implement those purposes that have meaning for him or her as the motivational force behind significant learning.

4. The facilitator endeavors to organize and make easily available the widest possible range or resources for learning.

5. The facilitator regards himself or herself as a flexible resource to be used by the group.

6. In responding to expressions in the classroom group, the facilitator accepts both intellectual content and the emotionalized attitudes, endeavoring to give each aspect the approximate degree of emphasis which it has for the individual or the group.

7. As the acceptant classroom climate becomes established, the facilitator is increasingly able to become a participant learner, a member of the group, expressing his views as those of one individual only.

8. The facilitator takes the initiative in sharing his or her feelings as well as thoughts with the group and is free to express his or her own feelings in giving feedback to

students, in reacting to them as individuals, and in sharing personal satisfaction or

disappointments.

9. Throughout the classroom experience, the facilitator remains alert to the expressions

   indicative of deep or strong feelings.

10. In the functioning as a facilitator of learning, the leader endeavors to recognize and

    accept his or her own limitations.

The conditions of learning are also an important aspect to ensure the success of an

adult learner. These conditions are developed and determined by the facilitator. The

characteristics of necessary learning conditions and facilitator expectations developed by

Knowles can be utilized to help facilitators ensure the conditions are being met.

Table 2

The Role of the Teacher

Conditions of Learning	Principles of Teaching
The learners feel a need to learn.	1. The teacher exposes students to new possibilities of self-fulfillment. 2. The teacher helps each student clarify his own aspirations for improved behavior. 3. The teacher helps each student diagnose the gap between his aspiration and his present level of performance. 4. The teacher helps the students identify the life problems they experience because of the gaps in their personal equipment.
The learning environment is characterized by physical comfort, mutual trust and respect, mutual helpfulness, freedom of expression, and	5. The teacher provides physical conditions that are comfortable (as to seating, smoking, temperature, ventilation, lightning, decoration) and conducive to interaction (preferably, no person sitting behind another person). 6. The teacher accepts each student as a person of worth and respects his feelings and ideas. 7. The teacher seeks to build relationships of mutual trust and helpfulness among the students by encouraging cooperative

acceptance of differences.	activities and refraining from inducing competitiveness and judgmentalness. 8. The teacher exposes his own feelings and contributes his resources as a co-learner in the spirit of mutual inquiry.
The learners perceive the goals of a learning experience to be their goals.	9. The teacher involves the students in a mutual process of formulating learning objectives in which the needs of the students, of the institution, of the teacher, of the subject matter, and of the society are taken into account.
The learners accept a share of the responsibility for planning and operating a learning experience, and therefore have a feeling of commitment toward it.	10. The teacher shares his thinking about the options available in the designing of learning experiences and the selection of materials and methods and involves the students in deciding among these options jointly. 11. The teacher helps the students to organize themselves (project groups, learning-teaching teams, independent study, etc.) to share responsibility in the process of mutual inquiry
The learning process is related to and makes use of the experience of the learners.	12. The teacher helps the students exploit their own experiences as resources for learning through the use of such techniques as discussion, role playing, case method, etc. 13. The teacher gears the presentation of his own resources to the levels of experience of his particular students. 14. The teacher helps the students to apply new learning to their experiences, and thus to make the learning more meaningful and integrated.
The learners have a sense of progress toward their goals.	15. The teacher involves the students in developing mutually acceptable criteria and methods for measuring progress toward the learning objectives. 16. The teacher helps the students develop and apply procedures for self-evaluation according to these criteria.

Note. Knowles, 1980, pp. 57-58, as cited in Knowles et al., 2005

Review of Literature

The overall topic of this review of literature begins with history of teacher leadership and explaining the issues that make defining teacher leadership difficult. Next, the Teacher Leader Model Standards will be discussed, followed by the need for teacher leadership in schools and the conditions needed to foster the growth of teacher leaders. Then, the benefits

of teacher leaders will also be reviewed, as well as the barriers teacher leaders face. Finally,

the future of teacher leadership will be discussed.

History of Teacher Leadership

"The call for teacher leaders to help improve the K-12 educational system is

approaching half a century of existence" (Lumpkin, Claxton, & Wilson, 2014, p. 59). Three

waves of teacher leadership have been identified that explain the evolution of teacher

leadership (Silva, Gimbert, & Nolan, 2000). The first wave focused on maintaining an

efficient and effective educational system rather than instructional leadership. Roles of

teacher leaders included department head, head teacher, master teacher, and union

representative, who met periodically with administrators and brought back information from

these meetings to their groups. In addition, they often had operational duties, such as

ordering textbooks and supplies or creating room assignments (Harris, 2003; Wilhelm, 2013).

During the first wave, being a teacher leader was something a teacher ended up as if they

demonstrated skills beyond what was required in the classroom (Bassett, Kajitani, & Stewart,

2014). The "point and anoint" model meant becoming a teacher leader just happened and

meant extra duties were taken on beyond the classroom teaching load (Bassett et al., 2014).

This use of teachers as managers contributed to the "neutering" of teachers. Frymier (1987)

explains this limited view of teacher leadership, describing teachers as

> Neutered by the bureaucratic routinization of teaching and learning that has grown
>
> out of administrative attempts to control schools as places with teachers as deskilled
>
> workers and students as uniform products. (p. 11)

This first wave of teacher leadership was ineffective due to a lack of training, little

understanding on how to mentor colleagues or teach adults, inadequate training for

administrators in distributed leadership models, lack of defined roles or structure for teacher

leaders, little to no compensation, and a culture that did not embrace teacher leadership (Bassett et al., 2014).

The limitations of the first wave caused the emergence of the second wave of teacher leadership. The importance of teachers as instructional leaders were acknowledged, and positions were created that capitalized on teacher instructional knowledge. Examples of such positions include team leader, curriculum developer, and staff development positions. These positions moved teacher leadership away from management and in the direction of teacher pedagogical expertise (Silva et al., 2000). Issues with the second wave of teacher leadership arose because the leadership positions involved work that was done outside of the classroom and often times not even in the same building as those being led. This led to the movement of "remote controlling of teachers" (Darling-Hammond, 1998; Shulman, 1987). Teacher leaders became specialists, creating prepackaged material and cookie cutter routines for teachers (Darling-Hammond, 1998).

The realization that curriculum was not a simplistic formula, even if it were created by teachers, emphasized the importance of empowering teachers who continue to work in the classroom, leading to the third wave of teacher leadership. The third wave of teacher leadership focuses on changes that "reculture" schools and provides space for teachers to meaningfully participate in schools (Silva et al., 2000). Rather than emphasizing efficiency and effectiveness, teacher leaders would focus on fundamental cultural changes in the goals, structure, roles, and norms of the school, with value being placed on collegiality and professionalism. Teacher leaders in the third wave enable their colleagues to improve professional practices by doing things they generally do not do otherwise (Lumpkin et al., 2014; Wasley, 1991). Teacher leaders "help redesign schools, mentor their colleagues,

engage in problem solving at the school level, and provide professional growth activities for colleagues" (Wasley, 1991, p. 5). Silva et al. (2000) use the following description of the third wave of teacher leadership:

> Teacher leaders would "slide the doors open" to collaborate with other teachers, discuss common problems, share approaches to various learning situations, explore ways to overcome the structural constraints of limited time, space, resources, and restrictive policies, or investigate motivational strategies to bring students to a deeper engagement with their learning. (p. 781)

The third wave emphasizes shared leadership teams. These teams, such as professional learning communities (PLCs), foster continual adult learning so every student achieves at the highest levels. One of the most important ways that teacher leader roles change in a shared leadership model is that teachers feel an increased sense of ownership for improving student outcomes, not just in their classrooms, but throughout the school. There is no longer a sense on "my students," but "our students" (Wilhelm, 2013).

Defining Teacher Leadership

The literature on teacher leadership has immense variation in its definition of teacher leadership. "The lack of a definition may be due, in part, to the expansive territory encompassed under the umbrella term *teacher leadership*" (York-Barr & Duke, 2004, p. 260). Definitions of teacher leadership from early literature suggested "teachers leaders lead within and beyond the classroom; identify with and contribute to a community of teacher learners and leaders; influence others toward improved educational practice; and accept responsibility for achieving the outcomes of their leadership" (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009, p. 6). Harris (2003) defined teacher leadership as "centrally concerned with forms of empowerment and agency which are also at the core of distributed leadership theory" (p.

316). Many authors cited York-Barr and Duke's (2004) definition of teacher leadership as "a unique form of leadership not necessarily vested in a formal hierarchy or role description" and that "teacher leadership reflects teacher agency through establishing relationships, breaking down barriers, and marshalling resources throughout the organization in an effort to improve students' educational experiences and outcomes" (p. 263).

Margolis' (2012) definition of a hybrid teacher is one "whose official schedule includes both teaching K-12 students and leading teachers in some capacity" (p. 292). Bagley and Margolis (2018) further define hybrid teacher leaders as being in the center of reform efforts without completely leaving the classroom, typically at a ratio of 80% – 20%, 50% 50%, or 20% – 80%. Wenner and Campbell (2017) examined York-Barr and Duke's (2004) research and continued their investigations, as well as extending their research questions beyond York-Barr and Duke's original list. This led to the definition of teacher leadership as "teachers who maintain K-12 classroom-based teaching responsibilities, while also taking on leadership responsibilities outside of the classroom" (Wenner & Campbell, 2017, p. 140), which is the definition this study will use for teacher leadership.

An important distinction in any definition of teacher leadership is the roles and responsibilities of teacher leaders. Literature shows that teacher leadership cannot be easily defined by a singular role and it is not just a checklist of tasks, but a mindset that is fundamental in successfully handling the challenges that teachers face in the classroom (Angelle & DeHart, 2011; Kajitani, 2015). While these roles and responsibilities may change based on individual schools' needs, there are many common traits that are universal for teacher leadership. First, teacher leaders focus their efforts on students, a commitment to learning, and collaboration among teachers (Lieberman & Friedrich, 2010). Second, teacher

leaders are simultaneously colleague and leader. They must inspire and energize their teams

while also overseeing and judging their work (Wilson, 2015). Teacher leaders lead both

inside and outside the classroom, nurturing other teachers to become leaders (Katzenmeyer &

Moller, 2009). Finally, teacher leaders influence the improvement of educational practice

based on a shared commitment to student learning, empowerment, relationships, and

collaboration (Harris, 2003; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009; Lumpkin et al., 2014).

Teacher Leader Model Standards

The evolution of the roles and responsibilities of teacher leaders ultimately led to the

development of the Teacher Leader Model Standards (Teacher Leadership Exploratory

Consortium, 2008). In 2008, work began when a group of key leaders, including union

representatives, teachers, school administrators, policy organizations, and higher education

leaders, from around the country came together to discuss the importance of teacher

leadership in assuring school and student success (Kajitani, 2015; Lumpkin et al., 2014). This

group, known as the Teacher Leader Consortium, developed the Teacher Leader Model

Standards, providing a conceptual framework for aspiring and experience teacher leaders

(Creasman & Coquyt, 2016). The Teacher Leader Model Standards are formatted similarly to

the ISLLC Standards that are used for principal preparation programs (Hall & Clapper,

2016).

The purpose of the Teacher Leader Model Standards is to provide strategies for

aspiring teacher leaders and serve as guiding practices for effective teacher leadership. As

Harrison and Killion (2007) noted, the teacher leader model standards can be used to guide

the preparation of experienced teachers to assume leadership roles such as resource

providers, instructional specialists, curriculum specialists, classroom supporters, learning

facilitators, mentors, school team leaders, and data coaches. The Teacher Leader Model

Standards contain seven domains which are further expanded into functions teacher leaders

can utilize (Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium, 2008). The seven domains of the

Teacher Leader Model Standards are as follows:

Domain I: Fostering a Collaborative Culture to Support Educator Development and

Student Learning,

Domain II: Accessing and Using Research to Improve Practice and Student Learning,

Domain III: Promoting Professional Learning for Continuous Improvement,

Domain IV: Facilitating Improvements in Instruction and Student Learning,

Domain V: Promoting the Use of Assessments and Data for School and District

Improvement,

Domain VI: Improving Outreach and Collaboration with Families and Community,

Domain VII: Advocating for Student Learning and the Profession.

Michael Cosenza's (2015) qualitative study sought "to discover how teachers define

the term teacher leadership and then compare those findings to the seven domains of the

teacher leader model standards" (p. 83). Through coding and analysis of teachers' responses,

Cosenza found "the emergence of five distinctive themes: collaboration, sharing best

practices, taking action, role modeling, and formal leadership roles" (p. 86). Thus, Cosenza

(2015) concluded that, "the themes that emerged from the responses support a more

progressive understanding of the term teacher leadership. This is in line with the teacher

leader model standards which provide a progressive set of guidelines for teacher leadership"

(p. 96).

The Need for Teacher Leadership

It is no surprise that leadership plays a vital role in improving schools and ensuring

academic success for all students (Lumpkin et al., 2014). Hall and Clapper (2015) stated,

"Leadership is a key factor in improving schools and ensuring academic success for all students" (p. 54) While many teachers are searching for leadership roles, most have little to no interest in moving into administrative positions. According to a 2013 MetLife survey, 84% of teachers were either "not very" or "not at all" interested in becoming a principal, but approximately 25% of teachers showed interest in a blended role that combined teaching with some sort of leadership position. Former Secretary of Education Arne Duncan (as cited in Basset et al., 2014) explained that many teachers are moving out of classroom teaching roles because they have to, not because they want to. In one district surveyed, 59% of administrators said they would have stayed in the classroom if they could have received the same compensation.

A common theme in literature regarding the definition of teacher leadership is how it differs from the role of a principal or administrator. While leadership roles have traditionally been with the principal, they can no longer be expected to be the sole leaders in the building (Hall & Clapper, 2016). One argument on why teacher leaders are needed is that schools are becoming too complex for principals to lead alone, and additional person power is needed to help run the organizational operations (Angelle, 2007; Hall & Clapper, 2016). Angelle (2007) explains:

> Collaborative leaders recognize that in today's schools, one person cannot adequately address the needs of all members of the school community. Empowering others to lead alongside the principal builds collegiality and shares opportunities for active participation in the improvement of the school. (p. 56)

Teacher leaders who collectively share their specialized knowledge, expertise, and experience with colleagues can help principals broaden and sustain classroom and school

improvement efforts (Lumpkin et al., 2014). Pellicer and Anderson (1995) noted that

"instructional leadership does not necessarily begin and end with the principal. Rather,

instructional leadership must come from teachers if schools are to improve and teaching is to

achieve professional status" (p. 16).

An additional need for teacher leaders is that they can provide teacher perspectives

that can inform administration of considerations, resulting in more effective decisions.

Teachers are the "boots on the ground" and hold vital knowledge in the daily operations of

schools (York-Barr & Duke, 2004). Teachers are critical to education reform because they

understand the support needed to do their jobs well. "Teacher expertise is at the foundation of

increasing teacher quality and advancements in teaching and learning" (York-Barr & Duke,

2004, p. 258). Teacher expertise becomes more readily available when accomplished

teachers model effective instructional strategies and encourage sharing best practices.

Mentoring new teachers and collaborating with teacher colleagues also help to break down

teacher isolation to create a more professional work environment (York-Barr & Duke, 2004).

Teacher leaders are also needed as teaching students today is more complex than ever

before, requiring teachers to find new ways of doing work. As Kajitaini (2015) explains:

> Today's teaching requires a masterful blend of content knowledge and innovative
>
> teaching methods, mixed with the ability to function in a system that requires us to be
>
> highly collaborative, technologically savvy, and relentlessly outspoken about the
>
> needs of our student and profession. (p. 122)

These skills are imperative, as research shows that, in school, an effective teacher is the

strongest predictor of student achievement (National Commission on Teaching and

America's Future, 1996, as cited in Kajitani, 2015).

Teacher leadership has also been shown to fend off feelings of boredom (Margolis &
Deuel, 2009). By learning and working with other adults, teachers get a "break from the
routines of the classroom in order to engage with colleagues and administrators" (York-Barr
& Duke, 2004, p. 259). Solely working with K-12 students is no longer wholly satisfying, so
improving work conditions, intrinsic rewards, and opportunities for professional growth can
influence teacher retention (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009; Margolis & Deuel, 2009). For
some teachers, leadership fills a need for growth which maintains motivation in the
profession (Margolis & Deuel, 2009), without having to move into an administrative role.

Motivation to Lead

The literature focused on three main reasons for why teachers would be motivated to
step into a leadership role. Margolis and Deuel (2009) found that teachers move into a
leadership role for moral imperatives, professional growth, and personal reasons. Participants
noted that accepting the teacher leader role was driven by a larger sense of educational duty,
such as fairness and distribution of resources and a more basic stance of helping others. Other
reasons included encouraging content-area teachers to embed reading and writing strategies
into their pedagogies. Thus, "some of the motivation to lead was *intrinsically driven* by
beliefs about what is "right" in education" (Margolis & Deuel, 2009, p. 272).

Another reason teachers are motivated to lead is for professional growth
opportunities, which have both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations. Some of these
opportunities involve improving one's own teaching, creating more quality and satisfaction,
and better serving students (Margolis & Deuel, 2009; York-Barr & Duke, 2004). Other
opportunities include advancing in ways where the teacher could have a wider sphere of
influence, such as pursuing advanced degrees, becoming an instructional leader at the school
or district level, impacting policies related to curriculum and instruction, and having

opportunities to network with people from university or educational service districts

(Margolis & Deuel, 2009).

Monetary compensation may be another motivator for teachers moving into a

leadership role. While most teachers will openly discuss that teachers are not in education for

the money, being compensated for being a teacher leader shows their time is being valued. In

addition, compensation shows that the work of a teacher leader is important and worth the

stipend; the money was important because it was a symbol of recognition. Although money

is of secondary importance, it is still motivating for teachers to move into leadership

(Margolis & Deuel, 2009).

Recruiting and Choosing Teacher Leaders

According to Wilhelm (2013), an essential first step in developing teacher leaders in a

shared leadership school is ensuring that the leadership team has the right players. It is

suggested teacher leaders be selected by the principal to ensure the members meet important

criteria, such as being open, having strong instructional skills, displaying a commitment to

improving their schools, and having the respect of peers. Opportunity and teacher self-

confidence alone are insufficient for teacher leadership (Angelle & DeHart, 2011). An

article by Berry (2014) states that leadership is often only recognized when administrators

"anoint or appoint." However, the teacher leadership title meant little and was largely

irrelevant for teachers to perceive themselves as leaders (Harris & Kemp-Graham, 2017;

Margolis & Deuel, 2009). The activities of learning, sharing, collaborating, and teaching are

more important than any formal terminology related to the role. This is because teaching is a

largely action-oriented profession, and what you do is more prominent in determining your

image than any official designation one may have.

When choosing teacher leaders, principals should hear the voice of all teachers,

regardless of years of experience, and should base leadership roles on a teacher's leadership

qualities. As Berry (2014) quoted, "The 2013 MetLife Survey of the American Teacher

found that nearly one in four teachers in the United States reported being very or extremely

interested in serving in hybrid roles that combines teaching with leadership responsibilities"

(para. 19). Assigning leadership based only on tenure can stunt the professional growth of

potential leaders (Harris & Kemp-Graham, 2017). While convenience or familiarity may lead

principals to turn to the same group of teachers, "school leaders must understand that

teachers may have the desire to lead and may have the skills to lead but administrators, in the

understanding of leadership beyond the classroom, must provide the opportunities for these

teachers to lead" (Angelle & DeHart, 2011, p. 156). In addition, teacher leaders should be

selected based on who can meet the greatest need, has the ability to influence colleagues,

takes risks, and whose top priority is student learning (Angelle, 2007). As Coquyt and

Creasman (2017) suggested, "The school administrator must recruit teachers to become

leaders who possess or can acquire the skills necessary to not only be effective, but will also

fill a gap in the school" (pp. 35 – 36). Administrators are urged not to take the recruiting

process lightly and to use techniques and strategies that are effective and results in the best

teachers being recruited to teacher leadership positions (Coquyt & Creasman, 2017).

Conditions that Foster Growth of Teacher Leaders

According to York-Barr and Duke (2004), there are three conditions that influence

teacher leadership: school culture, roles and relationships, and structures. Principals must

make space for individual innovation and encourage a culture of risk taking. "Playing it safe

and by the book might protect you as a principal but it can lead to stultification of the school.

In this current world, you either move forward or you decline in quality" (Crowther,

Ferguson, & Hann, 2009, p. 84). By providing opportunities and encouragement in a relatively safe environment, teacher leaders can develop and mature (Crowther et al., 2009), bringing positive change to schools and transforming the school into a place of adult and student learning (Angelle & DeHart, 2011; Roby, 2011). Lastly, principals should build on achievements of teacher leaders to create a culture of success (Crowther et al., 2009).

Ultimately, a positive culture of leadership comes down to trust. Principals must incorporate the aspirations and ideas of teacher leaders by demonstrating confidence in teacher leaders' contributions to the overall vision. Furthermore, principals must know how and when to step back from their leadership roles to encourage teacher leaders to step forward, be encouraged in their work, and create opportunities to further develop the leadership capabilities of teacher leaders (Crowther et al., 2009). This trust allows teacher leaders to step out of the "my hands are tied" culture that has saturated the field of education the past decade under No Child Left Behind (Kajitani, 2015).

"Imagine school cultures in which teacher leaders and administrators have reciprocal relationships, supporting one another's work and sharing responsibility for outcomes" (Kajitani, 2015, p. 123). Throughout the literature, the relationship between principals and teacher leaders is noted as being the key vehicle for teacher leaders to be successful and an important indicator of a teacher's willingness to participate in leadership responsibilities (Angelle & DeHart, 2011; Crowther et al., 2009; Kurtz, 2009; York-Barr & Duke, 2004). According to York-Barr and Duke (2004), "The relationship established between teacher leaders and their principal is consistently identified as a strong influence on teacher leadership (p. 276).

Angelle and DeHart (2011) note, "Teacher leadership can only be successful with the support of school leadership" (p. 145), led by principals who are empowering, treat teachers with respect, and value the work of teacher leaders (Angelle & DeHart, 2011). In a study by Ruff (2003), trust among teacher leaders and principals was built when all had an opportunity to voice their opinions and to be involved in the decision-making process. "By having an open line of communication, collaboration occurred and better decisions were made for the improvement of the school" (Ruff, 2003, p. 179). Administrators must recognize potential in teachers and strategically provide growth opportunities (Smith, 2017).

Researchers Yarger and Lee (1994) responded to structure as a condition that influenced teacher leadership, explaining, "teacher leadership requires some coherent reordering of the workplace of schools. This reordering helps to create a climate that encourages teacher collaboration and involves teachers in making decisions" (p. 234). In addition, Coyle (1997) determined that structures must be created, "that empower teachers to collaborate with one another and lead from within the heart of the school" (p. 239), or true educational leadership will be discouraged. Finally, York-Barr and Duke (2004) believed that teacher leadership is more likely to flourish when there were "structures that promote teachers learning and working together on a daily basis, with a focus on valued teaching practices" (p. 276).

For teacher leaders to reach their potential, it is essential they be given time, space, and opportunity for collaboration (Angelle & DeHart, 2011; Harris, 2003). Teacher leadership will not be effective if they must operate in a vacuum; ideas and decisions must be shared with the rest of the faculty (Angelle & DeHart, 2011). In addition, teacher leaders must be presented with rich and diverse opportunities for professional development (Harris,

2003). When the school culture, relationships, and structure for leadership are in place, "Leadership can be separated from person, role, and status and is primarily concerned with the relationships and the connections among individuals within a school" (Harris, 2003, p. 318).

The Benefits of Teacher Leadership

Teachers and administrators reap many benefits of teacher leadership, such as increased commitment and engagement in their schools, increased knowledge and skills, and increased student achievement. Teacher leadership encourages teachers to be actively engaged and take responsibility for what is happening in their schools. Teacher leaders tend to unite teachers and create a professional learning environment (Jackson, Burrus, Bassett, & Roberts, 2010; York-Barr & Duke, 2004). By creating a culture that values shared decision making, teachers feel empowered to share in schoolwide decision making, which in turn enhances teacher leadership throughout the school (Angelle & DeHart, 2011). When teachers are not able to make decisions, they reported feeling greater dissatisfaction, more stress, and less loyalty to the principal (Angelle & DeHart, 2011). Many Generation Y teachers express high levels of dissatisfaction regarding the lack of leadership opportunities (Basset et al., 2014), therefore, teacher leadership opportunities allow Generation Y teachers an opportunity for advancement and combats new teacher attrition (Jackson et al., 2010).

Much of the literature describes the benefits a leadership role has on other teachers, as well as teacher leaders themselves. As evidenced by a study by Margolis and Deuel (2009), "teacher leadership has the potential to laterally transform instructional practice where more traditional top-down efforts have failed to receive philosophical or practical buy-in" (p. 283). In addition, teacher leadership promotes growth and learning among the teacher leaders themselves, as learning and leading are inseparable (York-Barr & Duke, 2004). Margolis and

Deuel's (2009) study showed the promise of teacher leadership to advance instructional

practices. By participating in leadership activities, the teacher leaders became more

reflective, passionate, and effective teachers. This led to the development of relationships

with other teachers which aided in their colleagues being encouraged to try new ideas and

strategies. Arguably the most important reason to promote teacher leadership is the benefit

realized by students (Margolis & Deuel, 2009; York-Bar & Duke, 2004). Students get to

observe and experience democratic leadership, higher teacher morale, and better decisions

about students' lives because the teachers are more centrally involved in decision making

(York-Barr & Duke, 2004).

Ultimately, student growth and achievement is always going to be the driving force

behind any educational movement. One reason for the increased interest in teacher leadership

is that it has the potential to improve the quality of classroom instruction (Smith, 2017).

Additionally, research shows that shared or collective leadership has a stronger influence on

student achievement in mathematics and reading than individual leadership (Angelle &

DeHart, 2011; Berry, 2014; Hall & Clapper, 2016; Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, &

Anderson, 2010).

The Barriers to Teacher Leaders

While there are many benefits of teacher leadership, there are also practical,

intellectual, and emotional barriers preventing the effectiveness (Wilson, 2015). To start,

school schedules allow little time for teachers to design and lead lesson studies, conduct

action research, or develop new student assessments (Angelle, 2007; Angelle & DeHart,

2011; Berry, 2014; Margolis & Deuel, 2009). Furthermore, teacher leadership is often

dismissed as "yet another label for continuing professional development" (Harris, 2003, p.

314) or rejected because of "the complexities of viewing teachers as leaders within a

hierarchical school system where leadership responsibilities are very clearly delineated"
(Harris, 2003, p. 314). Schools' reliance on a clear demarcation of roles and responsibilities
presents a major barrier to the idea of teachers being leaders (Harris, 2003).

Another barrier some teacher leaders struggle with the balancing act of leadership
roles, classroom obligations, and personal lives. Furthermore, when change happens slower
than anticipated, it can lead to stress and burnout, which can dampen the spirit of a teacher
leader who has been accustomed to excellence in their classroom (Angelle, 2007).
Additionally, well-intended PLCs obsess over data and spreadsheets of student test scores.
They fixate on the "what" of teaching while ignoring the social nature of learning among
teachers, or the "why" and "how" of effective teaching (Berry, 2014).

A common barrier mentioned in the literature was the lack of training and
professional development for teacher leaders. While teacher leadership has expanded in
purview and demands, teachers who move into teacher leadership positions continue to rely
on who they are or what they have experienced rather than on training they have received
(Wilson, 2015). Many teacher leaders have had little to no leadership instruction and struggle
to come to terms with the dual role of supervisor and colleague. It can be challenging for
teacher leaders to simultaneously inspire and energize teams while also overseeing their work
(Wilson, 2015). As Wilson (1993) states, "the very capabilities that distinguish teacher
leaders from others… —risk-taking, collaboration, and role modeling —produce tensions
between them and colleagues" (p. 26). Lastly, teacher leaders can often feel conflicted
between their need for achievement and their need for affiliation:

"Teacher leadership creates internal debate about who we are and what we value…
to be effective teacher leaders we must maintain the relationships of excellent

colleagues and exert the influence of excellent leaders. Put another way, we must be two (or more) versions of ourselves." (Wilson, 2015, p. 78)

The Future of Teacher Leadership

Numerous states have begun or completed legislation establishing criteria for endorsing, certifying, or credentialing teacher leaders (Jackson et al., 2010), while nearly every state has started conversations around formalizing teacher leadership (Bassett et al., 2014). As more state and federal programs seek to fill the need for hybrid career tracks, teacher leadership will grow (Basset et al., 2014). "The old "appoint and anoint" model is being replaced as teachers intentionally choose leadership positions that will allow them to remain in their classrooms and grow as professionals" (Bassett et al., 2014, p. 39). There is a need to support a culture of teacher leadership in schools and to provide training and career options that would allow teacher leaders to flourish (Bassett et al., 2014). Teacher leadership requires a shift in thinking regarding organization and culture. As Basset et al. (2014) explain:

> It is no longer enough to offer educators only two career paths: lifelong classroom teacher or principal. This antiquated system fails to capitalize on the many diverse ways teachers can potentially lead in their schools and districts while remaining in the classroom. (p. 38)

Synthesis of the Research Findings

One theme that seemed to be repeated time and again revolved around school culture. The literature was riddled with the importance of having a culture of collaboration in order for teacher leaders to be successful and agents of change. Ultimately, this can be summarized down into trust. While only a few resources directly mention trust, virtually all the literature alludes to the importance of trust if teacher leaders are to be successful. This trust

relationship includes trust between other colleagues, principals and other administrators, and community members. Teacher leadership can have a dramatic effect on the achievement of students and the growth of other teachers, but this result is not a given unless there is a culture of trust.

One of the most obvious patterns in the literature emerged when analyzing which of the Teacher Leader Model Standards were discussed most. Domain 2, which focuses on researching teaching effectiveness and student learning, and Domain 4, which focuses on being reflective of the instructional practices used, are heavily discussed in nearly all the literature. Domain 5, regarding the use of assessment tools and data for school improvement, was also a common topic in the literature. Domain 3, regarding professional learning, was discussed only a handful of times throughout the literature.

Interestingly, the literature often discussed skills that teacher leaders must possess to be successful, such as making decisions, identifying needs of others, leading discussions, listening, and managing conflict. These skills all fall into Domain 1, understanding the principles of adult learning and developing a collaborative culture of collective responsibility in the school. However, only two studies mention principles of adult learning. A study by Taylor et al. (2011) implicitly discussed adult learning, but still uses the term *pedagogy* instead of *andragogy* when discussing the learning of adults. A study by Hunzicker (2012) is the only study that directly discussed adult learning and references Knowles' work.

Student learning and achievement is always going to be a top priority for teachers, so it makes sense why many of the studies focus on Domain 4. What is surprising, however, is that discussion on the importance of collaboration between teachers and between teachers and principals are just as frequent, yet there is little to no mention of the principles of adult

learning theory. Even when the research is focused on mentorship or instructional coaching, which fall into Domain 4, it is shocking how adult learning theory principles are ignored when there is such stress put on the interactions among colleagues and the development of a collaborative culture. The irony lies in the fact a school with a culture of collaboration embraces continuous improvement which often results in increased student achievement. The development of skills in adult learning theory should be a top priority for teacher leaders.

Another theme that emerged throughout the literature was the gap between teaching positions and principal positions. Teachers wanting leadership roles without having to leave the classroom is a consistent pattern. It was made clear time and again that a majority of teachers refuse to take leadership positions if it means having to take on administrative roles, such as principal, and many principals note that they would have stayed in the classroom if there were teacher leadership positions available or if they were compensated similarly. In higher education, the number of teacher leadership programs are slowly starting to expand, but they seem to be limited by the fact that schools do not have a structure for teacher leaders that fits in with the traditional school hierarchy.

Critique of Previous Research Methods

The previous research methods used in the literature varies greatly. Approximately one-half used a qualitative approach, one-fourth used a mixed methods approach, one-fourth were quantitative in nature with surveys being the main data collecting tool. Some of the survey instruments used include School Professional Staff as Learning Community Questionnaire (SPSLCQ), the Teacher Leadership Culture Scale (TLCS), the Comprehensive Trust Scale (CTS), and the Teacher Professionalism Scale, which are all Likert scale surveys. The sample sizes for the quantitative studies ranged from 39 participants to 1,445 teachers.

Of the studies that were qualitative, approximately one-third were phenomenological, and two-thirds were case studies. The case studies varied between the cases being individual teacher leaders or being different schools within a district. The phenomenological studies revolved around a teacher leaders experience of becoming a teacher leader (Taylor, Goeke, Klein, Onore, & Geist, 2011) and what it is like to be a teacher leader over time (Margolis & Deuel, 2009). Sample sizes were anywhere from three to five participants in studies using a case study approach and five to 13 participants in the studies using a phenomenological approach. One outlier to this was a study by Gilles, Want, Fish, and Stegall (2018) that used 227 participants, as this study was over a five-year period and used an open-ended survey as the data collection tool.

While the demographics of participants in studies showed a representative of all genders, races, and ethnicities, most participants were white females. Interestingly, many participants were within year three to year 10 of their teaching career, and there was no mention of the correlation between the ages of the participants and the number of years they had been in education. Geographically, most studies took place in the United States, while a few took place in Canada and Istanbul. The teachers and teacher leaders who participated in studies were split evenly between elementary and secondary levels, and this split was also reflected regarding content areas taught.

Summary

Teacher leadership brings school change, promotes democratic schools, makes use of teacher expertise, enhances collaboration, and arguably most importantly, establishes trust in the organization (Angelle & DeHart, 2011). By allowing teachers to take the lead in bringing change, school culture is enhanced (Roby, 2011). The six principles of adult learning theory advocated by Knowles et al. (2005) should be incorporated when recruiting teacher leaders

and planning trainings or professional development opportunities, as learning from peers has

been shown to be a powerful tool that teacher leaders can initiate to impact school culture

(Roby, 2011). The use of the Teacher Leader Model Standards should also be a focus for

principals looking to recruit teacher leaders.

       While there is an abundance of literature describing the concept of teacher leadership

and offering frameworks, there are still questions to be answered and research to be

conducted in the area of teacher leadership practices and adult learning theory, which is

Domain 1 of the Teacher Leader Model Standards. The literature lacks studies related to the

training and skills teacher leaders must have to facilitate adults. There is also a plethora of

research that focus on student learning, but a gap remains in the literature involving how

teacher leadership impacts adult learning. This gap is what this study aims to fill. The

methods used in this study to determine how teacher leaders perceive the role of adult

learning will be discussed in Chapter 3.

CHAPTER 3.   METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This study examined the perspective of North Dakota teacher leaders in facilitating

and leading adults in comparison to teaching students. The researcher was particularly

interested in the current reality of teacher leaders in respect to their knowledge of adult

learning theory. This chapter will describe the purpose of the study and examine the research

questions and methodology guiding the research. The procedures for participant selection,

data collection and data analysis will be described in detail. Finally, the instrumentation used

and the ethical considerations will be discussed.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine how K-12 teacher leaders experience the

challenges of leading and facilitating adults through the lens of adult learning theory. This

study is significant because of its direct application to K-12 school systems. The data

gathered from the interview participants will give insight on the perspectives and needs of

teacher leaders that can be used by school administrators, school board members, and higher

education institutions. Pages seven and eight of Chapter One described the design of the

study. In this chapter, the material will be repeated with significantly more detail.

Research Question

The central research question guiding this study is:

1. How do teacher leaders perceive the challenges of working with adults in comparison

   to teaching students?

Research Design

Due to the need for inquiry into the perceptions of teacher leaders, a qualitative

approach was used for this study. The perceptions of teacher leaders on the challenges of

leading and facilitating adults was expected to vary, so the use of a qualitative approach

allowed the phenomenon to be fully studied by the researcher. A quantitative approach was

considered but rejected by the researcher due to the rigidity and lack of flexibility to adjust

with the research as it unfolded, where as a qualitative study has " a focus on understanding

and meaning…based on verbal narratives and observations rather than numbers"

(MacMillan, 2012, p. 12). A qualitative approach was a more appropriate design for this

study as it allowed for a more emergent design. As described by Creswell (2014):

> The initial plan for research cannot be tightly prescribed, and some or all phases of
>
> the process may change or shift after the researcher enters the field and begins to
>
> collect data. The questions may change, the forms of data collection may shift, and
>
> the individuals studied [,] and the sites visited may be modified. (p. 186)

The perspective that "all human life is experienced and constructed from a subjective

perspective" (Briggs et al., 2012, p. 23) led to this study employing a qualitative,

interpretivist paradigm. Through the lens of social constructivism framework, multiple

realities were constructed through one's lived experiences and interactions with others

(Creswell & Poth, 2018) and allowed the participants to "provide rich descriptions of

phenomena that enhance understanding" of the research topic (MacMillan, 2012, p. 18).

More specifically, the phenomenological approach was used in this study, as the

study focused on describing the common challenges teacher leaders face. Phenomenological

research is defined by Leedy and Ormrod (2013) as a "method that attempts to understand

participants' perspectives and views of social realities" (p. 100). In phenomenological

studies, participants describe an experience as he or she is living or has lived (Briggs et al.,

2012; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Leedy & Ormrod, 2013). The phenomenological approach was chosen because it allowed the researcher to investigate and collect data through the perceptions of current teacher leaders.

In this study, the researcher's interests lied in the participants' description of the phenomenon and not the researcher's own explanation of the phenomenon. According to Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2007), "quantitative research is not apt for answering why and how questions. In contract, qualitative research can address such process-oriented questions" (p. 559). Based on this information, the researcher believed that a qualitative design best answered the how and why questions the researcher used to study the phenomenon about the challenges teacher leaders face when leading and facilitating adults.

Participant Selection

For teacher leaders to qualify to be a participant in this study, they had to be a current K-12 teacher leader who also spends at least 80% of their day in the classroom. The 80% – 20% classroom ratio was chosen as a suggestion from Bagley and Margolis (2018). As Chapter Two describes, the definition and role of a teacher leader can vary greatly. For the purposes of this study, the definition of a teacher leader is "*teachers who maintain K-12 classroom-based teaching responsibilities, while also taking on leadership responsibilities outside of the classroom* (Wenner & Campbell, 2017, p. 140). Demographics such as years of experience or highest degree attained were not considerations for the inclusion of participants. While teachers in positions of instructional coaches or curriculum specialists are often referred to as teacher leaders, they were excluded as participants for this study as they do not maintain their classroom-based teaching responsibilities.

Procedures

Participation Selection

In qualitative studies, it is typical for participants to be chosen based on a non-random, purposeful strategy (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013; MacMillan, 2012). This holds true in a phenomenological study, as the researcher needs "a group of individuals who have all experienced the phenomenon" (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 76). The participants in this study consisted of eight teacher leaders who continue to teach in the classroom 80% or more of the time. The participants were current classroom teachers at the elementary, middle, and high school levels with leadership roles as grade level lead teachers, PLC leaders, or department chairs.

The participants chosen for this study were selected based on volunteer sampling. The researcher contacted all North Dakota superintendents and principals requesting them to share information about the study and the researcher's contact information with teacher leaders in their schools. In addition, the North Dakota Teacher Support System was contacted to share information of the study with participants in their Instructional Coaches Academy. While instructional coaches were excluded as participants, not all participants of the Instructional Coaches Academy are in an instructional coach role. When a teacher leader showed interest in being a participant, expectations of the study were explained and informed consent was sent. When interest was confirmed, the researcher contacted the participant by email to set up a date and time for the interview.

Protection of Participants.

Minimal harm or discomfort was anticipated for participants who choose to be involved in the study, which was evidenced by IRB approval. Measures were taken to address ethical considerations, which is discussed later in this chapter. The researcher

provided an informed consent document to read and sign. Within the informed consent was an explanation of the purpose of the study as well as what the participants were expected to do in the study. Participants had the option to remove themselves from the study at any time. Participants were given the option to ask questions before the study begins and refuse to answer any of the interview questions. There was no identifying information attached to the participants, with coded names used to replace the actual names of the participants. All information shared by the participants was kept confidential. The researcher kept all information and correspondence in a secure, locked file cabinet owned by the researcher, with the keys to the file cabinet being solely in the researcher's possession. Participants had the ability to receive a copy of the final project electronically if desired.

Expert Review

The researcher had the interview questions reviewed by two experts in teacher leadership. At the time of the study, one expert is an associate professor in the department of leadership and learning. He sat as the dissertation committee chair for numerous students in the educational leadership doctoral program and is the program coordinator for the Master of Science in Curriculum and Instruction program. He had also written three books on teacher leadership. The second expert is a superintendent of schools, who has previously served as an assistant superintendent, a high school and middle school principal and assistant principal, an instructional technologist, and a classroom teacher. In addition, he has written two books on teacher leadership.

The researcher and experts communicated through email and Zoom conversations. The general feedback the reviewers gave was regarding how to word the interview questions to ensure they were open ended and give the researcher the ability to ask the interviewee to expand upon their answers, keeping the interview questions in a semi-structured format.

After making the suggested revisions, the expert reviewers approved the interview questions.

Data Collection

In phenomenological studies, "the interviewer is the research instrument" (Gillham, 2005, p. 7 as cited in Coleman, 2012, p. 250). This is because the researcher is interested in "understanding the lived experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience" (Seidman, 2006, p .9 as cited in Coleman, 2012, p. 251). Therefore, the researcher collected data through one-on-one, semi-structured interviews.

The interviews began in July of 2020. The researcher met with the participants via Zoom due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The interviews were recorded in order to create a transcription of the interview. The interview questions pertained to demographic information and the challenges they faced as teacher leaders when facilitating adults. While the data being collected was primarily through individual, semi-structured interviews, the researcher was also including gestures and body language of the participants as part of the data being collected. Once the data had been collected, each interview recording was transcribed by the researcher using the word processing software, Trint.

Data Analysis

This study utilized Moustakas's (1994) transcendental phenomenological approach to data analysis. One important aspect of transcendental phenomenology regarding data analysis is the *epoché process* (Moustakas, 1994), which involved the researcher setting aside all preconceptions or judgments of the phenomenon. Epoché allowed the researcher to be bias-free and ensured the research questions were being answered from the viewpoint of the participants experiencing the phenomenon (Yüksel & Yildirim, 2015). This was accomplished by the researcher being bracketed out of the study and setting aside personal experiences and knowledge of the phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994;

Yüksel & Yildirim, 2015).

Moustakas's (1994) approach was utilized because of its systematic steps in the data analysis procedures (Creswell & Poth. 2018). The general procedure included preparing data for analysis, reducing the data phenomenologically, engaging in imaginative variation, and uncovering the essence of the experience (Yüksel & Yildirim, 2015). Figure 2 illustrates the steps of data analysis.
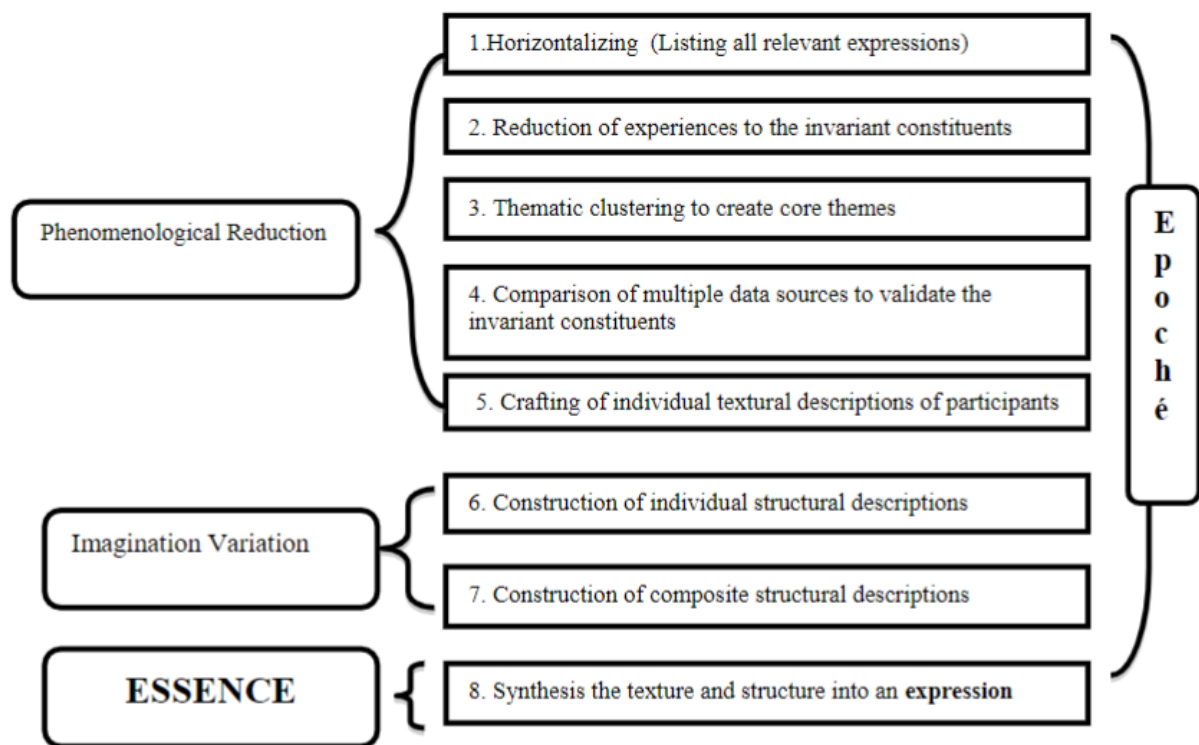
Figure 2. The steps of data analysis (Yüksel & Yildirim, 2015).

Data analysis began with phenomenological reduction, or describing the individual experiences, and involves steps one through five (Yüksel & Yildirim, 2015):

1. *Horizontalizing, or listing all relevant expressions*: the researcher created a list from the verbatim transcripts of each participant and removed all irrelevant

expressions. As Coleman (2012) states, "it is vital to ensure that there are good transcripts of the interviews" (p. 262).

2. *Reduction of experiences to the invariant constituents*: the researcher clustered horizons into themes, with each theme only having one meaning.

3. *Thematic clustering to create core themes*: the researcher clustered and thematized the invariant constituents, or the horizons defined as the "core themes of the experience" of the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994, p. 121).

4. *Comparison of multiple data sources to validate the invariant constituents*: The themes resulting from the participants' experiences by interviews were compared to other methods, such as researcher observation, to verify accuracy.

5. *Constructing of individual textural descriptions of participants*: The researcher described the experiences of the participants using verbatim excerpts from the interviews. The researcher also explained the meaning units in a narrative to enable the understanding of the participants' experiences.

"Imaginative variation is a phenomenological analysis process that follows phenomenological reduction and depends purely on researchers' imagination rather than empirical data" (Yüksel & Yildirim, 2015, p. 8). The goal of the imaginative variation process was to remove unnecessary features by finding a possible meaning of the phenomenon. Steps six and seven are part of the imaginative variation process (Yüksel & Yildirim, 2015):

6. *Construction of individual structural descriptions*: based on the textural descriptions, the researcher imagined how the experience occurred and created the structures.

7. *Construction of composite structural descriptions*: after writing the textural description for each participant, the researcher incorporated the textural description into a structure explaining how the experience occurred.

Finally, step eight aimed to uncover the essence of the experience of the phenomenon (Yüksel & Yildirim, 2015):

8. *Synthesizing the texture and structure into an expression*: the researcher created two narratives, describing both "what" occurred and structurally describing "how" it occurred. The meaning units were listed for each participant, followed by the researcher creating meaning units that all participants had in common. From these meaning units, the researcher created textural and structural descriptions, eliminating individual meaning units to synthesize the essence of the phenomenon.

Instruments

The data collected for this study primarily consisted of one-on-one interviews between the researcher and the participants; therefore, the main instrument that was used for data collection was the researcher. The researcher also used the Zoom recording feature to record each interview. This software was used to allow the researcher to transcribe the interviews verbatim upon completion of the interviews.

Role of the Researcher

As a current middle school principal who is in a supervisory and evaluative position, I refrained from selecting any participants from my current school district to avoid any potential conflict of interest that may jeopardize a working relationship or interfere with the study. However, I asked teacher leaders in my district to participate in practice interviews to ensure the questions were worded appropriately and to practice my interview skills. As a

principal, I am highly interested in developing teacher leaders and have studied teacher leadership prior to this study. Therefore, I had to be deliberate in taming my own thoughts on teacher leadership and the development of teacher leaders all times.

Trustworthiness

Lincoln and Guba (1985) classify the elements of trustworthiness in qualitative research as credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (p. 300). In order to establish the trustworthiness of this qualitative research project, several research techniques were incorporated. The first of these techniques was member-checking.

The researcher partnered with participants who offered their personal insights in individual interviews. To present their constructed meaning accurately, member-checking was utilized to ensure credibility. Member-checking involves seeking the participants' view of the credibility of the findings and interpretations, which Lincoln and Guba (1985) considered, "the most critical technique for establishing credibility" (p. 314). Each participant was given the opportunity to read the case findings and clarify meanings prior to publication.

The concept of transferability in qualitative research differs from that of quantitative research. Lincoln and Guba (1985) explained,

> Thus the naturalist cannot specify the external validity of an inquiry; he or she can provide only the thick description necessary to enable someone interested in making a transfer to reach a conclusion about whether transfer can be contemplated as a possibility. (p. 316)

The addition of rich, thick descriptive elements, such as introductory vignettes, offers readers the opportunity for transferability.

Creswell (2018) reminded, "The naturalistic researcher looks for confirmability rather

than objectivity in establishing the value of the data. Both dependability and confirmability are established through an auditing of the research process" (p. 265). The dependability and confirmability of this qualitative research was established through oversight and audit by its research advisor and committee.

Finally, positionality entered into the trustworthiness of this research. The researcher clearly positioned herself as a participant in not only the research, but also the topic being studied. As a school administrator, the researcher clearly had a vested interest in the research topic. The goal of the researcher was clearly stated, to better understand the lived experiences of teacher leaders regarding facilitating adults.

Ethical Considerations

According to Creswell and Poth (2018), there are certain ethical considerations during data collection that must be adhered to. First, the researcher had to avoid deceiving participants about the nature of the research. Second, the researcher was sensitive of potential power imbalances that can be created between the researcher and the participants. The potential power imbalance must be respected. This was accomplished by building trust with the participants and avoiding any leading questions. Third, the researcher avoided the exploitation of the participants. Creswell and Poth (2018) explain that "the simple act of collecting data may contribute to "using" the participants and the site for personal gain of the researcher" (p. 57). Strategies such as sharing the final research report was used to create reciprocity with the participants. Finally, the researcher respected the privacy of the participants. This included assigning coded names to protect anonymity and taking the appropriate security measures when storing data and materials.

Summary

The methods that were used for this study were purposefully chosen to better

understand the perceptions of teacher leaders regarding the challenges they face leading and

facilitating adults. The researcher opted for a qualitative study to provide insight into the

lived experiences of teacher leaders. The data was collected through one-on-one interviews,

which were transcribed and analyzed using Moustakas's (1994) approach. Chapters four and

five of this study describe the findings and conclusions from this investigation, and

recommendations are provided for school administrators as to how they can best support

teacher leaders.

CHAPTER 4.   FINDINGS

While chapters one, two, and three describe the research design and methodological assumptions, chapter four describes the results of the study and includes a presentation of the data collected, the results of the data analysis, and the findings of the study. This chapter first discusses the role of the researcher, followed by a description of the samples. This chapter then describes how the research methodology is applied to the data analysis and provides a presentation of the data and results of the analysis. Finally, the chapter concludes with a summary.

Introduction

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to describe the challenges teacher leaders face when leading and facilitating adults. The researcher for this qualitative phenomenological study sought to obtain the perceptions of K-12 North Dakota teacher leaders regarding the challenges of leading and facilitating adults in comparison to teaching students. Phenomenology uses a researcher's personal interests to develop questions (Moustakas, 1994). As a former teacher leader and current middle school principal, the researcher had an interest in the topic of the study. The motivation behind the study was to determine how the researcher, as an administrator, can better support and retain teacher leaders and recruit new teachers into leadership positions. Long term, the researcher strives to use the results of this study to develop a strong teacher leadership program within her school district to foster the growth of teacher leaders. Prior to her role as a principal, the researcher served as a teacher leader for five years. The teacher leader roles the researcher was involved in included PLC leader, school improvement committee member, and instructional coach. This background aided in understanding the varied roles a teacher leader

can have, which enabled her to narrow down a definition of teacher leader for this study. In addition, the researcher's background helped guide the interview questions used to gather data. However, because of this background, caution needed to be used not to include personal biases into the study to ensure objectivity.

A qualitative phenomenological approach for data collection was used in this study. The researcher had never done a full study using a phenomenological approach. However, a small project using the phenomenological approach and interviews for data collection was completed during her coursework through the doctoral program. Training in writing open-ended interview questions and using an interview protocol throughout the data collection process was also learned from the course.

After thoroughly researching the topic, there were few qualitative studies that focused on the challenges that teacher leaders face that also explain the importance of understanding adult learning theory. Therefore, this study focused on the perceived challenges that teacher leaders face when working with adults. The substance of the study was found in the research question: how do teacher leaders perceive the challenges of working with adults in comparison to teaching students? This chapter describes the phenomenon using the participants' voice and provides an overall understanding of the experiences of teacher leaders.

Participants

The following section presents a summary of each of the eight participants in this study to provide better insight into the findings. Each participant was a current teacher leader in a North Dakota public school. Guidelines for participation were set to ensure the phenomenon under investigation would be studied. To recruit for the study, all principals and superintendents in North Dakota were emailed asking to share information about the study

and to contact the researcher if interested in being a participant. The potential eligible participants were emailed a short description of the study, as well as the informed consent (Appendix B). Once the informed consent was signed and returned to the researcher, an interview date and time was agreed upon. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all interviews were arranged to take place via Zoom. The only issues that occurred using this interview method was some connectivity issues when the camera was on. Therefore, two participants were not able to be seen during their interview.

Description of the Sample

There were eight participants in this study. The following section provides a brief description of each participant. The actual names of the participants have been changed to maintain confidentiality.

Ruby is a middle school reading teacher in a Class A school in eastern North Dakota. She has been a teacher for 11 years and has served in a teacher leadership role for 10 years. The teacher leadership positions Ruby holds include the middle school representative on the district and school improvement committee, a middle school leadership team member, the grade level team leader, and a mentor teacher to first year teachers. Ruby also holds a master's degree in technology.

Mitchell is a middle school social studies teacher in a Class A school in western North Dakota. He has been a teacher for 6 years and has served in a leadership position for 3 years. Mitchell holds leadership positions as the grade level team leader, is on the school leadership team, and is a middle school teacher representative on the district and school improvement team. Mitchell is also the middle school social studies department chair and PLC leader. Mitchell currently has a bachelor's degree but anticipated completing his master's degree in curriculum and instruction in December of 2020.

Donna is a middle school science teacher in a Class A school in eastern North Dakota. She has been teaching for 27 years and has been in a teacher leader position for 14 years. The teacher leadership roles Donna has been involved with include being a grade level team leader, being a member of the school improvement team, and being a mentor to first year teachers or new teachers to her school district. Donna's highest degree attained is a bachelor's degree in education.

Annie is a 5th and 6th grade elementary school teacher in a Class B school in western North Dakota. She has been teaching for 10 years and has been in a teacher leadership position for 8 years. Annie's teacher leadership positions include being a PLC leader and a mentor to first year teachers and new teachers to her district. Annie has a bachelor's degree but is working towards a master's degree in educational leadership and administration.

Alan is a middle school English teacher in a Class A school in eastern North Dakota. He has been teaching for 5 years and has been in a teacher leadership position for 2 years. Alan serves as the grade level team leader and is a member of his school's leadership team. Alan holds a bachelor's degree in education.

Robert is a middle school science teacher in a Class A school in eastern North Dakota. He has been teaching for 29 years and has been in a teacher leadership position for 11 years. The leadership positions Robert holds include being the grade level team leader, being on the school leadership team, and being a mentor teacher to first year teachers. Robert holds a bachelor's degree in education as his highest degree attained.

Samantha is a 3rd grade elementary school teacher in a Class A school in western North Dakota. She has been teaching for 28 years and has been in a teacher leadership position for 7 years. The teacher leadership positions Samantha holds includes being the

grade level team leader, a member on the school improvement team, and a mentor teacher to first year teachers and new teachers to her school district. Samantha a master's degree in elementary reading strategies.

Laurie is a high school English teacher in a Class A school in eastern North Dakota. She has been teaching for 17 years and has been in a teacher leadership position for 10 years. Laurie holds leadership positions as the grade level team leader and course captain, is a member of the school improvement team, and is the PLC leader and department chair. Laurie has a master's degree in educational leadership and administration.

It is important to note that at the time of the interviews in July of 2020, the world was in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic. Schools in North Dakota had closed in mid-March of 2020 and the impacts of the closure was still fresh on the participants' minds. Many of the participants answered the interview questions based on how things were prior to the COVID-19 school closure, but some answered based on their experiences during the closure. The experiences of the COVID-19 closure were unique to each participant and may have had an impact on the findings in this study.

Table 3

Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Demographic Characteristics	Number
Gender	
Male	3
Female	5
Teaching Position	
Elementary School	2
Middle School	5
High School	1
Highest Degree Attained	
Bachelors	5
Masters	3

Years of Teaching Range	5-29 years
Leadership Position	
Grade Level Lead Teacher	7
Leadership Team Member	5
School Improvement Team Member	4
Mentor Teacher	5
Department Chair/PLC Leader	2
Years in Leadership Range	2-14 years

Research Methodology Applied to the Data Analysis

The researcher utilized Moustakas' (1994) phenomenological data analysis procedure, which included preparing the data for analysis, phenomenologically reducing the data, engaging in imaginative variation, and uncovering the essence of the experience. During the data collection process, the researcher used an interview protocol (Appendix C). Data was collected through on-on-one interviews that took place over Zoom due to COVID-19 precautions. The researcher used the Zoom recording features to record the interviews. Prior to the beginning of the interview, the researcher obtained consent from the participants using an IRB approved consent form (Appendix B). Upon completion of the interview, the researcher used the Trint software to transcribe the interviews verbatim. The use of Trint was beneficial as it helped keep all information organized and also has tools embedded to aide in the accuracy of transcribing interviews. Trint also gives the option to store interviews safely as a backup. Once the interviews had been transcribed, the transcription was sent to each participant to ensure validity of the participants' answers. This type of member checking allowed the participants to make any necessary changes, clarify the responses, or agree with the transcript. There were no changes made to the transcripts by the participants during the member checking process.

Start: researcher's Epoche
• Set aside judgement, prejudice, and view the phenomenon with a fresh eye (view of a transcendental ego)
• Verbatim transcript

Transcendental-phenomenological reduction
• Consider the phenomenon with an open mind, and consider it from different perspectives.
• Identify units of meaning / segment (invariant horizons)
• Horizontalization → each segment has equal value
• The outcome is a textual (the what) description of the phenomenon.

Imaginative variation
• From the textual description, construct the structural (the how) epitome of the experience. This procedure requires imaginations and intuition to reflect the relationship (themes) pertinent to the experience.

Synthesize
• Combine textual and structural descriptions to form a textual-structural essence of the experience, emphasizing on the space and time when the phenomenon is observed.

Repeat the process for each participant until saturation

Combine the textual-structural descriptions into a composite description representing the essence of experience of the whole group

Figure 3. Moustakas Transcendental Phenomenological Approach (Chun, 2013)

Once the data collection process was complete, the researcher began the data analysis

process using Moustakas' (1994) transcendental phenomenological approach, starting with

phenomenological reduction. Figure 3 provides a visual of Moustakas' approach. After

completing the epoché process to set aside her personal experiences with the phenomenon

(Yüksel & Yildirim, 2015), the researcher began the phenomenological reduction process,

starting with horizontalizing. The researcher started with the verbatim transcripts of the

participants and deleted any irrelevant expressions, leaving the horizons, or significant

statements, of the phenomenon to emerge (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Yüksel & Yildirim,

2015). Then, the researcher reduced the horizons into themes. Each theme had only one meaning, which provided the foundation for interpretation by creating clusters and removing repetition. The researcher utilized the Quirkos (www.quirkos.com) software program to aide in the phenomenological reduction process. The Quirkos software helps visually organize the words of the participants by dragging and dropping significant statements onto colorful bubbles that grow as data is added. Quirkos also has features like keyword searches, side-by-side comparisons of subgroups, and visualizations that show connections in the data.

After creating the themes, the researcher constructed textural descriptions of the participants' experiences and perceptions of the phenomenon using verbatim excerpts from the interviews (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Yüksel & Yildirim, 2015). Next, the researcher constructed structural descriptions by using imaginative variation to describe how the experience happened by reflecting on the setting and context. Finally, the researcher synthesized the textural and structural descriptions into a composite description of the phenomenon, also known as the essence of the experience (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Yüksel & Yildirim, 2015).

Presentation of Data and Results of the Analysis

The following themes emerged from data concerning the research questions. Participant quotes are used to solidify the themes and provide an answer to the research question.

Research Question

The research question examined the experience of how teacher leaders perceive the challenges of working with adults in comparison to teaching students. Participants reported:

a) Lack of education, training, or preparation

b) Lack of clarity in the role

c) Negative treatment from other teachers

d) Navigating how to lead adults

e) Lack of feedback from administrators

f) Navigating authentic decision-making opportunities, and

g) Obstacles initiating change

Lack of education, training, or preparation. Participants in the study by in large felt they had not received adequate education or training regarding their preparedness for teacher leadership. The subthemes that emerged included (a) preparation through master's courses in comparison to undergraduate courses, (b) personal research, (c) reliance on experience, and (d) lack of teacher leadership professional development.

Masters courses versus undergraduate courses. This subtheme emerged as participants mentioned their education as preparation for their teacher leadership role. When asked about how they had been prepared to teach and lead adults, Mitchell replied, "prior to my master's courses, I don't really think that I was. As far as…my undergraduate education program, it didn't really exist."

Robert initially struggled with the question, answering, "how am I prepared to teach adults? That one is a tricky one. I don't know. Have I had formal adult training or anything like that? I would say probably not."

Annie mirrored Robert's response, noting, "As far as, like, formal training on how to be prepared, there was none."

As Alan reflected on his undergraduate experience, he explained:

There was no explicit teaching of it. I think the only thing that was given over my teacher prep was the ideas of like, sometimes people are resistant. Some people just

have to be dragged along. I just think at the college level that it's just not there. That

there wasn't anything that was explicitly out there for us.

Laurie eagerly responded:

I went through the Teacher Leadership Academy through NDSU for my masters. I

feel like that training was super beneficial. You know, I read a lot of pieces of

literature that I feel helped me understand how you can maybe get adults to move

along, especially reluctant ones. Prior to that, not great at all.

Laurie also noted that she felt, "like my masters trained me a lot more, and then a lot of the

things I seek out on my own."

Personal research. Some of the participants mentioned seeking out their own

research or resources to prepare themselves for the teacher leadership role. Mitchell stated

that when he stepped into a teacher leadership role he did his, "own individualized things that

I researched and I completed to try and see the best way to lead a group of my peers rather

than my students."

Laurie explained:

I'm also somebody who seeks a lot of that out on my own. So, I follow a lot of

educators on Twitter. I find, you know, a lot of like educational resources on

Twitter…I will just do professional development on my own, like during the

summer… I'm constantly checking like professional development conferences being

offered and stuff like that and taking ones I think would be most beneficial.

Laurie went into further detail regarding the conferences she has attended:

I went to the Innovation Academy in Bismarck, so I thought that was phenomenal.

I've gone to the NCTE conference. So, I think every year I've done some sort of

training, like the PLC institute. But at least once a year I feel like there's been

something that has helped me learn and grow.

Laurie concluded her experience by saying:

Other than my own individualized things that I researched, and I completed, I try to

see the best way to lead a group of my peers rather than students… I love to go online

and find research and I'm constantly sending things to people. Working with teachers,

doing book studies, and stuff like that has helped, too.

Reliance on experience. Samantha and Alan explained that they have relied on their

personal experiences to prepare them for teacher leadership roles. Samantha explains, "I

think that experience has helped me the most because I haven't had leadership from admin or

things like that, or even feedback. So, it's been from my own and applying my own

experiences."

Alan discussed that, "A lot of the things that work are just things that others did, just

things I observed from people who are better at that than me… it's more of an osmosis

approach."

Lack of teacher leadership professional development. Regarding professional

development in teacher leadership, all eight participants reported attending conferences

related to student achievement and data, such as PLCs, Multi-Tiered Systems of Support, or

site visits. However, many of the participants eluded to a lack of opportunity for professional

development in teacher leadership. When asked whether she had been given an opportunity

for professional development, Samantha stated, "As far as professional development? Nope."

Ruby explained that there are not many opportunities or training within the district, and that

she had to seek out professional development outside of the district. Mitchell and Laurie both

seconded this idea, noting that any training or professional development opportunities were done individually and not suggested by administration. Robert and Donna were the only two participants who had a professional development opportunity related to teaching adults by participating in the North Dakota state mentoring program.

Alan mentioned, "I haven't really been given that many opportunities. Certainly, nobody here has given me an opportunity to do that." Alan went on to clarify that while he had not been given an opportunity for professional development in teacher leadership, he had been provided other professional development opportunities. He reflected upon returning from these opportunities, stating:

> I wish [the principal] would at least have us present to somebody, or I'm happy to write a report, like a reflection to the school board. At least to have that level of reflection and implementation, you know, instead of just good you went there. Now let's change some things.

Lack of clarity in the role. Participants reported on how they obtained their teacher leadership role and explained their reasons for reluctance in accepting the role, especially regarding the unclear descriptions and duties of the role.

Obtaining the teacher leader role. For all the participants, the administrator played the largest role in acquiring a teacher leadership position. Laurie explained, "It was just a question from a principal. Hey, would you be willing to be a department chair?" She does believe that there may have been recommendations from other administrators or other teacher leaders, but there was no formal interview process.

Donna was also approached by her administrator asking if she would be interested. "It's coming from the administrative side reaching out and they see some of those strengths

in individuals and they will put their expertise to work in selecting those people."

Annie's experience was much like Donnas, explaining, "Our principals kind of look at what your own skills are and then if you have some pretty good strengths, they may ask you to help lead in certain areas."

Robert also stated that the teacher leadership role was given to him by administration and that he believed his administrator, "selected those that they thought were going to be good leaders for their grade level or for the school."

Mitchell explained that his peers had a significant influence on gaining a teacher leadership role. "I guess you become a teacher leader just by gaining the respect of your peers and probably the people you are directly under." He did go on to clarify, "But then to step into an actual leadership role where you have some sort of title, that was simply given to me by my principal."

Ruby's experience was based on the recommendation of another teacher in conjunction with volunteering. She explained how the principal was looking for volunteers for a teacher to be on the school improvement team. "One teacher was like you would be good at this." When Ruby volunteered, the principal was excited and surprised, which made her question her decision as it seemed like no one else wanted that role.

Samantha and Alan both explained that they inherited the role. In the words of Samantha, "I think it probably stems from being the one there the longest." Alan explained, "I definitely did not seek it out. I'm the last person on the team, so I guess I inherited it because I am not like on the admin track."

Reluctance in accepting the role. Some of the participants expressed some hesitation or reluctance in accepting the role as a teacher leader. Laurie expressed that she has

aspirations of being an administrator one day. However, she had some concerns about the long-term vision of the district:

> I love being a teacher, but I also know I want to be in a position of power to make the decisions that greatly impact students and our community. I have wanted a more administrative role for a few years now and feel at my best when I am leading. I also am a firm believer that people who have experience in a variety of areas are better equipped at making decisions. I just don't think the district was ready to, like, place these people in leadership roles. Like, okay, we want people to be teacher leaders, but then they didn't have a system to say, now that you've had this training, we're actually going to put you in these roles.

Unlike Laurie, Mitchell and Alan do not have goals of being an administrator, which led to their reluctance in accepting the teacher leadership role. Mitchell explained:

> Long term, I don't necessarily intend to become a leader in the sense of like principal or superintendent. But if I do ever decide to leave the district, obviously it looks good on a resume. I guess it's one of those things where I'm not necessarily looking to gain an advantage anywhere, but it probably does broaden my options a little bit.

Alan shared the most hesitation about moving into a leadership role. While he did share some excitement towards the teacher leader role, he also shared:

> I was really reluctant because I know that's just not my thing. I am not, like, admin track. I've made that really, really clear. I just don't want to be like a leadership position any bigger than just with my peers, my colleagues.

Lack of direction. Upon accepting the teacher leadership positions, some of the participants voiced their frustrations regarding what their role entailed. Alan explained that,

"it was like getting thrown in the deep end."

Laurie recalled, "At the very beginning, it was deer in headlights. It was just kind of like you're thrown in. Here's your title. Good luck."

Lastly, Samantha mentioned, "You're asked to do this, but you're not give anything other than show up at the school improvement meeting."

Negative treatment from other teachers. Participants reported that they were treated differently by other teachers after they had accepted a teacher leadership role. Participants described having to field additional complaints, feelings of isolation, and dealing with others believing they were evaluators or had more proximity to power.

Fielding Complaints. Participants recalled negative experiences with colleagues coming to them with complaints. Alan explained:

> There are people who think that because you're on the leadership team, they can complain and you're a complaint box. And somehow, you're going to take that to the principal. And that's not really how the leadership committee is envisioned, especially because anybody in the school can talk to our principal. He's a very accessible person.

Alan also shared a specific incident that has stuck with him through his time as a teacher leader:

> I had somebody who trailed me all the way down the hallway, from my classroom to the office and then back to my classroom, complaining about something our principal had done that our leadership committee had been privy to. We hadn't really been a part of decision making, and it wasn't even a controversial thing. In fact, to this day I can only remember her response, but I can't remember what it was about. Eventually

there was a point where I just pointed at the office, in that direction and said you've

got to talk to somebody else.

Donna and Annie also feel like other teachers come to them with complaints. Donna

said, "They'll come to me, they'll ask questions. Sometimes it's negative, especially when

we're initiating change." Annie described her experience, saying, "Not everybody is going to

agree with you, we're going to get a lot more eye rolls than you do with kids."

Feelings of Isolation. Participants noted that, at times, there were feelings of

isolation from other teachers in the building due to their teacher leader role. Laurie explained

that she felt treated differently because she was an active member in teacher leadership areas.

"I do think others put barrier labels on me such as *kiss up*, *brown noser*, or *admin's pet*.

Robert described his experience, explaining, "It got as little nasty at times. I remember one

time I walked in the library and everybody just stopped talking." Mitchell also had a similar

experience:

> You know, you walk to the water cooler and it becomes silent because they're scared
>
> they're going to say something in front of you. I have seen that before. I think that
>
> stems from the fear that this is somehow going to tie into their evaluation.

Illusion of power. Participants commented that after stepping into a teacher

leadership role, some of their colleagues had the illusion that the participants had more power

or influence. Ruby stated that her colleagues would often tease her, saying that if they wanted

something from the principal, they needed Ruby to ask because she gets whatever she wants.

Alan described his experience with his peers treating him as though he had additional

influence as a teacher leader. "I think I get treated kind of like a procedural runaround or

something. Like I have proximity to power, and I don't feel like I do." Laurie also expressed

frustration when explaining how her colleagues would tiptoe around her. "I'm just a department chair, a PLC leader, and a course captain. I don't get to make any of the really heavy decisions. I don't get to evaluate them on their jobs and stuff like that."

Mitchell had similar sentiments as Laurie. He, too, felt that people began censoring themselves around him once he stepped into a teacher leadership position:

> I'm not in charge of necessarily telling teachers what they need to do or even necessarily what they should do, but rather guide them towards hopefully being more successful in meeting the goals of our school district. There's a delicate balance of making everyone aware in your team that you're the team leader. But you're simply a leader. You are not a manager. You are not evaluating them.

Navigating how to lead adults. Participants expressed some challenges when leading and facilitating adults, including establishing trust among colleagues, using listening skills to ensure all teachers feel heard, and coming to terms with the inability to please everyone.

Establishing trust. Alan described the importance of establishing a healthy team dynamic:

> You're all peers and you have to navigate those waters. I definitely like to devolve a lot of powers onto other people on the team. We have a few people who are really good at making connections in the community. We have people who are incredible organizers, which I'm not.

Donna also noted the importance of building relationships with colleagues to open lines of communication. "It's neat when you have a relationship with somebody. Sometimes those conversations might be a little bit more difficult to have. But when that relation piece is

there, it's a lot easier to have those conversations."

Laurie also expressed the importance of knowing the strengths and weaknesses of her team, which comes from spending the time to get to know the people she is leading:

One of the most important things is knowing your team, who you're working with. You know, what are their skills? What are their values? What do they care about? How are they going to approach a situation? You have people who will always approach it using confrontation. That's just the way they are. So I think if you can know the people you're working with and allow the time and space for that to kind of happen, but not take over the meeting or the event, that gives that person a moment of, okay, I've been heard… If you don't take the time to get to know those people, it's just not ever going to work. I strategically give them something to do so they feel part of the team.

Communication skills. Communication skills was another common theme that was brought up by the participants. When working with other adults, Samantha advised, "Listen to an adult and react in a way that shows you respect that person because respect isn't just given. You earn it." Donna described how she had to focus on compassion and empathy when working with adults to have meaningful conversations. "I had to really work on questioning and how to guide someone through questioning to get them to think where the conversation was going without telling them what to do."

Mitchell spoke at length about the importance of trust with colleagues to facilitate difficult conversations:

Forming a strong bond as a team is pivotal to meeting the goals that you want to achieve. You can all be doing a great job, but unless you have that bond and unless

you're willing to have some difficult conversations and conversations that are maybe

challenging or uncomfortable, there really is not a lot of success. People have to feel

comfortable. Adults have to feel comfortable in front of their team in order to get that

discussion going and help a team to go in the right direction.

Laurie explained that, as a leader, it is important that the adults she is working with

know that she is approachable and cares what they have to say:

It's important to give people the space and time to share their ideas or their

frustrations to get it out. Otherwise, if it's pent up inside, they're just going to go

behind a closed door, behind somebody's back and they're going to say it and spread

it, and then it turns toxic. I think it's trying to create that environment where you can

be vulnerable and you have trust. People want to be heard and they want to be seen.

Laurie continued explaining that she wants to create a space where the teachers she leads

feels comfortable voicing their opinions. "Even if you don't like what we're doing, please

say it. Let's flush this out, because you might be seeing it from a different way that I'm not

seeing it."

    Inability to please everyone. Participants recalled how they have struggled learning

that, as a teacher leader, one is not able to make everyone happy. Ruby said, "I feel like you

can never make everybody happy. And of course, everyone thinks their idea is the best idea."

Annie shared similar struggles:

That's definitely something that I struggled with to begin with. I used to think, well,

how can I make that person happy? But this is what we have to do. And the more that

I've done it, the more you just realize as long as you know you're doing what is best,

you just have to let it go and be okay with some people just not agreeing with you. At

the end of the day, as long as you're doing what you feel is best for the most and what data is showing is best, then you just have to be okay with that.

Lack of feedback from administrators. Communication with administration was another common theme expressed by the participants. Some of the encouragement from administrators that was described includes regular check-ins, giving advice for certain situations, discussing school goals, and giving general support. While the participants conveyed appreciation towards their principals for being encouraging and supportive, they also mentioned a lack of evaluative, individual feedback. Annie noted, "I guess we don't really get the communication on how well I'm doing as a teacher leader. And not individual feedback."

Regarding whether the principal provides any feedback on her role as a teacher leader, Ruby replied:

Not often. Maybe like informally on the evaluation. Like, oh, you're involved in all these things and you communicate with your team and all that stuff. But he doesn't come up and say I need you to do better at this. You need to fix it. He's not a big communicator in that way.

Alan said:

He's really open if you're asking about it. But I mean, it's pretty informal. I don't think it's anywhere in our rubric for the teacher evaluation, specifically teacher leadership. The things he draws on would be some of the things he sees at the team level. He'll check in. That's about it.

Samantha seemed exasperated when reminiscing about her experience with her principal regarding feedback:

I have never had a discussion with him other than I guess on my evaluation, the one

thing I would say that possibly addressed it was the school mission. But he's never

really come to me and said, hey, as a team leader, I want you to do this or you need to

work in this area. I've not heard any feedback like that.

Mitchell described that his principal did have a drastic part in assigning him the role

of teacher leader, but that is where the guidance ended:

As far as guidance from my principal, that wasn't really overly clear. And I think it

was pretty obvious when you look at different teacher leaders within our middle

school and how each of those different teacher leaders led their teams. I guess it was

pretty clear that there wasn't necessarily a framework that any of us were working

under or anything like that. As far as more individual guidance regarding actual

leadership and what he determined a teacher leader would look like, there wasn't

really a lot of constructive feedback I guess it was more just positive feedback.

Laurie, who works with multiple administrators as the department PLC leader for a

large district, described her experience:

I've been department chair for four years now. I do meet with the principal who

oversees the English department, usually once a week to just kind of talk about PLCs

and where we're at and updating him. I guess that would kind of be like a mini check

in, like are you in those four questions for PLC constantly? Are you getting the work

done? Are you making progress? So, you know, for PLC leader, I would say it's

maybe that once a week check in with the principal. But district wide, there hasn't

really been a sit-down evaluation. There probably should be. That might help get

some of the people who aren't necessarily in it for the progress to get to see that

maybe it's not a right fit for them. There's no formal type of evaluation. It's usually

just a survey, like they'll ask you some questions.

Navigating Authentic Decision-Making Opportunities. When asked about whether

or not there were opportunities for authentic decision making, all of the participants

expressed numerous opportunities at the grade or department level. The decisions the

participants were able to make included decisions around content and curriculum, data, the

health and culture of the school, and general problem solving at the grade and department

level. Regarding these grade and department level decisions, the participants felt very

comfortable and supported by both teachers and administrators.

Challenges related to authentic decision making occurred more at the district level,

and the participants shared several obstacles and frustrations. Some of the participants

expressed that they are allowed to voice their ideas and opinions, but don't necessarily make

authentic decisions at the district level. Samantha explained, "ideas were listened to and

maybe it was then put off to admin or board members. I didn't feel a lot of follow through

there." Robert explained that at the district level, "we can share information, but the principal

is the one that kind of does all of the meetings."

Donna shared that the decisions may be above even the school level, saying, "Input is

allowed. It's appreciated. I do have an understanding, though, it might be a state thing. It

might be a national thing, where I have to keep that in mind."

Ruby struggled with the idea of authentic decisions at the district level and hesitated

prior to answering:

District level is a little tricky. I am on the school improvement team, so I get to give

input on how things are working or how teachers are utilizing certain things or not

utilizing them. So, I get to voice some input that way. I don't know if it makes any

real change, but at least I feel my voice is heard a little bit.

Marshall, however, answered a bit more bluntly. "As far as district-wide decisions, I

would say I have very little impact on authentic decisions or choices that affect us as an

entire district."

Alan revealed some frustrations around some of the roadblocks he has experienced

regarding authentic decision making:

I think there's authenticity, but it's not necessarily always collaborative. I guess you

feel more like a board, sort of getting the run down and then just given a very clear

target. Which is fine, because obviously our principal is sort of the engine. But I do

feel like sometimes, with authentic decisions, we sort of bypass things, really good,

authentic decisions, because there's pushback. Sometimes I think our hands get tied

up for other concerns. And I feel like sometimes authentic decisions get sort of get

pushed under when somebody is like, I don't know if I want to do that.

Laurie shared the frustrations she experiences in a large school district:

At the district level, probably not so much. It's probably less at that level. I think if

the district were to have a more clear [*sic*] vision, we could make district-wide

decisions easier because every administrator and every building seems to be in a

different place.

Laurie also voiced some frustration with authentic decision making, sharing that there have

been "those moments where you kind of feel like your principal is taking what you said and

not giving you credit for it at the staff meeting."

Annie's experience was the one anomaly to the rest of the participants. Because of the

small size of her school district, "decisions that would affect our grade level also affect our

school and our district, all at once."

Obstacles initiating change. The most resounding theme the participants discussed

were the challenges they face when a change is being initiated. Some of the subthemes that

emerged included learning how to approach change with adults and dealing with resistance

from teachers.

Navigating change with adults. Participants shared their experiences when

navigating change with other teachers and the lessons they have learned through these

experiences. Donna expressed the importance of focusing on, "understanding mindsets.

Guide them through questioning. They're not kids, and they are not your students." Robert

contradicted Donna's sentiments, explaining that when he leads and facilitates adults, "I

probably teach them a lot like I would teach students because that's what I'm used to. I'm

very explicit. That way there's no confusion. I want to make sure that they totally understand

what they need to do."

Samantha takes the experience of the teachers she leads into consideration when

initiating a change. She mirrors Robert's comments about teaching like one would with their

students in their classroom:

> I tend to really, really listen to someone who's been in the classroom. But I also
>
> handle them with kid gloves because things change, and change is the hardest for
>
> people. They'll say, "That's not how I've done it before," or "I don't have the time,"
>
> or, "I just don't get what you're saying." Then, taking a step back and trying to
>
> approach it another way, just like you would kids in a classroom. If they're not
>
> understanding it one way, you back up and you think about it and you try to approach

it from another angle. They're not much different from kids. More stubborn, maybe.

Annie attempts to prepare herself as much as possible for the obstacles she might face when initiating change with teachers, focusing on how to sell it to teachers. She also considers how to make the changes needed not feel overwhelming:

When trying to create any sort of change, I do my own forethought about what obstacles I might come across to begin with and how I am going to go about that. I try to think about everybody's personalities. How am I going to reach everyone? I just make sure that they feel supported and that they're not just being told this is what you have to do. I think that a lot of teachers feel that we're constantly being told this is what you have to do. But nobody is telling you what else you can take off your plate or how to make that actually work. And so for me, it was just mainly how do I support other teachers to realize that we can make it more feasible. I focused on making it to where it's not more work, we just have to change a little bit of it. So, it was a nice, steady change and an easier change as opposed to changing everybody all at one.

Mitchell reminisced on his experiences of working through change with teachers, explaining that adults need to have a clear understanding of why the change is necessary:

Adults, just like everyone, but really adults in the teaching profession have very, very strong opinions. Most educators truly care about their profession and their craft. I don't want to say that they're unwilling to learn new methodologies, but they need much more than 'you should do this because it's good for the students' or 'it's good for the grade level.' I mean, they need some actual evidence based on why they should change their philosophy, whatever that might be. I think a major component of

that is ensuring that they can understand not only how to change, but also the why. Why should I change the way I am doing things? I think that's really important.

Alan described his experiences with adults who were facing change and noticed that teachers tend to fall into certain categories, and he has had to learn which battles to fight:

There's a certain percentage who are there and they're going to be paying attention and are going to be involved. There's a certain percentage who are, you know, really happy just to look at their phones the whole time. And then there's a certain percentage who just love disrupting and derailing. But when it's with your peers, especially peers who have been teaching as long or even longer than you, it's like such a high wire. I don't want to back down on something, but I've learned that there are those times you have to pick your battles. And then there are the times where you say, well everybody else has agreed and we're going to do this.

Laurie explained the importance of influence when creating change among her colleagues:

When you're a young teacher and you're starting out, it's survival mode to stay ahead of the kids. And then I think when you transition into adults, it's definitely a different ballgame to try to influence them and try to get them to see something a different way. It's a slow process to get everybody on board. And there's a lot of naysayers… It's about trying to influence adults in the building to make the changes that are currently happening in education. It's about presenting the evidence to them. Some people are like, 'Tell me the facts. Give me all the data. Give me the numbers. Show me that it works for kids. I need hard data. I need evidence.' So, it's influencing them to see that it's a good idea, it's what's best for kids. Kind of taking what's latest in education and then trying to influence them to make those changes in their classroom

or in their daily practice. Then having an honest conversation with them about why

they don't want to change.

Laurie further explained that, while she can empathize with some teachers struggling with

change, there are some that don't have the best of intentions. "Unfortunately, I think our

profession is one that is littered with people who maybe don't have the best intentions, and

it's really hard then to get them to change." Laurie also noted that there are times when

nothing a teacher leader does will convince a teacher to change and you must involve an

administrator:

> You always have those people who probably aren't going to change no matter what
>
> you do. You do have to pull in an administrator or somebody else to come in and
>
> have that hard conversation. Here's where we're going. You're either with us or
>
> you're not. And sometimes it helps and sometimes it doesn't.

> ***Resistance***. While discussing their strategies for influencing change, the participants

explained that the greatest challenge they have faced was the resistance of teachers they lead.

Mitchell stated, "I would say one of the major obstacles are the outliers or the people who

don't necessarily share the consensus of the group, then getting those people to get on

board." Robert shared similar sentiments as Mitchell, explaining that, while they might not

be vocally resistant, they lack follow through. Donna explained that she has personally

struggled with change, so she can empathize with the resistant teachers who feel as though

they are giving up control. "I always felt there's an old mindset that people don't like to be

told what to do. That was a big thing for me. I am kind of a control freak."

Alan expressed his frustration regarding resistance of others, stating that there are

larger implications on the culture of the school when people are resistant to change:

Resistance, I mean, it's the biggest obstacle. And I think that's also where my

frustration came through with the idea of resistance. Where you go, wow, we're on a

school bus together and you're just like sitting there with your arms crossed.

Everybody in the school builds the climate and a sense of community. So, resistance

has just been the biggest barrier.

Some of the participants expressed that some of the largest resistors in the school are

the veteran teachers. However, the participants shared that the veteran teachers may be

resistant for different reasons. Samantha explained that, "experienced teachers definitely get

set in their ways and need to be coaxed a little more." Annie acknowledged that, "veteran

teachers have kind of seen the pendulum swing and think how long are we going to do this

until it swings back?" Laurie stated:

You have teachers who are veteran teachers who feel like 'I only have a year left. I'm

not doing it. Nope. I've been in this district long enough. I know that things are

cyclic. They never follow through on stuff. It'll be something new next year.' Some

of those teachers who dig their heels in, and they don't want to move forward like

what they're doing in their classroom. They can be the toughest. But I think having

the conversation and maybe inviting them to see it in action, to have a conversation

with somebody who's actually doing it. A lot of times they're just scared of what they

don't know, and they don't know how it's going to look in their classroom. Adults

just come with a little bit more negativity and baggage sometimes, and they take a

little bit longer to chisel away at.

The following sections outline the composite textural and structural descriptions created for

the participants' responses, followed by the textural-structural synthesis

Composite Textural Description

The composite textural description focused on a group description of the phenomenon of the challenges of teacher leaders when working with adults. Using the themes discussed above, the data revealed the group descriptions of the challenges that teacher leaders face when working with adults. Recurring themes included a lack of preparation for a leadership role, a lack of clarity in the role, being treated differently by colleagues, the importance of establishing trust among colleagues, a lack of evaluative feedback from administrators, frustrations regarding authentic decision making, and obstacles faced when initiating change.

Composite Structural Description

The researcher applied the process of imaginative variation to construct a composite structural description by integrating all the individual participant's descriptions into one comprehensive, universal structural description of the challenges that teacher leaders face when working with adults. Through the data analysis process, the researcher identified that participants felt as though they were thrown into the deep end once they accepted the position of teacher leader. Participants also felt there was a lack of direction with the role and reported feelings of isolation or that they were a glorified complaint box. Participants shared the importance of how they communicate with teachers and their frustrations about the lack of guidance from administrators. There was also discussion regarding the lack of authentic decision-making opportunities at the district level. Finally, the participants discussed at length the frustrations they share when teachers are reluctant to change.

Textural-Structural Synthesis

Stepping into a teacher leadership role requires teachers to straddle the line between colleague and supervisor. The participants accepted a leadership position because they strived to improve the education of their students. However, the participants were not well-

prepared for the role, feeling like they were thrown into the deep end and wished the best of luck. This also led to a lack of clarity and direction, which created feelings of isolation or that they were used solely for teachers to complain to.

Since there was a lack of clarity and direction for teacher leaders, it makes sense that there was also a lack of evaluative feedback from administrators regarding the teacher leadership role. The participants had to navigate how to communicate with teachers on their own, often leaning on their personal experiences with students and attempting to translate that to adults. Frustrations then occurred when the participants felt that they were not involved in district-wide, authentic decision-making opportunities. This especially became true when there was a change initiative, and the teacher leaders took on an active role with their colleagues. The participants were tasked with dealing with reluctance from teachers and worked to influence their colleagues in changing their practices for the benefit of the students. Overall, the participants' experiences centered around the challenges of navigating the aspects of leadership, such as communication and initiating change, while also ensuring they were not taking on any evaluative roles.

Summary

This chapter reports the findings of this research project illustrating the challenges that eight teacher leaders faced when working with adults in comparison to working with students. The findings suggest that teacher leaders experienced challenges through a lack of preparation, a lack of clarity in the teacher leader role, negative treatment from teachers, navigating how to lead adults, a lack of feedback from administrators, navigating authentic decision-making opportunities, and obstacles faced when initiating change.

In the final chapter, the researcher will present a personal analysis of the findings from the study in relation to prior research on teacher leadership, specifically through the

lens of adult learning theory. Limitations of the study, implications for theory, and future

research will also be discussed.

CHAPTER 5.   DISCUSSION

Introduction

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to examine how teacher leaders perceive the challenges of working with adults in comparison to teaching students. The phenomenological approach was used as it focused on describing what challenges teacher leaders have in common. A case study was considered but ultimately abandoned as the study was not bounded by parameters like location or time (Creswell & Poth, 2018). A quantitative approach was also considered, however, the need for a detailed understanding about the lived experiences of the participants required a qualitative approach.

The study focused on eight teacher leaders who spend at least 80% of their time in the classroom and take on additional leadership roles, such as PLC leader, grade level lead teacher, department chair, mentor, or school improvement committee member. In a phenomenological study, the participants must be a group of individuals who have all experienced the phenomenon; therefore, a sample size of eight participants was used as it provided an adequate depth of information to answer the research question meaningfully. This study is centered on the research question:

- How do teacher leaders perceive the challenges of working with adults in comparison to teaching students?

The rationale for this research question lied in the fact that teacher leaders often lack training and professional development for teacher leaders, resulting in teacher leaders relying on who they are or what they have experienced (Wilson, 2015). However, most teachers' experiences are in working with children and students, not with adults. In order to answer the research

question, the eight participants were interviewed by the researcher using a semi-structured, one-on-one interview protocol.

In this chapter, there is a brief summary of the findings with discussions related to each theme. Current literature is interspersed throughout the chapter and provides a clearer understanding of the themes within the discussion. The theoretical framework is revisited with discussions related to the theories and findings. The researcher then examines limitations of the study, as well as implications of the study. Lastly, the researcher provides recommendations for future research before concluding the chapter.

Summary of Results

Teacher leadership is a common topic found in educational research, approaching half a century of existence (Lumpkin et al., 2014). Historically, there have been three waves of teacher leadership (Silva et al., 2000), with the first wave focusing on maintaining an effective and efficient educational system instead of instructional leadership. Teacher leadership roles were operational (Harris, 2003; Wilhelm, 2013), with teachers being appointed to the leadership role to take on extra duties outside of the classroom teaching load (Bassett et al., 2014). The second wave of teacher leadership capitalized on teachers' instructional knowledge and pedagogical expertise (Silva et al., 2000). However, work was often done outside of the classroom or school building, leading to the "remote controlling of teachers" (Darling-Hammond, 1998; Shulman, 1987). Changes to "reculture" schools is the focus of the third wave, with teacher leaders empowering their colleagues to improve professional practices (Lumpkin et al., 2014; Wasley, 1991). The third wave also emphasizes shared leadership teams, such as PLCs, to foster adult learning and create ownership for improving all student outcomes (Wilhelm, 2013). While there is an abundance of literature

on the general topic of teacher leadership, limited literature can be found regarding teacher leadership and adult learning theory.

A notable theme in the literature on teacher leadership is the numerous variations in its definition. Some examples include contributing to a community of teacher learners and leaders and influencing others toward improved educational practices (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009), empowerment and distributed leadership (Harris, 2003), increasing teacher agency by breaking down barriers and establishing relationships outside of a formal hierarchy (York-Barr & Duke, 2004), and hybrid teaching with schedules involving teaching both students and teachers (Margolis, 2012). This study utilizes Wenner and Campbell's (2017) definition of teacher leadership: "teachers who maintain K-12 classroom-based teaching responsibilities, while also taking on leadership responsibilities outside of the classroom (p. 140). Additionally, this study used Bagley and Margolis' (2018) ratio of 80% of duties in the classroom setting and 20% of duties outside of the classroom.

While there is plenty of literature on the general topic of teacher leadership, limited literature can be found regarding teacher leadership and adult learning theory. Most of the research found in the literature focuses on Domains 4 and 5 of the Teacher Leader Model Standards (Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium, 2008), shown in Table 4. These domains focus on instruction, assessments, and the use of data to drive instruction. At the time of research, little literature could be found on Domains 1 and 3, which focuses on fostering a collaborative culture to support development of teachers and promoting professional learning for continuous improvement (Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium, 2008). The knowledge and application of adult learning theory is imperative if teacher leaders are going to find success in Domains 1 and 3 of the TLMS.

Table 4

Seven Domains of the Teacher Leader Model Standards

Domain 1	Fostering a Collaborative Culture to Support Educator Development and Student Learning
Domain 2	Accessing and Using Research to Improve Practice and Student Learning
Domain 3	Promoting Professional Learning for Continuous Improvement
Domain 4	Facilitating Improvements in Instruction and Student Learning
Domain 5	Promoting the Use of Assessments and Data for School and District Improvement
Domain 6	Improving Outreach and Collaboration with Families and Community
Domain 7	Advocating for Student Learning and the Profession

Note. Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium, 2008

   This study is significant due to its direct application for K-12 school systems. A 2013 MetLife survey showed that 84% of teachers were "not very" or "not at all" interested in becoming a principal, but 25% showed interest in a combined teaching role with some leadership responsibilities. While the role of administrator and teacher leader differs dramatically, principals can no longer be the sole leader in the building (Hall & Clapper, 2016) due to the increasing complexity of the administrator position (Angelle, 2007; Pellicer & Anderson, 1995). Most teachers that are interested in taking on leadership duties are motivated a sense of educational duty and an intrinsic drive to do what is right (Margolis & Deuel, 2009), professional growth opportunities to improve satisfaction and better serve students (Margolis & Deuel, 2009; York-Barr & Duke, 2004), and monetary compensation showing that their time is being valued (Margolis & Deuel, 2009).

   The data gathered from the participants in this study can be used by school administrators, school board members, and higher education institutions, as it shows the

perspectives and needs of teacher leaders. Ideally, the data gathered from this study will

foster discussions on how to better prepare and support teacher leaders in order to improve

job satisfaction and retention rates, which is an area of concern for many western North

Dakota school districts (Hall & Clapper, 2016). It may also aide administrators to think

critically on how to recruit and choose the best teachers for teacher leader roles (Coquyt &

Creasman, 2017), rather than relying on the "anoint or appoint" model (Berry, 2014) or

tenure of teachers (Harris & Kemp-Graham, 2017).

This study utilized a phenomenological approach with semi-structured interviews for

the method of data collection. Interviews were transcribed verbatim and sent to participants

for member checking to ensure validity. This was followed by the researcher utilizing

Moustakas' (1994) transcendental phenomenological data analysis procedure, which

involved phenomenological reduction, horizontalizing, imaginative variation, and textural-

structural synthesis. This process revealed themes of (a) lack of education, training, or

preparation, (b) lack of clarity in the role, (c) negative treatment from other teachers, (d)

navigating how to lead adults, (e) lack of feedback from administrators, (f) navigating

authentic decision-making opportunities, and (g) obstacles initiating change.

<div align="center">

Discussion of the Results

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This study is centered on the research question:

- How do teacher leaders perceive the challenges of working with adults in

  comparison to teaching students?

Early in the interview process, the researcher uncovered behaviors and attitudes towards

teacher leadership that were anticipated. One example would be the need to establish trust

between the teacher leader and the teachers they work with. All participants discussed how a

trusting relationship was crucial to finding success as a teacher leader. This mirrors previous

literature, especially in regard to how trust impacts school culture. Crowther et al., (2009) state that principals who step back to allow teacher leaders to step forward encourages their work and creates opportunities to further develop the leadership capabilities of teacher leaders. This trust is imperative as it allows teacher leaders to step out of the "my hands are tied" culture that was commonly felt during the No Child Left Behind era (Kajitani, 2015). Trust is built when administrators give teacher leaders an opportunity to voice their opinions and be involved in the decision-making process (Angelle & DeHart, 2011), which ultimately leads to better decisions being made for the improvement of schools (Ruff, 2003), the creation of professional learning environments (Jackson et al., 2010), and an enhancement of teacher leadership throughout the school (Angelle & DeHart, 2011).

Another example would be the importance of using communication skills, specifically active listening skills. These skills allow teacher leaders to have difficult yet important conversations to promote growth among the teachers and to improve teaching practices to positively impact students. While this does not refute research, the focus in previous research tends to highlight skills like decision-making, identifying needs of others, leading discussions, and managing conflict. Many of these skills require effective communication skills, but communication skills were rarely overtly mentioned.

While some of the answers were anticipated based on previous studies and literature, which was discussed in Chapter 2, there were also many perceptions of teacher leaders that were unanticipated. One example of this would be the complete absence of the Teacher Leader Model Standards. None of the participants mentioned the TLMS, leading one to believe that the teacher leaders were either unaware of their existence or that there was no emphasis placed on their importance. This is a difficult idea to fathom, as the TLMS give

such specific guidance to the role of teacher leader, even though individual schools may have different needs and expectations for their teacher leaders.

Another unanticipated perception of teacher leaders was some of the participants' reluctance to accept a teacher leadership role. While previous literature discussed this topic, participants in this study discussed that the reasoning for the reluctance was because they were not on an administration track for their career goals, which was not discussed in the previous literature. Many of the participants seemed to combine the roles of administrators with the role of teacher leaders or treated them as though they are one in the same. In reality, the role of a teacher leader could not be more different from the role of an administrator. The participants eluded to hard work with leadership skills; however, hard work does not always translate to the leadership skills needed for administration.

Finally, the participants relied heavily on seeking their own research and resources to prepare themselves for a teacher leadership role. While many in leadership roles tend to do this, it was shocking that none of the participants mentioned reaching out to their administrators for suggestions on professional development. It makes one question how much administrators actually know about teacher leadership. In addition, none of the participants mentioned searching for or using any research regarding how adults learn or how to lead adults. It seems ironic that teachers, who are often so good at finding ways to teach children, did not consider research-based practices on how to facilitate adults and relied more on experience. Therefore, this research validated the need for education or professional development on adult learning for teachers moving into a leadership role.

Conclusions Based on the Results

Upon analysis of the results, one must reflect upon the results from previous literature to draw conclusions and determine how the results of the study fit into the wider field of

teacher leadership. There are several conclusions that can be drawn from this study regarding the challenges teacher leaders face. First, the findings will be compared to the theoretical framework and previous literature. Then, the findings will be interpreted, and the researcher will give plausible explanations for why the study yielded these findings.

Comparisons of the Findings with the Framework and Previous Literature

When comparing with previous literature, the findings of this study agree based on a number of conclusions. First, active listening, authentic decision-making, life experiences, and intrinsic motivation will be discussed, including how Knowles' andragogical model aligns with the results. Next, the role of the administrator will be discussed, specifically looking at the administrator's vision for teacher leadership and how the role of teacher leadership differs from administrative roles. Finally, the need for professional development, evaluative feedback, and the challenges and barriers that teacher leaders faced will be discussed.

Knowles' Andragogical Model. Historically, the pedagogical model, or the art and science of teaching children, has been the only educational model used in schools (Knowles et al., 2005). One would argue that this is still the case today. In the pedagogical model, the teacher is responsible for all decision making about what is learned, how it is learned, when it is learned, and if it has been learned, leaving the learner in a submissive role. While this model is successful when teaching children, it is often problematic when teaching adults. Because of the natural maturity of adults, the need for dependency is decreased, creating a gap between the need and the ability to be self-directing. This gap often creates tension, resistance, resentment, and rebellion in adult learners (Knowles et al., 2005). Knowles andragogical model is based on the six assumptions listed in Table 5.

Table 5

Six Assumption of Knowles' Andragogical Model

The Learners' Need to Know	Adult learners need to know why they need to learn something before beginning to learn.
Self-Concept of the Learner	Adult learners want to be responsible for their own decisions.
Prior Experience of the Learner	Adults bring a greater volume and a different quality of life experiences to educational activities in comparison to children.
Readiness to Learn	Adult learns become ready to learn, especially if they are things to know or do to effectively cope with real-life situations.
Orientation to Learning	Adults are life-centered and more motivated to learn if it will positively impact their life.
Motivation to Learn	Adult motivation is primarily intrinsic.

Note. (Knowles et al., 2005)

The themes that emerged from the data, including listening, having a voice, independence, decision-making, life experiences, and intrinsic motivation, relate to these six assumptions.

 Listening. The participants in this study repeatedly mentioned the importance of being an active listener and giving teachers time and space to be heard. "It's important to give people the space and time to share their ideas or their frustrations to get it out… It's trying to create that environment where you can be vulnerable, and you have trust." These findings align with the assumption of the learners' need to know (Knowles et al., 2005). Satisfying an adult learner's need to know is often achieved through mutual planning. Studies conducted by Hicks and Klimoski (1987, as cited in Knowles et al., 2005) and Baldwin, Magjuka, and Loher (1991, as cited in Knowles et al., 2005) found that students with a high degree of choice in what learning occurred and how their learning was conducted were more motivated to learn and learned more from trainings. Additionally, Clark, Dobbins, and Ladd (1993, as cited in Knowles et al., 2005) found that employees who had the chance to provide

input into training decisions were more motivated to learn. While the data in this study does

not explicitly mention teacher choice in learning, participants often spoke on adults needing a

clear understanding of learning:

> I don't want to say that they're unwilling to learn new methodologies, but they need
>
> much more than 'you should do this because it's good for the students' or 'it's good
>
> for the grade level.' I mean, they need some actual evidence based on why they
>
> should change their philosophy, whatever that might be. I think a major component of
>
> that is ensuring that they can understand not only how to change, but also the why.

This study's results on the importance of listening, as well as other communication skills,

agree with what has been stated previously in literature. "All leaders must be effective

communicators, which requires that the leader is also a good listener" (Coquyt, 2019, p. 27).

Coquyt and Creasman (2017) also state that, for teacher leaders to effectively coach, mentor,

and lead, they must be accessible to others and available to listen, gather input, and provide

feedback that is meaningful. Lambert (2002) explains that in order to sustain teacher

leadership, critical conversations must be had, which require a level of respectful listening.

   Decision Making. A common difference between the teaching of children and the

teaching of adults is that adults want to engage in self-directed learning. Adults want to be

responsible for their own learning and have a role in decision-making processes. Knowles et

al. (2005) referred to Kolb's experiential learning model (1984), as it has, "the dual benefit of

appealing to the adult learner's experience base as well as increasing the likelihood of

performance change after training" (p. 199). The assumption of self-directed learning was a

common theme among the participants. Participants voiced that they were able to engage in a

significant amount of self-directed learning and authentic decision making at the grade- or

school-level, especially regarding decisions on content, curriculum, data, the health and culture of the school, and in general problem solving areas. However, many participants explained that there was little to no decision making at the district level. While participants noted that they may get to share information or input, it often does not impact district wide decisions. "As far as district-wide decisions, I would say I have very little impact or authentic decisions or choices that affected us as an entire district," which can prevent adult learners from feeling responsible for their own learning. The need for teacher leaders to make authentic decisions aligns with previous research. A study by Ruff (2003) suggests that involving teachers in the decision-making processes establishes trust, and "teacher leadership can only be successful with the support of school leadership" (Angelle & DeHart, 2011, p. 145).

   Life Experiences. Due to a lack of knowledge and training in andragogy, which will be discussed at length further in this chapter, the participants relied on their personal experiences. This mirrors Knowles' assumption on the prior experiences of the adult learner that drives their orientation to learning. Adults' experiences have a critical impact on the learning process. Experience can assist in learning new knowledge if it is presented in a way that can be related to existing knowledge; however, prior experience can also be a barrier to new learning if it challenges one's way of thinking (Knowles et al., 2005).

   This assertion was confirmed by the participants, with one stating, "I think that experience has helped me the most because I haven't had leadership from admin… it's been from my own and applying my own experiences." Other participants relied on observing how others facilitated adults and tried to apply similar techniques. While the participants facilitated adult learning based off of their own experiences, they also ran into barriers

because of their colleagues past experiences, especially when it was regarding change. "Veteran teachers have kind of seen the pendulum swing and think how long are we going to do this until it swings back?" This was reflected in previous literature. Wilson (2015) explained that teacher leaders often must rely on who they are or their experience because of the lack of training received.

  Intrinsic Motivation. Finally, adults' primary source of motivation is intrinsic. Adults are often more motivated in learning if it helps them solve problems in their lives or results in an internal payoff. Wlodowski (1985) suggests four factors that motivate adult learning: success, volition, value, and enjoyment (as cited in Knowles et al., 2005). These factors are the most potent motivators for adults. "The learning that adults value the most will be that which has personal value to them" (Knowles et al., 2005, p. 200).

  Intrinsic motivation was seen through the participants' descriptions of doing their personal research on leadership and in working through change with their colleagues. Regarding personal research, one participant stated he did his own, "individualized things that I researched and I completed to try and see the best way to lead a group of my peers rather than my students." Other participants went to conferences, did book studies, or scrolled through Twitter to better prepare themselves to lead adults. When working with other teachers, the participants used the assumption of intrinsic motivation. One participant stated:

> I think that a lot of teachers feel that we're constantly being told this is what you have to do, but nobody is telling you what else you can take off your plate or how to make that actually work. And so, for me, it was just mainly how do I support other teachers to realize that we can make it more feasible?

Intrinsic motivation also played a role in the participants accepting a teacher leader role. While there was reluctance from some of the participants to take on a teacher leadership role, they ultimately accepted after analyzing the benefits. For some, the intrinsic motivation was that they get to make decisions that impact the students and school. For others, it was because of aspirations to step into an administrative role. Finally, some took on the role to improve their resume and open up options for any potential career moves.

The responses from the participants support what can be found in previous literature. Margolis and Deuel (2009) explained that some teachers accept leadership roles because of a larger sense of educational duty, while others were intrinsically driven by their belief of what is right. Professional growth opportunities were another reason cited in prior studies as a reason teachers took on leadership duties. These opportunities improved teaching, created more satisfaction, and better served students (Margolis & Deuel, 2009; York-Barr & Duke, 2004). Teacher leaders also realized that they would have a wider sphere of influence to impact policies and network with people from other educational service districts (Margolis & Deuel, 2009). One aspect mentioned in previous studies that were not mentioned by participants in this study were extrinsic motivations, specifically monetary compensation. While it was identified as a secondary motivator, being compensated for being a teacher leader was shown to be motivating for teacher leaders, as it showed that their time was being valued (Margolis & Deuel, 2009).

Role of Administration. The role of the administrators and the relationship between administrators and teacher leaders was woven into many of the themes that emerged from the data. This section will look specifically at the role of administrators having, or lacking, a

vision, followed by analyzing the differences between a teacher leader's role and an administrator's role.

       Vision. First, it is clear from prior research that administrators need to have a vision for what teacher leadership looks like in their schools. The literature was distinct that there is no single definition of teacher leadership (Angelle & DeHart, 2011; Kajitani, 2015). Since there is such broad array of what teacher leadership can look like in any given school, it is imperative that administrators share their vision of teacher leadership with those in a leadership role. Coquyt and Creasman (2017) share that, "the school administrator clearly communicates the purpose of teacher leadership and the role the teacher leader will play in leading the school" (p. 3). Unfortunately, the participants shared frustrations about the lack of vision and direction. "It was just kind of like you're thrown in. Here's your title. Good luck." The lack of vision can be supported by Coquyt (2019), who discussed that a lack of vision from the administration added to the frustration of teacher leaders. Without a clear vision, teacher leaders will feel like a deer in the headlights, as some of the participants explained, "It's like getting thrown in the deep end."

       Teacher leader versus administrator. Another conclusion evident from this research that agrees with previous literature is how the role of teacher leader differs from the role of principal or administrator (Angelle, 2007; Creasman & Coquyt, 2016; Hall & Clapper, 2016). School leadership is built by two groups: education leaders, such as principals and administrators, and teacher leaders, such as department chairs or lead teachers. While it takes both groups to working together for effective school leadership, the roles are drastically different. Creasman and Coquyt (2016) explain that educational leaders obtain their power and authority through their titles, and they empower teacher leaders to lead and inspire

others. Teacher leaders obtain their power, authority, and respect through their empowerment of others. While schools need both educational leaders and teacher leaders to be effective, their roles should be clearly delineated.

Unfortunately, the roles are often confused. Coquyt (2019) states: "Why is it that the only transition that is contemplated by most teachers, at least in my experience, is that from classroom teacher to administrator?" (p. 18). This was certainly the mindset of the participants when asked about their role. While one participant was clear about aspiring to be an administrator one day, most of the participants wanted nothing to do with administration, causing hesitancy prior to taking on the teacher leadership role. Some seemed to believe that taking on a teacher leadership role communicated that they were interested in a future in administration. One participant stated, "I was really reluctant because I know that's just not my thing. I am not, like, admin track," with another participant explaining, "I don't necessarily intend to become a leader in the sense of like principal or superintendent." The participants are in good company, as evidenced by the 2013 MetLife survey that resulted in 84% of teachers being "not very" or "not at all" interested in becoming an administrator.

Need for Professional Development. Another conclusion from this research that agrees with prior literature is that there is a lack of professional development opportunities for teachers in the area of teacher leadership. In addition, teacher leaders receive little to no feedback on their performance as a teacher leader. The lack of preparation has caused teacher leaders to face challenges and barriers.

Professional development and feedback. Previous literature describes the concerns regarding a lack of training and professional development for teacher leaders. Research by Coquyt (2019) showed that teacher leaders were given no formal training on adult leadership

and adult learning theory after accepting a teacher leader position. Wilson (2015) explained that the lack of leadership instruction causes teacher leaders to struggle to come to terms with their new role. The data collected from the participants regarding training or professional development confirmed the previous literature. While the teacher leaders had received plenty of professional development in the area of instructional strategies and teaching practices, few had any professional development in the areas of leadership or adult learning theory. The participants that had received any training had to search for it on their own and was not provided by the school district. The participants that had or are currently working towards a master's degree did explain that their graduate courses were the most beneficial training they received, but "prior to my master's courses, I don't really think that I was [prepared]. As far as… my undergraduate education program, it didn't really exist." Wilson (2015) explained that, because of the lack of training and professional development, teacher leaders resort to relying on who they are or what they have experienced. Therefore, it is imperative for teacher leaders to be presented with rich and diverse opportunities for professional development (Harris, 2003).

In addition to a lack of professional development, the participants expressed a lack of feedback from their administrator. Although there were words of encouragement and general support, there were no participants who had any sort of evaluative, individual feedback regarding their teacher leader duties. "As far as more individual guidance regarding actual leadership and what [the principal] determined a teacher leader would look like, there wasn't really a lot of constructive feedback." A case study by Coquyt (2019) mirrored these results, with a need for affirmation being a recurring theme. Teacher leaders wanted to hear from their administration whether or not they were doing a good job.

Challenges and barriers. There are numerous barriers, practical, intellectual, and emotional, that teacher leaders face (Wilson, 2015). The lack of training and professional development discussed previously is a significant barrier to teacher leadership. Other examples include a lack of time in school schedules, preventing adequate time for lesson design, action research, or assessment development (Angelle, 2007; Angelle & DeHart, 2011; Berry, 2014; Margolis & Deuel, 2009). Teacher leadership has also been rejected due to the "complexities of viewing teachers as leaders within a hierarchical school system where leadership responsibilities are very clearly delineated" (Harris, 2003, p. 314). The results from this study mirror those from previous studies, as the participants stated that colleagues were under the impression they had additional power or influence. "I get treated like a procedural runaround… like I have proximity to power, and I don't feel like I do."

Teacher leaders have also felt conflicted about their new position regarding how it would impact their relationship with their colleagues, where they are, "thrown into this limbo-land where you're not a teacher, you're not one of us, but you're not an administrator either" (Coquyt, 2019, p. 22). Results from this study align with this, as the participants described having feelings of isolation from other teachers due to their leadership role. Some participants were referred to as a brown-noser, kiss-up, or admin's pet, while others would walk into a room of teachers and the conversations would end suddenly.

Summary of Conclusions. There are several conclusions that have been drawn from this study regarding the challenges teacher leaders face. The findings have been compared to the theoretical framework, Knowles' andragogical model, and previous literature. Listening, decision-making, life experiences, and intrinsic motivation are some of the findings that support previous literature. In addition, the role of the administrator regarding a vision for

teacher leadership and how the role of a teacher leader differs from that of an administrator were examined and found to align with previous studies. Finally, the need for professional development, feedback, and the challenges teacher leaders face were all in agreement with what had been discovered in previous research. In the next section, the findings will be interpreted, and the researcher will give plausible explanations for why the study yielded these findings.

Interpretation of the Findings

After reflecting upon the conclusions based on the results, there are many interpretations of the findings that must be further discussed. First, the absence of adult learning theory will be addressed. Subsequently, the importance of administrators sharing their vision for teacher leadership and providing evaluative feedback using a metric will be discussed.

When reflecting upon the conclusions, specifically listening, authentic decision-making, life experience, and motivation, one can easily make connections to Knowles' Adult Learning Theory. While the conclusions align with findings from previous studies, it is alarming how few studies discuss the assumptions of adult learning. Even the studies that do discuss adult learning theory do so minimally. It is fascinating that so many studies elude to the principles of adult learning, yet it is never at the forefront of any study. When asked about preparedness for a teacher leader position, the participants in this study that had completed or were currently in a master's program had mentioned that their courses helped to prepare them for working with adults. While specific information was not gathered regarding the content of these classes, one could hypothesize that graduate courses provide some level of instruction on adult learning theory. Unfortunately, not all teacher leaders have the opportunity of taking graduate level courses, and one does not often see professional

development opportunities that are highly focused on adult learning. Also, no information

has been presented in prior research or in this study to show that undergraduate teacher

programs provide any courses or information on andragogy.

Another common theme from the findings in this study and from previous literature is

that there is not only a lack of training or professional development, but also a lack of

feedback from administrators regarding teachers' leadership roles. A possible explanation for

this lack of feedback is because of the administrator's lack of vision for teacher leadership.

Coquyt (2019) implored administrators to share their vision with every teacher in the school

prior to teacher leaders beginning their work. Additionally, administrators should work with

teacher leaders to develop a teacher leader plan, using the TLMS, so that both parties

understand the responsibilities, expectations, and duties of the teacher leader (Coquyt, 2019).

Unfortunately, this seems to be something that rarely happens. As one can hypothesize, this

lack of vision will hinder the full potential of teacher leaders.

Before administrators can provide feedback to teacher leaders, both teacher leaders

and administrators must know what they are being evaluated on and how they can grow as

leaders. The TLMS are a great tool for administrators to use to help foster growth in teacher

leaders. What was concerning from the findings is the lack of knowledge of their existence.

This possibly explains the lack of evaluative feedback. There is little mention in previous

literature about evaluative tool for teacher leaders, leading one to believe that most

administrators are not completing teacher leader evaluations because of a lack of knowledge

rather than simple laziness. Although the TLMS have been around for over a decade, there is

shockingly little references made to them in the previous literature on teacher leadership. In

addition, none of the participants referenced the TLMS, causing one to assume that the

participants did not know of their existence. With the increasing need of teacher leaders, one would think that the TLMS would be as well-known as the Marshall or Marzano evaluation tools used for classroom teaching. To further build off this conclusion, administrators and teacher leaders should focus on principles of adult learning, as it is a major component of Domains 1 and 3 of the TLMS (Appendix A). Without feedback from administrators to teacher leaders on the TLMS, "the full potential of utilizing teacher leaders will not be realized" (Coquyt, 2019). For schools to see the full benefits of teacher leadership, there must be more than a title; training, mentoring, and feedback focused on the TLMS and adult learning theory assumptions must be provided to teacher leaders.

Limitations

The basic research design of semi-structured interviews yielded a variety of findings that led to important conclusions. However, the design could have been enhanced to allow for deeper analysis. First, the study was limited by the relatively small sample size of teacher leader participants. Second, the qualifications to be a participant in the study were limited. It would be interesting to see the results had all participants obtained a master's degree or if none of the participants had any graduate level experience. It would also be interesting to compare the answers of these two groups. Third, the participants in this study were at schools that differed dramatically in size. Given the varying roles of teacher leaders, the design of this study could have been enhanced by narrowing participants to schools of a similar size or structure. Finally, since the definition of teacher leader can differ depending on individual schools, the study design could have been improved to include only participants with teacher leader roles in a specific area, such as PLC leader or school improvement member.

Implications of the Study

This study functions as a qualitative research endeavor to address the challenges teacher leaders face and how school administrators can use this information to better support teacher leaders. First, the implications regarding theory will be discussed, followed by analysis on the implications for the knowledge base and a deepened understanding of teacher leadership. Finally, the practical implications for the field of leadership will be reviewed.

Theory

This study has added to the literature on teacher leadership by providing a deeper understanding of the phenomena of the challenges that teacher leaders face when leading and facilitating adults. Teacher leaders, regardless of their exact leadership duties or titles, face many challenges when working with adults. The challenges of working with adults can be segregated into two different categories. First, teacher leaders face challenges with leading and facilitating other teachers. This is especially true when trying to facilitate change in the school. The second category is based on the challenges teacher leaders face when working with administrators. Although teacher leaders may not necessarily be leading or facilitating administrators, they do face challenges when working with their administration, such as a lack of vision and feedback.

As stated previously, teachers often get a significant amount of training on pedagogy and how to teach children. While this is certainly of utmost importance, an argument can be made that training on andragogy is just as important, especially when one takes into consideration how dramatically the teaching profession as changed. Teaching is more collaborative than ever before; therefore, andragogy is in many ways just as important as pedagogy, and attention must be given to providing training on adult learning theory to teachers.

Deepened Understanding of Teacher Leadership

Through information gathered from this study and previous literature, it is clear that the role of teacher leader is quite unique. First, there are a variety of roles teacher leaders can take on, such as department chair, school improvement team member, PLC leader, or mentor, and many teacher leaders take on more than one of these roles. The skills needed to be successful in these roles may vary depending on school needs and the vision of the administrator.

As seen from the results, it is imperative that administrators provide expectations and responsibilities to their teacher leaders if they are to reap the benefits of teacher leadership. Unfortunately, the data shows this is not always taking place. The lack of expectations, in conjunction with a lack of training or professional development, leads to teacher leaders relying on their own experiences or looking for their own resources. However, the skills that often make great teachers do not always translate to having great leadership skills. While their self-driven motivation is inspiring, one has to ask how beneficial this is when the teacher leaders do not have a clear idea of what is expected of them. How many teacher leaders are looking for answers in the wrong places? Additionally, there seems to be a sense of guilt from teacher leaders who accept leadership roles when they have no desire to go into administration. Even though teacher leaders and administrators have drastically different roles, teacher leaders are still viewed by many as a pipeline into the administrative world. In reality, very few people who are interested in taking on leadership responsibilities have a desire to go into administration.

Ultimately, the data gathered from this study and results from previous studies lead one to believe that the overarching issues is that both administrators and teacher leaders don't know what they don't know. It is a vicious cycle of teacher leaders not knowing their job

duties and looking for feedback, but administrators are unable to give feedback because of a lack of a metric. Rather than teacher leaders and administrators playing a never-ending game of trial and error, both parties must become educated in the principles of adult learning theory and the TLMS.

Practical Implications

There are many ways this research may benefit or be used by professionals in the education field, including the K-12 education realm, higher education institutions, and fields outside of education. At the K-12 education level, it is imperative that superintendents, principals, and directors have a solid understanding of adult learning theory. These principles must be taught to teachers who are moving into a teacher leadership role. For example, the principles of adult learning theory could be embedded into onboarding sessions, or teacher leaders would have to have some sort of training or professional development in adult learning theory prior to accepting a teacher leadership role. By K-12 administrations providing education on adult learning theory, the capacity for leadership in the school has the potential to dramatically increase.

This research can also be used by higher education institutions to determine how principles of adult learning theory and teacher leadership can be implemented into both undergraduate and graduate programs. Some graduate programs offer courses in adult learning theory, but the courses are not always required, or the scope of the course is often narrow. It is recommended that the principles of adult learning theory are revisited in many courses throughout graduate programs so future leaders have a concrete understanding of how to use the andragogy principles. Higher education institutions should also highly consider embedding adult learning principles into undergraduate courses. With the teaching profession being more collaborative in each passing year, new teachers must understand how

adults learn and not focus solely on pedagogy. Adding courses on andragogy at the

undergraduate level would also give teachers a broader perspective on how learning changes

as humans grow and develop.

Finally, while there are obvious implications for the education field, the results from

this research can be used in other fields as well. The results from this study showing the need

for training in adult learning theory can be easily be applied in any field where adults are

tasks with leading or facilitating adults outside of an administrative position. The principles

of adult learning theory are not specific to education; therefore, administrators in any field

should have a firm knowledge of andragogy to see the maximum benefit for their

organization.

<div align="center">**Recommendations for Future Research**</div>

Further research is recommended on the topic of teacher leadership and how to

successfully teach and facilitate adult learners. Recommendations for future research will be

discussed based on the data, the methodological approach, and the delimitations of the study.

Recommendations from the Data

Based on the data from this study, further research is recommended in the areas of

adult learning theory and the TLMS. Specifically, further research on the topic of

administrators' knowledge of adult learning theory and TLMS should be addressed. Research

could also be done on the evaluation processes of teacher leaders. Additionally, research

specific to teachers' knowledge of adult learning principles and the TLMS should also be

considered to gain an understanding of how where teachers' knowledge lies regarding these

topics.

Recommendations from Methodological, Research Design, and Limitations

First, from a methodological perspective, research is needed on a larger scale. A more thorough study could include use of a much larger sample size, a deeper analysis into different sizes or demographics of schools, and greater attention paid to the educational experiences and degrees obtained by the participants. In this manner, findings could be analyzed in regard to specific variables often noted in educational literature. For example, further research could segregate specific teacher leadership roles, such as PLC leader versus mentor. Additionally, this study focused solely on teacher leaders who spent 80% of their day in the classroom setting, Further research could be done on teacher leaders who work outside of the classroom, such as instructional coaches.

Other methodological approaches could be used to provide additional information. For example, a quantitative or mixed method approached could be used to survey teacher leaders and administrators, which would allow for a greater sample size. Finally, further research on specific adult learning theory models is recommended. This study utilized Malcolm Knowles' (Knowles et al., 2005) adult learning theory of andragogy as the theoretical framework. There are, however, other theories of adult learning that may be considered for future research.

Recommendations from Delimitations

Based on the delimitations of this study, further research is recommended using a larger sample size, as there were only eight participants in this study. This study was delimited to public school teachers in North Dakota; therefore, further research should be considered with teachers in other areas of the United States.

Conclusion

This qualitative phenomenology investigated the challenges that North Dakota K-12 teacher leaders face when facilitating adults in comparison to teaching students. Through the use of semi-structured interviews, the study explored the perceptions of teacher leaders regarding challenges they face. In answering the research questions, the study found a variety of challenges that teacher leaders face, with the lack of administrator's vision, lack of training and professional development, lack of feedback, and reluctance of other teachers regarding change being the most significant barriers. The results from this study show a significant need for professional development and training in adult learning theory, for both administrators and teacher leaders.

As a current administrator who relies on the work of teacher leaders, the research has come to understand that she falls into the same category as many of the administrators in this study. She has not adequately articulated her vision for teacher leadership with the teachers in her school, and she has not provided evaluative feedback to her teacher leaders. When contemplating on her career, the researcher, who was a former teacher leader, remembers the lost feeling of having little to no direction from administrators and realizes that she is now part of that problem. When looking back at her educational history, the research realized that, prior to doing research for this dissertation, she had very few courses that emphasized adult learning theory. The work on this dissertation has caused the researcher to reflect on her own leadership practices and how they must be improved upon to see success in her school.

Upon reflection of this dissertation, the researcher has come to appreciate the importance of taking the time to develop teacher leaders. Administrators often get buried in paperwork and reports, but it is imperative to take the time to mentor anyone who works with adults in a leadership position to get the full benefits of teacher leadership. The TLMS and

assumptions of adult learning must receive more attention, as their use will be far-reaching

and long-lasting. By increasing the importance of growth in teacher leaders, through the use

of adult learning theory principles and the TLMS, school leaders will create learning

opportunities, which will in turn create a culture of learning for everyone in the school

building, both students and adults.

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APPENDIX A.   TEACHER LEADER MODEL STANDARDS

 (Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium, 2008).

Domain I

Fostering a Collaborative Culture to Support Educator Development and Student Learning

The teacher leader understands the principles of adult learning and knows how to develop a collaborative culture of collective responsibility in the school. The teacher leader uses this knowledge to promote an environment of collegiality, trust, and respect that focuses on continuous improvement in instruction and student learning.

Functions

The teacher leader:

a) Utilizes group processes to help colleagues work collaboratively to solve problems, make decisions, manage conflict, and promote meaningful change;

b) Models effective skills in listening, presenting ideas, leading discussions, clarifying, mediating, and identifying the needs of self and others in order to advance shared goals and professional learning;

c) Employs facilitation skills to create trust among colleagues, develop collective wisdom, build ownership and action that supports student learning;

d) Strives to create an inclusive culture where diverse perspectives are welcomed in addressing challenges; and

e) Uses knowledge and understanding of different backgrounds, ethnicities, cultures, and

f) languages to promote effective interactions among colleagues.

Domain II

Accessing and Using Research to Improve Practice and Student Learning

The teacher leader understands how research creates new knowledge, informs policies and practices and improves teaching and learning. The teacher leader models and facilitates the use of systematic inquiry as a critical component of teachers' ongoing learning and development.

<u>Functions</u>

The teacher leader:

a) Assists colleagues in accessing and using research in order to select appropriate strategies to improve student learning;

b) Facilitates the analysis of student learning data, collaborative interpretation of results, and application of findings to improve teaching and learning;

c) Supports colleagues in collaborating with the higher education institutions and other organizations engaged in researching critical educational issues; and

d) Teaches and supports colleagues to collect, analyze, and communicate data from their classrooms to improve teaching and learning.

Domain III

Promoting Professional Learning for Continuous Improvement

The teacher leader understands the evolving nature of teaching and learning, established and emerging technologies, and the school community. The teacher leader uses this knowledge to promote, design, and facilitate job-embedded professional learning aligned with school improvement goals.

Functions

The teacher leader:

a) Collaborates with colleagues and school administrators to plan professional learning that is team-based, job-embedded, sustained over time, aligned with content standards, and linked to school/district improvement goals;

b) Uses information about adult learning to respond to the diverse learning needs of colleagues by identifying, promoting, and facilitating varied and differentiated professional learning;

c) Facilitates professional learning among colleagues;

d) Identifies and uses appropriate technologies to promote collaborative and differentiated professional learning;

e) Works with colleagues to collect, analyze, and disseminate data related to the quality of professional learning and its effect on teaching and student learning;

f) Advocates for sufficient preparation, time, and support for colleagues to work in teams to engage in job-embedded professional learning;

g) Provides constructive feedback to colleagues to strengthen teaching practice and improve student learning; and

h) Uses information about emerging education, economic, and social trends in planning and

i) facilitating professional learning.

Domain IV

Facilitating Improvements in Instruction and Student Learning

The teacher leader demonstrates a deep understanding of the teaching and learning

processes and uses this knowledge to advance the professional skills of colleagues by being a

continuous learner and modeling reflective practice based on student results. The teacher

leader works collaboratively with colleagues to ensure instructional practices are aligned to a

shared vision, mission, and goals.

Functions

The teacher leader:

a) Facilitates the collection, analysis, and use of classroom- and school-based

data to identify opportunities to improve curriculum, instruction, assessment,

school organization, and school culture;

b) Engages in reflective dialog with colleagues based on observation of

instruction, student work, and assessment data and helps make connections to

research-based effective practices;

c) Supports colleagues' individual and collective reflection and professional

growth by serving in roles such as mentor, coach, and content facilitator;

d) Serves as a team leader to harness the skills, expertise, and knowledge of

colleagues to address curricular expectations and student learning needs;

e) Uses knowledge of existing and emerging technologies to guide colleagues in

helping students skillfully and appropriately navigate the universe of

knowledge available on the Internet, use social media to promote

collaborative learning, and connect with people and resources around the

globe; and

f) Promotes instructional strategies that address issues of diversity and equity in

the classroom and ensures that individual student learning needs remain the

central focus of instruction.

Domain V

Promoting the Use of Assessments and Data for School and District Improvement

The teacher leader is knowledgeable about current research on classroom- and school-based data and the design and selection of appropriate formative and summative assessment methods. The teacher leader shares this knowledge and collaborates with colleagues to use assessment and other data to make informed decisions that improve learning for all students and to inform school and district improvement strategies.

Functions

The teacher leader:

a) Increases the capacity of colleagues to identify and use multiple assessment tools aligned to state and local standards;

b) Collaborates with colleagues in the design, implementation, scoring, and interpretation of student data to improve educational practice and student learning;

c) Creates a climate of trust and critical reflection in order to engage colleagues in challenging conversations about student learning data that lead to solutions to identified issues; and

d) Works with colleagues to use assessment and data findings to promote changes in instructional practices or organizational structures to improve student learning.

Domain VI

Improving Outreach and Collaboration with Families and Community

The teacher leader understands that families, cultures, and communities have a significant impact on educational processes and student learning. The teacher leader works with colleagues to promote ongoing systematic collaboration with families, community members, business and community leaders, and other stakeholders to improve the educational system and expand opportunities for student learning.

Functions

The teacher leader:

a) Uses knowledge and understanding of the different backgrounds, ethnicities, cultures, and languages in the school community to promote effective interactions among colleagues, families, and the larger community;

b) Models and teaches effective communication and collaboration skills with families and other stakeholders focused on attaining equitable achievement for students of all backgrounds and circumstances;

c) Facilitates colleagues' self-examination of their own understandings of community culture and diversity and how they can develop culturally responsive strategies to enrich the educational experiences of students and achieve high levels of learning for all students;

d) Develops a shared understanding among colleagues of the diverse educational needs of families and the community; and

e) Collaborates with families, communities, and colleagues to develop comprehensive strategies to address the diverse educational needs of families and the community.

Domain VII

Advocating for Student Learning and the Profession

The teacher leader understands how educational policy is made at the local, state, and national level as well as the roles of school leaders, boards of education, legislators, and other stakeholders in formulating those policies. The teacher leader uses this knowledge to advocate for student needs and for practices that support effective teaching and increase student learning, and serves as an individual of influence and respect within the school, community, and profession.

Functions

The teacher leader:

a) Shares information with colleagues within and/or beyond the district regarding how local, state, and national trends and policies can impact classroom practices and expectations for student learning;

b) Works with colleagues to identify and use research to advocate for teaching and learning processes that meet the needs of all students;

c) Collaborates with colleagues to select appropriate opportunities to advocate for the rights and/or needs of students, to secure additional resources within the building or district that support student learning, and to communicate effectively with targeted audiences such as parents and community members;

d) Advocates for access to professional resources, including financial support and human and

e) other material resources, that allow colleagues to spend significant time learning about

f) effective practices and developing a professional learning community focused

on school

g) improvement goals; and

h) Represents and advocates for the profession in contexts outside of the

classroom.

APPENDIX B.   INFORMED CONSENT

Consent Form

Participation in Research

Title: Examining Teacher Leadership: The Perceived Challenges of Being a Teacher Leader
Purpose: Examining and analyzing how K-12 teacher leaders perceive the challenges of leading and facilitating adults through Knowles Andragogy Adult Learning Theory

Study Information: This study will determine the how K-12 teacher leaders perceive the challenges of leading and facilitating adults using andragogy rather than pedagogy. Data will be be collected through observations and interviews. Data collection may involve documents (documents regarding mentoring and PLC agendas and other documents created by teacher leaders), interviews (transcripts of interviews between participants), and observation and field notes made by the researcher. Individuals involved in the data collection will be the researcher and the participants.

Time: The participants will complete this study during a time convenient to them. This study will take place during the summer and fall of the 2020-2021 school year.

Risks: There are no known risks and/or discomforts associated with this study.

Benefits: The expected benefits associated with participation are the information about the experiences of teacher leaders and the opportunity to participate in a qualitative research study.

Confidentiality: Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will not be disclosed. We will do our best to keep your personal information confidential. To help protect your confidentiality: (1) storage of data and notes will be kept in a secured location accessible only to the researcher; (2) purging of all personally identifiable information from transcripts, and research reports submitted to us.

This research project may involve making digital audio recordings of your interview conversations. The digital audio recordings, accompanying notes, and transcriptions will be kept on a password protected computer. Information from this study will be kept until June 2021 when all information will be destroyed. If you decide to participate, you are free to discontinue or refuse the follow-up interview at any time.

Participation and Withdrawal: Participation in this study is optional. Teacher leaders can choose not to participate or choose to withdraw at any time without any negative effects on the relationship with the researcher, the relationship with the department, or relationship with Minnesota State University Moorhead.

Contact: If you have any questions about the study, you may contact any of these people:

Noelle Green	Michael Coquyt, Ed.D.
Co-Investigator	Principal Investigator
Phone: 218.731.1416	Associate Professor, School of Teaching and Learning
Email: noelle.green@go.mnstate.edu	Lommen 216C
	College of Education and Human Services
	Minnesota State University Moorhead
	Phone: 218.477.2019
	Email: Michael.coquyt@mnstate.edu

Any questions about your rights may be directed to Lisa Karch, Ph.D., Chair of the MSUM Institutional Review Board, at 218.477.2699 or by lisa.karch@mnstate.edu. You will be given a copy of this form to keep.

"I have been informed of the study details and understand what participating in the study means. I understand that my identity will be protected and that I can choose to stop participating in the study at any time. By signing this form, I am agreeing to participate in the study. I am at least 18 years of age or older."

_____

Name of Participant

_____   _____

Signature of Participant   Date

_____   _____

Signature of Investigator   Date

APPENDIX C.   INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Interview Protocol

Time of interview:
Date:
Place:
Interviewer: Noelle Green
Interviewee:
Position of interview:
Brief Description of Project:

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to understand the perception of K-12

teacher leaders regarding the challenges of leading and facilitating adults. The primary focus

will be on the experiences of the teacher leader in leading adults through the framework of

Knowles Andragogy Adult Learning Theory and how their experiences differ from

educational pedagogy used when working with students.

Interview Questions

1. Demographic Information
   a. Teaching Position & School/District:
   b. Leadership Position:
   c. Years Taught:
   d. Highest Degree Attained (specific):
   e. Years in a leadership position:
   f. Years in current district:
2. How would you define your role as a teacher leader? Please explain

3. Explain the process of coming into the role of a teacher leader? (Is this still the practice) (Did you accept the position reluctantly or excitedly)

4. What was your motivation to become a teacher leader? (Long term goals?)

5. How often do you get opportunities to make authentic decisions that affect or impact your grade level, school, or district? Please explain.

6. How have you been provided opportunities to learn and develop skills needed to be school leaders? Please explain.

7. How involved has your principal or administrator been in the process of developing you as a teacher leader? Please explain.

8. How often does your administrator discuss your performance as a teacher leader? Please explain.

9. How were you prepared to teach or facilitate adults compared to how you were prepared to each students/children? Please explain.

10. What are some of the most important things you have learned about teaching adults? Please explain.

11. What obstacles do you encounter when teaching adults, and how do you overcome them? Please explain.

12. Have you ever felt that you were treated differently by your co-workers/other teachers because you are in a teacher leadership role? Please explain.

13. How has your idea of teaching and learning changed over the course of your life, from being a new teacher working mostly with your students, to your teacher leadership roles, where you are now working with students and adults? Please explain.