Dissertations

Teacher Leadership: Developing the Ability of Teachers to Move Forward Independently—A Delphi Study of Selected Secondary Teachers in Riverside County, California

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Teacher Leadership: Developing the Ability of Teachers to Move Forward

Independently—A Delphi Study of Selected Secondary Teachers

in Riverside County, California

A Dissertation by

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

December 2014

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BRANDMAN UNIVERSITY

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Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

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December 6, 2014

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The successful completion of this dissertation would not have been possible without the support and encouragement of many people. I would like to thank each of them for the contribution that they made throughout this journey.

I want to dedicate this dissertation to my family and friends for their patience and understanding during the large spans of time when I was mentally or physically absent. Even though I struggled with a strong sense of guilt, knowing that your love is unconditional gave me the strength to complete my work.

I dedicate this dissertation to my husband, Ray, whose unconditional love has provided sustenance to my heart and soul, whose belief in me throughout this journey never wavered, and whose continued support allowed me to overcome all the challenges I met in pursuit of this degree. I could not have finished this program and dissertation without his sacrifices, continual encouragement, patience, and understanding. He is my anchor, my rock, and my forever love.

I also dedicate this dissertation to my parents, Caridad and Ramón Martínez, who sacrificed unselfishly so that my siblings and I could have a better life and whose love and encouragement gave me the inner strength to fulfill this lifelong dream.

Finally, I dedicate this dissertation to my children, Matt, David, Craig, and Rebecca. Their love has been one of the most important driving forces for all that I do. They are my pride and joy.

I truly believe that everything happens for a reason. I am forever thankful to Brandman University for allowing me to be a part of the inaugural class of the Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership program. This program, and its exceptional

faculty and staff, supported me in the lifelong dream of earning my doctorate. You are second to none.

I want to express my appreciation to my Riverside 2 cohort members: Amna Ahmad, Melissa Bazanos, Marian Gutterud, Lakesha Harris, Mallanie Harris, Venus Mixson, Sharon Nakama, Zhanna Preston, Gillian Schneider. We started our doctoral program together, struggled together, and grew together. I am honored to have learned alongside all of you. A special thank you to M4 for your love, support, and encouragement. Thank you for helping me stay in the moment while getting the work done. I could not have survived this program without you.

I feel privileged to have an exceptional dissertation committee who challenged me to do my best. With sincere gratitude, I would like to acknowledge my dissertation chair, Dr. Philip O. Pendley, who believed in me when I struggled to believe in myself. You provided calm reassurance when I needed it the most. Your influence is forever. I want to thank Dr. LaFaye Platter, who served as cohort mentor and as committee member, for graciously sharing your vast experience, your invaluable wisdom, and especially your precious time. You made a difference. I want to genuinely express my appreciation to Dr. Jonathan Greenberg, who provided encouragement and insight through kindness and meaningful feedback. Finally, I want to acknowledge and express my deepest appreciation to Dr. Tamerin Capellino, who helped me begin this journey with hope. You have inspired me through your contagious optimism, innovation, and love for teaching and learning.

Finally, I want to thank all of my Beaumont Unified School District colleagues for putting up with my frustrations and for celebrating in my successes. In particular, I

want to express my gratitude to my superintendent, Dr. Maureen Latham, for serving as a role model and for believing in me. You reminded me that it is never too late to dream. I also want to acknowledge and thank Dr. Christina (Christy) Goennier for supporting me through your honest feedback, through your acceptance, and through your reminders that sometimes you must simply have faith. Finally, I want to thank Antoinette Gutierrez for allowing me to use her as a sounding board and guinea pig for everything that I learned throughout my doctoral program. You were gracious in your acceptance of me and in return have earned my admiration and respect.

ABSTRACT

Teacher Leadership: Developing the Ability of Teachers to Move Forward

Independently—A Delphi Study of Selected Secondary Teachers

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The purpose of this study was to identify the key learning opportunities necessary to

build teacher leadership, the most difficult barriers to overcome, and the most important

facilitators as identified by teacher experts. This study also sought to determine the best

approaches to implementation of identified learning opportunities, the most effective

approaches for overcoming identified barriers, and the most effective approaches for

implementing facilitators that support teacher leaders. Consistent with a Delphi method,

the instruments used within this study collected perceptual data from an expert panel of

high school teachers from Riverside County, California, through an electronic format

within a 3-round process. The expert panel consisted of effective high school teacher

leaders selected by their principals based on the 6 most prominent characteristics of

effective teacher leaders. Findings showed that there are elements of professional

learning opportunities that must be addressed for professional learning to take place.

They include the opportunity for collaboration, practice, and practical application.

Teachers must also feel that they have a voice in addressing current issues/needs.

Findings from this study also indicate that it is essential to have an environment that

includes a supportive administration and supportive colleagues and that the provision of

time is essential for developing effective teacher leadership. According to the expert

panel, to implement professional learning opportunities that develop effective teacher

leadership, teachers must have the opportunity to collaborate, practice and apply newly

learned information or instructional strategies, and have a voice in addressing current

issues and site needs. Finally, developing effective teacher leadership is facilitated

through a supportive environment. To develop effective teacher leadership, schools and

districts must (a) restructure the school day to create time for teachers to interact,

(b) provide teachers with information on teacher leadership, (c) bridge the disconnect that

currently exists between what teachers and what administrators believe is needed,

(d) provide professional learning for teachers and administrators to continue the

development of a shared model of decision making, and (e) provide opportunities for

teachers to participate in peer observation and debriefing, self-reflection, practicing

teacher leadership skills, and mentoring and coaching colleagues.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

The U.S. education system can no longer afford to remain the same when the world is changing so quickly. Innovation in information technology has created a planet where countries, communities, organizations, and individuals can connect like never before. Societies are beginning to experience how globalization is creating a world of interdependency (Karakas, 2009). Student learning that focuses on relevancy and on essential skills to meet the demands of the 21st-century marketplace has become increasingly urgent. The needs of the future marketplace necessitate transforming schools, and teacher leadership is an essential component for meeting the current needs of students and the future needs of the global community.

While the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB, 2002), which reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965, resulted in high-stakes accountability measures for students, teachers, schools, and local educational agencies (LEAs), the demand for increasing levels of student achievement within the core academic areas continues (Michelman, 2012). A focus on 21st-century learning has evolved from a focus on subject-matter proficiency to Common Core State Standards (CCSS), application of learned skills, and college/career readiness for all students (Michelman, 2012).

Preparing students for this new workplace of the future means that educational institutions themselves will need to change. One of the identified areas of change that has emerged from the environment of high-stakes accountability and focus on continuous school improvement is school leadership (Barth, 2001a). Traditional models of leadership that are "hierarchical in nature, emphasizing social control" are shifting toward

a concept that emphasizes empowerment, collaboration, and social responsibility (Kezar & Carducci, 2007, p. 3). With increasing calls for greater accountability and instructional innovation, the work that is required can no longer be left to the LEA. It is equally unreasonable to expect the principal to be solely responsible for the scope of work or the expertise that is necessary to improve instruction (Copeland, 2003). Mangin and Stoelinga (2010) asserted that "by aligning the work that teacher leaders do with school improvement goals, instructional teacher leaders can become a key resource for improving instruction, increasing learning, and meeting state and federal mandates" (p. 56). It is now incumbent upon principals to share their leadership and "involve all members of the school community to improve instruction" (Weiner, 2011, p. 10).

With the level of accountability today, it is important that all school stakeholders be seen as partners who work collaboratively and are supportive members of the school community (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004). Katzenmeyer and Moller (2009) suggested that "within every school there is a sleeping giant of teacher leadership, which can be a strong catalyst for making change" (p. 2). Specifically, the three most significant roles of a teacher leader are as advocate, innovator, and steward (Lieberman & Miller, 2004). Because of the relationships built on trust and credibility that are created within departments or teams, teachers are able to lead successfully, especially during times of greatest change (Danielson, 2007). In fact, by taking part in helping to use the site vision to set goals with accountability measures within their collaborative teams, many teachers are already building the capacity for successful leadership practices (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003).

For teacher leaders to take part in leading the school improvement movement, there is a need to equip them with the skills necessary to be successful in this new leadership role. If teachers are expected to be a part of the team that leads the school, it is essential that they have the skills to do so well (Danielson, 2007). The decision to provide training for teachers must be followed by the development of a strategic plan for this training (Phelps, 2008). This is especially significant since teacher preparation has traditionally been lacking in leadership training, which has led to the need for teachers to receive training once already in a teacher leadership role (Danielson, 2007). Ultimately, components of teacher leadership training must be identified and developed.

There remain, however, concerns with regard to the formal development of teacher leadership because although teacher leaders have a positive influence on the instructional practices and on student learning, the extent to which these skills are being developed is unclear (Mangin & Stoelinga, 2010). Katzenmeyer and Moller (2009) asserted that this occurs because "many schools and districts still do not understand, are hesitant to promote, or are not committed to teacher leadership" (p. 141).

There is much to be learned about the role of teacher leaders, the leadership skills necessary to create teacher leaders who can move forward independently, and the professional development necessary to cultivate these skills. In 2004, York-Barr and Duke reported that even after 10 years of studying the literature on teacher leadership, little has been added to the body of knowledge. Their research also found that the literature is "overwhelmingly descriptive instead of explanatory" and addresses mostly how teacher leaders are affecting school improvement initiatives (York-Barr & Duke, 2004, p. 287).

Building the capacity of teacher leaders has never been more important. In particular, there needs to be "a process whereby teacher leaders and their principals engage in collective action to build school capacity" (Crowther, 2009, p. 53). Crowther (2009) suggested, however, that the ability to build the capacity of teachers is contingent upon the existence of relational trust. This trust must include the principal's ability to involve teachers to take part in site decision-making processes and to "empower individuals to act" (DuFour & Eaker, 1998, p. 185). Katzenmeyer and Moller (2009) added that "recognizing that reform requires persistent work compels us to capitalize on the skills, knowledge, and expertise of every teacher who can be an agent of change" (p. 158). Identifying the key characteristics necessary to build teacher leadership and providing the appropriate professional development opportunities will empower teachers to realize their ability to move forward independently "to lead instructional improvement efforts despite a lack of positional leadership authority" (Mangin & Stoelinga, 2010, p. 50).

Background

Transformational Change in Education

Since the publication of *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Educational Excellence, 1983) and the institution of NCLB (2002), the role of leadership in schools has undergone significant changes. The call for education reform has become increasingly urgent as educational institutions attempt to achieve breakthrough results and increase student achievement. It is equally important, however, that student learning focus on relevancy as well as those skills that will be essential to meet the demands of the 21st-century marketplace (Duke, Grogan, & Tucker, 2003). Preparing students for this

new workplace of the future will mean that educational institutions themselves will need to change. Anderson and Anderson (2010) suggested that it is this complete shift in how the work is done and the way it must be approached that defines this change as transformational. To navigate this transformational change environment, leaders "must transform their beliefs about people, organizations and change, itself," and "they must alter their leadership style and behavior to accommodate the unique requirement of transformation" (Anderson & Anderson, 2010, p. 3). In other words, transformational change is a second-order change requiring that problems be analyzed differently and that new strategies be developed and implemented (Marzano, McNulty, & Waters, 2005).

Principal Leadership

Seismic shifts in the definition of school leadership began in the 1980s by making the "distinction between leadership skills involving persuasion, setting goals and developing community consensus behind them, and managerial and supervisory skills" (National Commission on Educational Excellence, 1983, "Recommendation E," para. 2). Blankstein (2004) said, "In times of great challenge or dynamic change, such as schools are now experiencing, organizations must develop cultures that are significantly different than those needed in stable times" (p. 7). While the focus for principals has changed, the day-to-day managerial duties that must be addressed have not disappeared. In an attempt to bridge the gap between expectation and reality, some LEAs and site principals have created opportunities for teacher leaders to serve in a supportive capacity with regard to the implementation of instructional strategies and student learning (Swinney, 2010).

One of the transformational changes that has emerged from the environment of high-stakes accountability and focus on continuous school improvement is the

expectation that the site principal's primary role is that of instructional leader (Barth, 2001b). Studies have shown, however, that the use of a collaborative approach to school governance is directly proportional to an increase in the capacity for school leadership (Carey, 2012). The concept of shared leadership is still relatively new as past practice viewed leadership as based on authority rather than on skill or expertise, and some site administrators struggle to give up control (Copeland, 2003). Leithwood and Riehl (2003) suggested,

> Leadership is a function more than a role. Although leadership is often invested in—or expected of—persons in positions of formal authority, leadership encompasses a set of functions that may be performed by many different persons in different roles throughout a school. (p. 2)

The distribution or sharing of leadership is essential as school improvement is a collective responsibility that should not fall on one person but instead should be shared among stakeholders (Copeland, 2003).

Teacher Leadership Roles

Since the 1980s, the role of teachers has shifted from isolated work to a more "collaborative style of teaching and leading" (Watt, Mills, & Huerta, 2010, p. 352). With the level of accountability today, it is important that all school stakeholders be seen as partners who work collaboratively and are supportive members of the community (Leithwood et al., 2004).

Obstacles to Teacher Leadership

Along with the many opportunities for implementing change, there are obstacles to teacher leadership that can often cause challenges to the transformational change

process. Defining effective leadership is difficult, yet possessing it is essential during this second-order change process (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). Also challenging is the summative quality of the existing teacher evaluation process, which does not serve as a valid assessment tool for developing leadership skills (Ball & Forzani, 2009). Additionally, as teacher leaders participate in shared decision making and tasks historically left to site administrators, mistakes will be made that will provide learning opportunities. These hands-on practices will require some understanding on the part of principals as to not only the learning curve but also the strengths and weaknesses of their staffs (Carey, 2012).

Finally, just as principals have had to deal with the growing issues surrounding the balance between instructional leadership and managerial duties in recent years, there are growing concerns that as teachers begin to take on more leadership roles, they too will experience these same challenges (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003).

Facilitators to Teacher Leadership

The quality of student learning and the quality of teachers have been correlated for many years (Harris & Muijs, 2003). Dramatic changes in the world and in the landscape of education magnify the need for teacher leadership. Lieberman and Friedrich (2010) asserted that the development of identity in leadership is essential as "individuals develop their identities as members of communities of practice, defined as spaces where people collectively create the practices they use every day and interpret what happens around them" (p. 9). It is essential, in a reform-driven environment, to forge the development of a leadership identity in teachers as it "opens up the possibilities for contributing not only to their own students but also to other educators" (Lieberman &

Friedrich, 2010, p. 10). According to Danielson (2006), there are conditions that must exist for teacher leadership identity to flourish, and these conditions are of a cultural or structural nature.

Peterson and Deal (1998) defined culture as "the underground stream of norms, values, beliefs, traditions, and rituals that has built up over time as people work together, solve problems, and confront challenges" (p. 28). Cultural conditions that facilitate teacher leadership include a culture of risk taking, a culture where support for teacher leadership is the norm, and the belief that teachers are professionals (Danielson, 2006).

Traits of Effective Teacher Leaders

Traditionally, teacher leadership has been defined through the lens of formalized roles that teachers have held within the hierarchical system of their schools and the informal roles and activities that occur (Watt et al., 2010). Phelps (2008) stated that for the role of teacher leadership to grow, all teachers will need to understand their role as leaders, see the value of being a leader, and "know about possible outlets for impact" (p. 120).

Danielson (2006) asserted that "if teachers are to be leaders, they must have the skills to do so" (p. 133). The most important skills for effective teacher leadership, according to Danielson, are collaboration, facilitation, planning, problem posing or problem solving, and action and evaluation.

Murphy (2005) argued that "teachers who have a wide array of skills, broad knowledge, a healthy attitude about service to others, and enthusiasm and willingness to serve have the greatest success as leaders" (p. 68). He added that for teachers to develop

into strong teacher leaders, they must develop strong skills in the areas of "expertise, collaboration, reflection, and empowerment" (Murphy, 2005, p. 69).

There is no definitive list of characteristics or traits that provide a model for developing effective teacher leadership, and there is little agreement as to which are the most essential. While the attributes are quite varied, the only variation appears to be in the ways in which they are characterized (Danielson, 2006; Gabriel, 2005; Lieberman & Miller, 2004; Murphy, 2005).

Summary

Researchers appear to agree that there is much to be learned about the role of teacher leaders and that there is an increasing need to support the transformational changes that are taking place in education (Anderson & Anderson, 2010; DuFour & Marzano, 2011; Marzano et al., 2005; Reeves, 2008). In 2004, York-Barr and Duke reported that even after 10 years of studying the literature on teacher leadership, little has been added to the body of knowledge. Their research also found that the literature is "overwhelmingly descriptive instead of explanatory" and addresses mostly how teacher leaders are affecting school improvement initiatives (York-Barr & Duke, 2004, p. 287).

With increasing calls for greater accountability and instructional innovation, the work that is required can no longer be left to one individual. It is now incumbent upon the principal to share his or her leadership and "involve all members of the school community to improve instruction" (Weiner, 2011, p. 10).

Building the capacity of teacher leaders has never been more important. The need for conscious change leaders who choose to make a commitment to transformational

change is urgent, and the responsibility for supporting all who embrace it is a collective one.

Statement of the Research Problem

The topic of teacher leadership is not a new one. Douglas Reeves (2008) shared that "one cannot read Plato's accounts of the dialogues of Socrates and believe that teacher leadership is a 21st century idea" (p. 1). The role of teachers as leaders until the turn of the century has been predominantly connected to formal school leadership positions, has "generally not been featured in school reform initiatives," and has been limited to a select few (Murphy, 2005, p. 7).

The 21st-century world has become a place where change is happening at an increasing speed and where an organization's ability to embrace change is often the difference between success and failure (Anderson & Anderson, 2010). In U.S. society, schools have become "the key unit of change" (Spillane & Louis, 2002, p. 83). Marketplace requirements have become a change driver such that there is a clear need for students to gain higher level skills in many areas in order to compete in the global market, and the role of teachers in the school improvement process is becoming increasingly important (Duke et al., 2003). Lieberman and Miller (2004) warned, however, that as long as classroom teachers continue to be viewed as less than professional, the changes needed to meet the demands of the 21st century will struggle to gain momentum. School improvement "requires the expertise and leadership of other individuals" and certainly more "than one individual can provide" (Duke et al., 2003, p. 202). DuFour and Marzano (2011) suggested that "the ability to lead is not the private reserve of a few extraordinary people or those in particular positions of authority" (p. 2).

Reeves (2008) added that "educational leadership is more than a spot on a hierarchical organizational chart" and that "the quality and practice of leadership at every level have a demonstrable impact on organizational health in general and on student achievement in particular" (p. 10).

To create an effective environment for change, it is necessary to provide opportunities for building capacity for change within the organization. Kegan and Lahey (2001) suggested that "it is very hard to bring about significant changes in any human group without changes in individual behaviors" (p. 3). For a school to continue to adapt, change, prosper and grow, and reach its highest potential, teacher leadership needs to be developed, and at some point all teachers will need to assume leadership roles (Chrispeels, Castillo, & Brown, 2000; Kouzes & Posner, 2012). Providing professional learning opportunities in leadership for all classroom teachers is therefore essential (Anderson & Anderson, 2010).

Conceptualization and implementation are two different entities. What is missing is a greater understanding of the essential professional opportunities that all teachers need that will support implementation of effective teacher leadership and an understanding of the barriers and facilitators to the implementation of effective teacher leadership for all teachers. The field also needs a greater understanding of the best approach to implementing professional learning opportunities with strategies for overcoming the barriers to and implementing the facilitators for teacher leadership. By gaining greater knowledge about how teacher leadership can be developed, administrators and districts will be able to create environments that foster the development and implementation of successful teacher leadership school-wide.

Purpose Statement

The first purpose of this study was to identify the key learning opportunities necessary to build teacher leadership, the most difficult barriers to overcome in implementing teacher leadership, and the most important facilitators of implementing teacher leadership as identified by teacher experts. The second purpose of this study was to determine the best approaches to implementation of the identified learning opportunities, the most effective methods of overcoming the identified barriers, and the most effective strategies for implementing the facilitators that support teacher leaders as identified by teacher experts.

Research Questions

The following research questions were used to guide this study.

Delphi Round 1

1. What professional learning opportunities best support the implementation of effective teacher leadership?

2. What do teacher leaders identify as barriers to the implementation of effective teacher leadership?

3. What do teacher leaders identify as facilitators to the implementation of effective teacher leadership?

Delphi Round 2

1. To what degree are the professional learning opportunities identified in Round 1 important in implementing teacher leadership?

2. To what degree is it important to overcome the barriers identified in Round 1 to implement teacher leadership?

3. To what degree are the facilitators identified in Round 1 important in implementing teacher leadership?

Delphi Round 3

1. Of the professional learning opportunities identified as most important in Round 2, what is the best approach to implementing each one?

2. Of the barriers identified as most important to overcome in Round 2, what are the most effective strategies for overcoming each one?

3. Of the facilitators identified as most important in Round 2, what are the most effective strategies for implementing each one?

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Significance of the Problem

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The role of leadership in schools has undergone significant changes since the publication of *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Educational Excellence, 1983) and the enactment of NCLB (2002). The call for education reform has become increasingly urgent as educational institutions attempt to achieve breakthrough results and increase student achievement in an environment where adequately yearly progress is tied to the success or failure of a school (National Commission on Educational Excellence, 1983). The importance of school leadership as integral to school improvement has never been more evident. Reeves (2008) argued that complying with state and federal mandates alone does not lead to improved student achievement, nor will it address the leadership crisis that exists in society in general. This transformational change must come from schools themselves. Deal and Peterson (1999) contended that this creates a "paradox of leading," where "leadership must come from the principal, but he or she cannot be the only source of leadership. To sustain strong, positive culture,

leadership must come from everyone" (p. 138). Sustainability requires that principals grow and develop the leadership skills in others so that the work continues regardless of who is in positional authority. Fullan (2006) asserted that "leaders developing other leaders is at the heart of sustainability" (p. 62). It is also through the cultivation of leadership that school improvement takes place (Donaldson, 2006; DuFour & Marzano, 2011; Murphy, 2005; Spillane & Louis, 2002).

There is limited research in the area of cultivating teacher leadership school-wide. This study identified the key learning opportunities necessary to build teacher leadership, the most difficult barriers to overcome in implementing teacher leadership, and the most important facilitators of implementing teacher leadership as identified by teacher experts. It also determined the best approaches to the implementation of the identified learning opportunities, the most effective methods of overcoming the identified barriers, and the most effective strategies for implementing the facilitators that support teacher leaders as identified by teacher experts.

Definitions

Theoretical Definitions

Facilitator. "Helps to bring about an outcome (as learning, productivity, or communication)" ("Facilitator," n.d., para. 1).

Barrier. "Anything used or acting to block someone from going somewhere or from doing something, or to block something from happening" ("Barrier," n.d., para. 1).

Operational Definitions

For the purpose of this study, the definitions of commonly used terms are listed below for reference:

- *Key professional learning opportunities*: essential professional development

- *Elements*: components of

- *Facilitators*: help to bring about a positive outcome

- *Barriers*: impede progress

- *Approaches*: strategies

- *Roles*: actions and activities expected

Delimitations

This study was delimited to teacher leaders in public high schools within Riverside County in the State of California who were selected as effective teacher leaders by their principals based on a set of research-based criteria. Research indicates that effective teacher leaders

- embody and project the belief that teachers make a difference (Collay, 2011);

- promote professional learning communities through open communication and reflective actions (Marzano et al., 2005);

- endeavor to improve and excel pedagogically through continuous learning (Reeves, 2008);

- address obstacles within the organization's culture by focusing on the needs of all students (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009);

- take ideas to implementation by creating systems of support and networking within all levels of the organization (Crowther, 2009); and

- recognize, nurture, and celebrate success through collective responsibility and high expectations (Blasé & Blasé, 2006).

Organization of the Study

The remainder of the study is organized into four chapters, references, and appendices. Chapter II consists of a review of the literature related to the study on (a) transformational change in education, (b) principal leadership, (c) teacher leadership roles, (d) developing teachers to move forward independently, (e) obstacles to teacher leadership, (f) facilitators to teacher leadership, and (g) traits of effective teacher leadership. Chapter III explains the research design and methodology of the study. This chapter includes the explanation of the population, sample, and data-gathering procedures, as well as the procedures used to analyze the data collected. Chapter IV presents, analyzes, and provides a discussion of the findings of the study. Chapter V contains the summary, findings, conclusions, recommendations for action, and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The call for education reform has become increasingly urgent as educational institutions attempt to achieve breakthrough results and increase student achievement (Murphy, 2005). One of the transformational changes that has emerged from the environment of high-stakes accountability and focus on continuous school improvement is the expectation that the site principal's primary role is that of instructional leader (DuFour & Marzano, 2011). While the focus for principals has changed from management to instructional leadership, the day-to-day managerial duties that must be addressed have not disappeared. In an attempt to bridge the gap between expectation and reality, some principals have created opportunities for teacher leaders to serve in a supportive capacity with regard to the implementation of instructional strategies and student learning (Swinney, 2010).

Studies have suggested that shared leadership, where teachers have opportunities to make decisions regarding curriculum and instruction, not only improves the instructional program but also has the added benefit of job satisfaction (Carey, 2012). The self-efficacy that teacher leaders gain from the experience of shared leadership gives them the confidence to tackle the difficult job of planning a course of action with a goal in mind (Swinney, 2010).

Researchers appear to agree that there is much to be learned about the role of teacher leaders and that there is an increasing need to support the transformational changes that are taking place in education (Danielson, 2006; Donaldson, 2006; Fullan, 2006; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009; Murphy, 2005; Reeves, 2008). The first purpose of this study was to identify the key learning opportunities necessary to build teacher

leadership, the most difficult barriers to overcome in implementing teacher leadership, and the most important facilitators of implementing teacher leadership as identified by teacher experts. The second purpose of this study was to determine the best approaches to implementation of the identified learning opportunities, the most effective methods of overcoming the identified barriers, and the most effective strategies for implementing the facilitators that support teacher leaders as identified by teacher experts.

Review of the Literature

Transformational Change in Education

The face of education has been changing across much of the United States (U.S. Department of Education, 2010). As a way of improving student achievement results and to raise the quality of education, the federal government has passed mandates such as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) and Race to the Top. In 2001, NCLB reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965, resulting in high-stakes accountability measures for students, teachers, and schools (U.S. Department of Education, 2010). It also set standards for determining which schools and which teachers were considered successful or failing. Subsequently, Race to the Top, a competitive grant program, has been used to essentially mandate that states adopt Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and tests for their students in reading and math (U.S. Department of Education, 2013). Building on a foundation of standards, the CCSS are meant to lay a common foundation for English and math that ensures college and career readiness for all (California Department of Education, 2013).

Lugg, Bulkley, Firestone, and Garner (2002) warned that "navigating the contextual terrain in the 21st century" will require "working in situations marked by great

complexity" (p. 37). They argued that to be able to "successfully navigate the modern educational terrain," school leaders will need to pay attention to "the economy, state level policy, and accountability through testing" (Lugg et al., 2002, p. 38). Although these are not the only areas that will need attention, Lugg et al. suggested that they are the most compelling. Duke et al. (2003) added that it is important to note several paradigm shifts regarding educational leadership in this age of accountability:

- The sociopolitical context in which educational leaders must lead is changing.

- Educational leaders are realizing that "business-as-usual" is an unacceptable response to the challenges of educational accountability.

- Educational leaders are responding to accountability initiatives without a clear sense of the possible long-term impact of their actions.

- What it means to be an educational leader is changing as a result of pressure for greater accountability. (p. 199)

A study by Goldring and Greenfield (2002) indicated that "constituencies external to schools increasingly drive accountability frameworks, . . . [and] reduce local discretion, autonomy, and creativity" (p. 9). According to Fullan (2006), this "heavy preponderance of external input and direction" from a variety of sources aimed at increasing student achievement has so far led to initial but not sustained school improvement (p. 19). He added that just as the world is changing, it is time to "face up to the fact that existing strategies are woefully inadequate" and to address the need to "craft a strategy to blend pressure and support in a way that effectively motivates people to lend their ideas and energy to collectively address what needs to be done" (Fullan, 2006, p. 43). Essentially, whether internally or externally driven, Goldring and Greenfield

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(2002) argued that "accountability will continue to have an impact on educational leadership" (p. 10).

Leadership

According to Phelps (2008), "Before teachers can adopt leadership as a possibility, they must understand its meaning" (p. 119). However, there are many definitions of leadership. One of the most comprehensive definitions, taken from a decade of leadership work by Yukl (1998), was provided by Paredes-Scribner and Bradley-Levine (2010):

> A process wherein an individual member of a group or organization influences the interpretation of events, the choice of objectives and strategies, the organization of work activities, the motivation of people to achieve the objectives, the maintenance of cooperative relationships, the development of skills and confidence by members and the enlistment of support and cooperation from people outside the group or organization. (p. 494)

Paredes-Scribner and Bradley-Levine (2010) suggested, however, that it is essential to entertain a second definition of leadership that addresses the importance of organization since teachers often impact organizational activities. Leadership as an organizational quality was defined in the work by Ogawa and Bossert (as cited in Paredes-Scribner & Bradley-Levine, 2010) as

> flow[ing] through the networks of roles that comprise organizations. The medium of leadership and the currency of leadership lie in the personal resource of people. And, leaders shape the systems that produce patters of interaction and the meanings that other participants attach to organizational events. (p. 494)

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Leithwood and Riehl (2003) asserted that "leadership is a highly complex concept [and that] efforts to define leadership too narrowly are more likely to trivialize than clarify its meaning" (p. 20). Providing a simpler definition of leadership, Barth (2001a) countered that leadership is "making happen what you believe in" (p. 85). Phelps (2008) argued that when job position is removed from the definition of leadership, it "suggests that anyone can be a leader," and therefore, this leadership viewpoint is about "knowing what one believes or espous[es] [as] a vision and understanding how to achieve that vision" (p. 119). Sandmann and Vandenberg (1995) added that "a new philosophy of leadership is emerging" and summarized that "leadership development for the 21st century requires [not only] a change in personal practice, [but] conceptual thinking, and organizational application" (Abstract, para. 1). Leithwood and Riehl (2003) further expounded that "at the core of most definitions of leadership are two functions: *providing direction and exercising influence*" (p. 2).

Principal leadership. The role of the principal is changing dramatically, and with the accountability measures that have been put into place, "principals are experiencing overload with the duties assigned to them" (Watt et al., 2010, p. 354). In a National Education Association policy brief, Van Roekel (2008) reported,

> Every day, principals juggle their various roles . . . [and simultaneously] are expected to be educational visionaries, instructional and curriculum leaders, assessment experts, disciplinarians, community builders, public relations/ communications experts, budget analysts, facility managers, special programs administrators, as well as guardians of various legal, contractual, and policy mandates and initiatives. (p. 1)

Crowther (2009) contended that the role of the principal has been molded by two particular value systems that exist in the education system: a bureaucratic one and a democratic one. While purpose, accountability, and safety continue to be an important part of the principal's role today, Crowther suggested that attention to organizational democracy is equally important. Katzenmeyer and Moller (2009) added that "a democratic community assumes that all participants are equal and contribute value through their participation. This matches our notion that all teachers should assume leadership roles within the school" (p. 27).

Crowther (2009) suggested that "the principalship . . . is the key vehicle in advancing the cause of teacher leadership—and hence of promoting the professional image of teachers, the cause of democracy, and the successful revitalization of schools" (p. 77). Reeves (2008) added that principals "who encourage teacher leadership understand that genuine leadership has less to do with title and position than it does with influence" (p. 74).

Accountability and education reform have resulted in "a paradox of leading" such that while leadership needs to emanate from the principal, others must share in that role (Deal & Peterson, 1999, p. 138). According to Marzano et al. (2005), the principal's responsibility as an instructional leader is critical. Fullan (2006) asserted, however, that "the role of the principal as instructional leader is too narrow a concept to carry the weight of the kinds of reforms that will create the schools that we need for the future" (p. 16). Unable to meet the needs of their campuses, principals are acknowledging the need to empower their teachers in the area of instructional leadership (Watt et al., 2010).

While the empowerment of teachers by principals has been referred to as shared leadership, an equally accurate label for this empowerment is "power distribution" (Murphy, 2005, p. 41). Often seen as a negative term by teachers and reluctantly relinquished by principals, power is a key concept in leadership (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009).

According to Hatcher (2005), while principals possess power through positional authority, they must be able "to separate management and leadership into two parallel structures" (p. 255). Katzenmeyer and Moller (2009) added that while principals possess positional authority, teachers also possess power garnered through the personal relationships they form among their colleagues and in the community. To create an environment that nurtures teacher leadership, "principals and teacher leaders must share their power or their resources" (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009, p. 129).

Studies have suggested that shared leadership, where teachers have opportunities to make decisions regarding curriculum and instruction, not only improves the instructional program but also has the added benefit of improving job satisfaction (Carey, 2012; Swinney, 2010). The self-efficacy that teacher leaders gain from the experience of shared leadership gives them the confidence to tackle the difficult job of planning a course of action with a goal in mind (Swinney, 2010). As educators begin to transition to CCSS, the ability to lead this process of planning innovative, collaborative curriculum for 21st-century learning will be crucial.

Other, equally important opportunities for teachers to influence student learning are through leadership roles outside the classroom. Although these leadership roles were traditionally considered primarily the responsibility of the site administrators, teacher

leaders could have a tremendous impact on the educational experience of students through these important facilitative roles outside of the school day (Danielson, 2007).

In the current reform environment, teachers will continue to have opportunities to play a larger role in the governance of schools and the accomplishment of school improvement goals. In fact, Spillane (2005) suggested that it is not the type of leadership that matters but how it is distributed that has the greatest influence on improving academic achievement. It is unreasonable to expect one individual, the principal, to be solely responsible for the scope of work or the expertise that is necessary to improve instruction (Copeland, 2003). Therefore, "by aligning the work that teacher leaders do with school improvement goals, instructional teacher leaders can become a key resource for improving instruction, increasing learning, and meeting state and federal mandates" (Mangin & Stoelinga, 2010, p. 56). Fullan (2006) contended,

> The main mark of a principal at the end of his or her tenure is not just the impact
> on the bottom line of student achievement but equally how many good leaders the
> principal leaves behind who can go even further. (p. 62)

Deal and Peterson (1999) argued that while the principal is ultimately responsible for school leadership, "to sustain strong, positive cultures, leadership must come from everyone" (p. 138).

History of teacher leadership. The idea of teachers as school leaders is not a new one; however, what it means to be a teacher leader has changed. Historically, early schools consisted of single teachers who were responsible for what happened in their one-classroom schools and who "were answerable to the local community" (Kafka, 2009, p. 320). According to Ensign (1923), there was little need for an administrator because

"the schools were small, serving but a limited portion of the people" (p. 187). As the

need for the addition of grade levels began to arise in the early 1800s, the *principal*

teacher, or headmaster, came into existence. Primarily a man, the role of the principal

teacher included handling many of the duties that were necessary to properly run a larger

school (Ensign, 1923; Kafka, 2009). Although these new duties included administrative,

clerical, and school maintenance tasks, Ensign (1923) noted that during this time "the

relative need for administration was small, far overshadowed by the teaching function"

(p. 187).

By the mid-1800s, local school boards began to request additional administrative

support from school principal teachers (Pierce, 1935). With the addition of

organizational duties and responsibilities, Ensign (1923) noted that principal teachers

were forced to decrease their teaching load but keep their more advanced subjects due to

their experience as scholars. The principal teachers were responsible, then, not only for

scholarship but also for organizing and leading the teaching staff. Kafka (2009) argued

that by the end of the 19th century, the role of principal teachers had changed from that of

teacher leader to school manager with responsibilities as "managers, administrators,

supervisors, instructional leaders, and politicians" (p. 329).

According to A. W. Hart (1995), much of the 20th century revolved around a top-

down school leadership model that identified "somewhat heroic visions of the school

leader as 'The Man in the Principal's Office'" (p. 9). With this transition from principal

teacher to principal, the concept of teachers as leaders diminished as they were viewed as

employees to be managed (Collay, 2011).

Teacher leadership in present time. Contrary to popular belief, the answer to solving problems in schools is not simply "wrapped up in finding the right persons" to fill the hierarchical position at the top (Copeland, 2003, p. 375). Collay (2011) explained that "while much research on educational reforms exhorts the principal to be an instructional leader, the expertise to lead instruction lies in the teacher ranks" (p. 96). York-Barr and Duke (2004) argued that "the concept of teacher leadership suggests that teachers rightly and importantly hold a central position in the ways school operate and in the core functions of teaching and learning" (p. 255).

There are three areas in which teacher leaders make the greatest difference, even while the definition of teacher leader is still unclear (Danielson, 2007). These differences are within their departments or teams, through the school, and outside the school (Danielson, 2007). Specifically, the three most significant roles of a teacher leader are as advocate, innovator, and steward, and the greatest common factor in all three areas is that of relating to or interacting with others well (Lieberman & Miller, 2004). Because of the relationships built on trust and credibility that can be fostered within departments or teams, teachers are able to lead successfully, especially during times of greatest change (Danielson, 2007). By taking part in helping to use the site vision to set goals with accountability measures within their collaborative teams, many teachers are already building the capacity for successful leadership practices (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). In fact, research suggests that greater numbers of teacher leaders are demonstrating the ability to strengthen instructional practices, model professional behaviors, facilitate collaborative discussions, and be partners with site administrators in improving student

achievement (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). The challenge, according to Mangin and

Stoelinga (2008), is "determining how to prioritize teachers' needs" (p. 80).

Developing Teachers to Move Forward Independently

Deal and Peterson (1999) stated that in this time of change and challenges come

significant opportunities. One is the "opportunity of people," which they described as

"the central resources in any organization" (Deal & Peterson, 1999, p. 139). Deal and

Peterson added that "when leaders invest in a culture that nurtures and challenges staff

. . . it pays off in learning outcome" and that "putting time into building culture that

motivates and inspires people is the venture capital of schools" (p. 139). Richardson

(2003) suggested, therefore, that "if teachers are to contribute meaningfully and

substantively to the leadership of the school, the development of teachers as leaders

should be a substantial investment for school districts" (p. 204).

Fullan (2006) asserted that to create a positive school culture, it is important to

address the collective efficacy of a group and to "assume that lack of capacity is the

initial problem and then work on it continuously" (p. 60). With the increasing need for

teachers to take part in leading the school improvement movement, there will be an even

greater need to equip them with the skills needed to be successful in this new leadership

role. The decision to provide training for teachers must be followed by the development

of a strategic plan for this training (Phelps, 2008). If teachers are expected to be a part of

the team that leads the school, it is essential that they have the skills to do so well

(Danielson, 2007). This is especially significant since teacher preparation has

traditionally been lacking in leadership training, which has led to the need for teachers to

receive training once already in a teacher leadership role (Danielson, 2007). Therefore,

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components of teacher leadership training must be identified and developed. In a study

on teacher leaders for the 21st century, Francis (2012) suggested that the two most

essential areas of training for teacher leaders are peer coaching and cognitive coaching

due to the reflective nature of both and the importance of reflection in improving

professional practices.

Katzenmeyer and Moller (2009) noted that while teacher leaders most notably

"influence teaching and learning . . . they can also contribute to other aspects of

schooling" (p. 105). There remain, however, concerns with regard to the formal

development of teacher leadership because although teacher leaders have a positive

influence on the instructional practices and student learning, "the extent to which these

skills are being developed is unclear" (Mangin & Stoelinga, 2010, p. 56).

Although the accessibility of professional development with an emphasis on

leadership is beneficial, studies have shown that teacher leaders' effectiveness is

enhanced when they are supported by their principal and when they take part in shared

leadership where there are authentic "opportunities to engage in parallel decision

making" (Swinney, 2010, p. 34). In particular, it is imperative that the principal grow the

people at his or her school by ensuring that they have the skills and knowledge that

support the instructional direction of the school (Austen, 2010). Taking part in shared

leadership opportunities allows teacher leaders to be partners in not only the leading but

also the learning (DuFour & Marzano, 2011).

Another way to provide support to teacher leaders is by providing them with

"appropriate models of best practices and beliefs fundamental to the organization"

(Leithwood et al., 2004, p. 29). Contrary to popular myth, the answer to solving

problems in schools is not wrapped up in finding the right principal (Copeland, 2003).

Yet, it is important to note the critical role of the principal in growing teacher leaders.

Although there are many people in the school organization who serve as models, it is

through principal leadership that teacher leadership is truly effective (Murphy, 2005).

Barriers to Teacher Leadership

There are barriers to the development of teacher leadership for which teachers

need support. Regardless of the geographical region of the country, Katzenmeyer and

Moller (2009) found three major reasons that teachers are reticent to see themselves as

leaders: "The quality of teacher leadership depends on the culture of the school,"

"teachers feel they do not have the skills to lead other adults," and "egalitarian norms of

school cultures suggest that all teachers should be equal" (p. 5). Lieberman and Miller

(2004) added that "the bureaucratic, hierarchical nature of schools often conflicted with

the collegial nature of the reforms that teacher leadership was designed to bring about"

and "that structures endemic to schools [make] it difficult for teachers to become

authentic leaders" (p. 17).

Johnson and Donaldson (2007) argued that although principals are placing more

and more teachers in leadership roles, the principal can be a facilitator and a barrier to the

development of teacher leadership. York-Barr and Duke (2004) shared that, overall,

principals support the general concept of teacher leadership; however, they are often ill-

equipped to properly support teacher leadership due to inexperience and a lack of

knowledge. In fact, "there is evidence to suggest that principal support of teacher

leadership is more readily espoused than enacted," and a lack of clarity between the

"domains of teacher leadership, domains of principal leadership, and areas of common ground" is partly to blame (York-Barr & Duke, 2004, p. 274).

Also a barrier to the development of teacher leadership is the relationship among teachers, especially when some teachers assume leadership responsibilities (York-Barr & Duke, 2004). In a study by Wilson (1993), teachers were asked to identify teacher leaders and to describe their leadership behaviors. Results from the study found that "the label of 'leader' sets a person apart from peers and diminishes his or her ability to bring about change" and that "secondary teachers value their autonomy and do not wish to lead or be led" (Wilson, 1993, p. 27). Barth (2001b) added that "many teachers report that the greatest obstacle to their leadership comes from colleagues" and that the belief has always been that principals lead and teachers teach (pp. 445-446). Phelps (2008) stated that colleagues can often be the greatest obstacles to change. Mangin and Stoelinga (2008) found that "according to both teachers and teacher leaders, the issue of qualifications and expertise often became a stumbling block that could limit teachers' perception of the teacher leaders as a useful resource" (p. 85). Katzenmeyer and Moller (2009) asserted that teachers pose an obstacle due to a lack of skills in leading other adults because, unlike principals and other leaders, teachers seldom have the opportunity to build these leadership skills.

Citing research by Bartlett (2001), Lieberman and Miller (2004) contended that even schools that

> allowed powerful teacher roles, lost much of [their] leadership because teachers
> found that they could not teach and lead at the same time. The demands of the
> two roles took too great a toll on their personal and professional lives. The will

and the support for teacher leadership were there, but the structures, time, and distribution of work were not. (p. 19)

According to Collay (2011), the simple act of becoming a teacher, given the historically inadequate job status and working conditions, is an act of leadership. York-Barr and Duke (2004) suggested that "stress can result from the juggling that occurs when . . . [teachers] are simultaneously teaching and leading and from the varied, ambiguous, and sometimes all-encompassing nature of their leadership work" (p. 283). Copeland (2003) added that "external stresses create barriers to the development of broader leadership" (p. 393). In fact, because "teachers [are] responsible for student learning [they] often have little time to learn new educational ideas" (Copeland, 2003, p. 379). The constraints of limited time and heavy responsibility of leadership, according to Leithwood et al. (2004), increase the already intensified demands that are being placed on teachers. Lieberman and Miller (2004) contended that one of the greatest challenges to expanding the role of teacher leadership is that "time in schools is in finite supply and in infinite demand" (p. 17).

C. P. Hart (2010) also argued,

When teachers are treated as technicians to implement curricula created by those outside of the school, teachers lose a sense of confidence in themselves as professionals and rely only on what is prescribed to them rather than trusting in their own expertise and intuition to do what is best for their students. (p. 5)

Phelps (2008) added that this lack of confidence often leads to "self-imposed constraints to leadership" (p. 122).

Facilitators to Teacher Leadership

According to Reeves (2008), teacher leadership can exist short term regardless of the level of systemic support that is in place. Reeves argued that "without systemic support, however, great teachers remain islands of excellence, surrounded by oceans of well-intentioned teachers who lack the information, skills, and opportunities for practice that distinguish their most effective colleagues" (p. 70). Gabriel (2005) added that only "myopic schools" fail to recognize that "teachers can be dynamic forces fully capable of effective change" (p. 2). Frost and Durrant (2010) argued the importance of creating a school culture where teachers can develop leadership skills because "teachers are unlikely to be able to engage in such leadership without a framework of support" (p. 179). Katzenmeyer and Moller (2009) added that "although individual teachers' disposition, belief systems, and skills affect their ability to lead, the context of the school is central to their success" (p. 83). Katzenmeyer and Moller further asserted that is it important to create a healthy school culture conducive to teacher leadership where teachers feel

- supported in learning new skills and knowledge and encourage others to learn,
- respected by administrators and colleagues alike for the work that they do and the contributions that they make,
- encouraged to be risk takers and innovators through supportive systems,
- actively involved as professionals who contribute to instructional and student achievement issues,
- able to be honest and open about an array of topics, and
- valued as respected professionals by parents, students, and administrators.

Katzenmeyer and Moller (2009) also contended that "supporting teacher leadership means understanding the concept, awakening the understanding of teachers themselves to their leadership potential, and then providing for the development of teacher leadership" (pp. 123-124).

According to Murphy (2005), there are structural supports that serve as facilitators for teacher leadership, and these fall under two principles: When restructuring changes to promote teacher leadership, one important source is from teachers themselves, and structures must allow teachers to be risk takers and to collaborate on what they are learning. Thornton (2010) added,

> Teachers, themselves, can act as researchers to help identify barriers and challenges to cultivating teacher leadership in their schools, and they can develop action plans to address these barriers as they build a community of learners and leaders within the school. (p. 43)

Traits of Effective Teacher Leaders

Through his research on teacher leadership, Murphy (2005) indicated that while there are challenges to creating a comprehensive list of qualities and skills that teacher leaders possess, "it is nonetheless instructive to examine the personal characteristics and competencies that characterize these educators" (p. 69). Murphy further asserted that teacher leaders often possess personal characteristics that are "distinguished by well-defined dispositions and values" (p. 69), which can be categorized into "four broad domains of skills . . . visioning, interpersonal, collaborative, and management skills" (p. 71).

Lieberman and Miller (2004) described the characteristics of effective teacher leaders in terms of the environment they create "that influences the entire school community" (p. 91) and asserted that teachers who lead effectively

- develop strong commitments to their students through their life experiences and their own teaching;

- become inquirers into their own practice, helping them to become articulate about learning and teaching;

- provide leadership through their examples of becoming lifelong learners themselves;

- take risks by expanding their own comfort zones and modeling experimentation;

- inspire their peers through commitment to continue to struggle to improve their practice;

- work hard at expanding their circle of friends and their own knowledge base;

- organize novice and veteran teachers into communities of support;

- care about the content and character of colleagueship as well as the content of the subject matter;

- learn to lead through colleagueship and humility;

- create incentives for themselves and others to understand that learning to teach is a lifetime affair within a community of learners;

- understand that sensitivity to context and culture is a critical part of leadership;

- find a variety of opportunities to lead and keep learning;

- go public with their understandings about students, strategies for learning, and the organization of the curriculum; and

- pursue improvement despite negative responses to change.

O'Connor and Boles (as cited in Murphy, 2005) listed seven key competencies of teacher leaders (p. 70):

- Understanding of politics, power, and authority . . .

- Skill in managing interpersonal relationships . . .

- Communication skills . . .

- Understanding of group dynamics . . .

- Presentation skills . . .

- Organization skills . . .

- Ability to change

Gabriel (2005) provided the following list of qualities or traits seen in effective leaders (pp. 14-20):

- Principled . . .

- Honest and ethical . . .

- Organized . . .

- Perceptive . . .

- Empathetic and supportive . . .

- Altruistic . . .

- Accessible . . .

- Resourceful . . .

- Fair . . .

- Accepting . . .

- Vulnerable . . .

- Forward-thinking . . .

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- Global . . .

- Decisive and incisive . . .

- Intelligent

Phelps (2008) added that the most important attributes of a teacher leader are self-efficacy, resilience, collaboration skills, and the ability to take initiative, to take risks, and to take responsibility. Through their work in school reform, Lieberman and Friedrich (2010) learned that

teacher leadership reflects several core principles:

- Advocating what's right for students;

- Opening the classroom door and going public with teaching;

- Working "alongside" teachers and leading collaboratively;

- Taking a stand; and

- Learning and reflecting on practice as a teacher and leader. (p. 95)

Danielson (2006) contended that the most important teacher leadership skills fall into four major skill groups:

- *Collaboration Skills*: establishing group norms; selecting a leader; determining roles . . .

- *Facilitation Skills*: introducing a topic; presenting new ideas; leading discussions; keeping groups on track; clarifying; mediating; summarizing and integrating; dealing with negativity; knowing when to summon outside expertise . . .

- *Planning Skills*: problem posing or problem finding . . .

- *Action and Evaluation Skills*: setting goals; determining evidence of success; planning actions; maintaining logs of activities (pp. 133-144)

Conclusions

Findings from the literature review indicate that there is a lack of consensus and clarity as to the definition and characteristics of teacher leadership. Little (2003) contended that ambiguity exists because "the meaning of teacher leadership var[ies] in ways that parallel shifts in policy and reform goals and strategies" (p. 416). Little also suggested "that teacher leadership might be pursued in ways that more consistently foster teacher learning, teacher commitment and school reform" (p. 416).

The purpose of this review of literature was to provide a knowledge base and then to add to the body of knowledge regarding teacher leadership, specifically developing the ability of teachers to move forward independently.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

The call for education reform has become increasingly urgent as educational institutions attempt to achieve breakthrough results and increase student achievement (Murphy, 2005). One of the transformational changes that has emerged from the environment of high-stakes accountability and focus on continuous school improvement is the expectation that the site principal's primary role is that of instructional leader (DuFour & Marzano, 2011). While the focus for principals has changed from management to instructional leadership, the day-to-day managerial duties that must be addressed have not disappeared. In an attempt to bridge the gap between expectation and reality, some principals have created opportunities for teacher leaders to serve in a supportive capacity with regard to the implementation of instructional strategies and student learning (Swinney, 2010).

Studies have suggested that shared leadership, where teachers have opportunities to make decisions regarding curriculum and instruction, not only improves the instructional program but also has the added benefit of job satisfaction (Carey, 2012). The self-efficacy that teacher leaders gain from the experience of shared leadership gives them the confidence to tackle the difficult job of planning a course of action with a goal in mind (Swinney, 2010).

Researchers appear to agree that there is much to be learned about the role of teacher leaders and that there is an increasing need to support the transformational changes that are taking place in education (Danielson, 2006; Donaldson, 2006; Fullan, 2006; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009; Murphy, 2005; Reeves, 2008). The first purpose of this study was to identify the key learning opportunities necessary to build teacher

leadership, the most difficult barriers to overcome in implementing teacher leadership, and the most important facilitators of implementing teacher leadership as identified by teacher experts. The second purpose of this study was to determine the best approaches to implementation of the identified learning opportunities, the most effective methods of overcoming the identified barriers, and the most effective strategies for implementing the facilitators that support teacher leaders as identified by teacher experts.

Overview

This study adds to the body of knowledge regarding teacher leadership, specifically developing the ability of teachers to move forward independently. This chapter provides a narrative structure for how this study was conducted and includes the purpose statement, research questions, and research design. The methodology section describes the population and sample, the instrument, and field tests. Data collection, data analysis, and limitations of the study are also addressed. Prior to any activity related to this study, approval was obtained from the Brandman University Institutional Review Board (IRB) to conduct the study.

Purpose Statement

The first purpose of this study was to identify the key learning opportunities necessary to build teacher leadership, the most difficult barriers to overcome in implementing teacher leadership, and the most important facilitators of implementing teacher leadership as identified by teacher experts. The second purpose of this study was to determine the best approaches to implementation of the identified learning opportunities, the most effective methods of overcoming the identified barriers, and the

most effective strategies for implementing the facilitators that support teacher leaders as identified by teacher experts.

<p style="text-align:center">Research Questions</p>

The following research questions were used to guide this study.

Delphi Round 1

1. What professional learning opportunities best support the implementation of effective teacher leadership?

2. What do teacher leaders identify as barriers to the implementation of effective teacher leadership?

3. What do teacher leaders identify as facilitators to the implementation of effective teacher leadership?

Delphi Round 2

1. To what degree are the professional learning opportunities identified in Round 1 important in implementing teacher leadership?

2. To what degree is it important to overcome the barriers identified in Round 1 to implement teacher leadership?

3. To what degree are the facilitators identified in Round 1 important in implementing teacher leadership?

Delphi Round 3

1. Of the professional learning opportunities identified as most important in Round 2, what is the best approach to implementing each one?

2. Of the barriers identified as most important to overcome in Round 2, what are the most effective strategies for overcoming each one?

3. Of the facilitators identified as most important in Round 2, what are the most effective strategies for implementing each one?

<div align="center">**Research Design**</div>

This research study focused on identifying the key professional learning opportunities for teacher leadership and the best approaches for implementing those opportunities as a way of helping to move teachers forward independently. Using the Delphi method as a qualitative research design, the researcher was able to obtain descriptive data through a "philosophical orientation called *phenomenology*, which focuses on people's experience from their perspective" (Roberts, 2010, p. 143). According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), this research design "assesses the nature of existing conditions" and allows for "characterizing something as it is" (p. 22).

Specifically, a Delphi method "is a widely used and accepted method for achieving convergence of opinion concerning real-world knowledge solicited from experts within certain topic areas" (Hsu & Sandford, 2007, p. 1). According to Grisham (2008), this approach is "a particularly good research method for deriving consensus among a group of individuals having expertise on a particular topic where information sought is subjective and where participants are separated by physical distance" (p. 116).

Stitt-Gohdes and Crews (2004) asserted that there are three different types of Delphi methods that may be used to "produce a detailed examination of a topic and/or problem" and identified them as "the Policy Delphi Model, the Trend Model, and the Structural Model" (p. 2). This study utilized the policy Delphi model, which "works toward discovering the strongest pro and con arguments about different resolutions for a specific policy issue" (Stitt-Gohdes & Crews, 2004, p. 3). Expert panel members

responded to the same research questions for each round of the Delphi process. Responses from each round were collected and analyzed by the researcher and were used to develop the next round of research questions for the expert panel members to answer.

Population

The common denominator in the configuration of any Delphi method panel is participant expertise (Day & Bobeva, 2005; Hasson, Keeney, & McKenna, 2000; Skulmoski, Hartman, & Krahn, 2007; Yousuf, 2007). Because the selection of participants determines the success of the Delphi study, Gordon (1994) asserted that it is "essential to include persons who are likely to contribute valuable ideas" (p. 7). According to Skulmoski et al. (2007), other criteria that should be used to identify the expert panel participants include the following:

- knowledge and experience with the issues under investigation;

- capacity and willingness to participate;

- sufficient time to participate in the Delphi; and

- effective communication skills. (p. 10)

The population for panel participants in this study consisted of public high school teacher leaders in Riverside County, California. The set of characteristics used by high school principals to select teacher leaders was determined by the six most prominent characteristics for effective teacher leaders found in the literature review. These six characteristics are as follows:

1. embody and project the belief that teachers make a difference (Collay, 2011);

2. promote professional learning communities through open communication and reflective actions (Marzano et al., 2005);

3. endeavor to improve and excel pedagogically through continuous learning (Reeves, 2008);

4. address obstacles within the organization's culture by focusing on the needs of all students (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009);

5. take ideas to implementation by creating systems of support and networking within all levels of the organization (Crowther, 2009); and

6. recognize, nurture, and celebrate success through collective responsibility and high expectations (Blasé & Blasé, 2006).

Sample

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), the sampling used in a study should be based on the researcher's knowledge of the population, and in particular, "in purposeful sampling . . . the researcher selects particular elements from the population that will be representative or informative about the topic of interest" (p. 138). This study used a purposeful sampling of effective high school teacher leaders from Riverside County, California. Permission was solicited from district superintendents for the researcher to contact high school principals within their districts. High school principals were asked to identify three to four teachers who possessed the characteristics of effective teacher leaders to serve as members of the expert panel for this Delphi study. The set of characteristics used by principals to select teacher leaders was determined by the six most prominent characteristics for effective teacher leaders found in the literature review. These six characteristics are as follows:

1. embody and project the belief that teachers make a difference (Collay, 2011);

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   2008);

4. address obstacles within the organization's culture by focusing on the needs of all
   students (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009);

5. take ideas to implementation by creating systems of support and networking within all
   levels of the organization (Crowther, 2009); and

6. recognize, nurture, and celebrate success through collective responsibility and high
   expectations (Blasé & Blasé, 2006).

Sandelowski (2000) argued that when "there is a very large pool of potentially
information-rich cases and no obvious reason to choose one case over another," a
sampling strategy is appropriate (p. 251); therefore, random purposeful sampling was
used to reduce the number of expert panel members to 36. Of the 36 participants selected
for this study, 29 participated in Round 1, 28 in Round 2, and 22 in Round 3.

Selected teacher experts identified the key learning opportunities necessary to
build teacher leadership, the most difficult barriers to overcome in implementing teacher
leadership, and the most important facilitators of implementing teacher leadership.
Identified teacher experts selected as participants also determined the best approaches to
the implementation of the identified learning opportunities, the most effective methods of
overcoming the identified barriers, and the most effective strategies for implementing the
facilitators that support teacher leaders.

Instrumentation

Consistent with a Delphi method, the instruments used in this study collected "the most reliable consensus of a group of experts" through an electronic format within a three-round process (Okoli & Pawlowski, 2004). In the first questionnaire, the expert panelists were provided with open-ended statements asking them to identify the professional learning opportunities that best support effective teacher leadership and the barriers and facilitators to effective teacher leadership. Results from this round were used to rank the participant responses within each category by importance from highest to lowest. A cutoff point was used to identify the top responses.

The top responses identified during the first round were used to construct a Likert-scale questionnaire. This questionnaire asked that the expert panel indicate the degree of importance of the top responses from Round 1.

Responses to the questionnaire from the second round were used to construct a final instrument for Round 3. With this instrument, based on the top five to 10 responses identified in Round 2, expert panel members identified common elements necessary for developing teacher leaders and the most effective way to provide professional learning opportunities for developing teacher leaders.

Instrument Field Tests/Reliability and Validity

McMillan and Schumacher (2010) indicated that "an instrument or the persons used to collect data might affect the results" (p. 112). To ensure that the instrument used in this study accurately measured what was intended, a pilot test in the same format as described in the research design of this study was administered to a sample of four teacher leaders. These teachers met the same criteria as the purposeful sampling for this

study. The instrumentation was amended based on the recommendations of the

participants in the pilot test. Patton (2002) argued that when conducting qualitative

research, it is important to create reliability by emphasizing "traditional scientific

research criteria" as a means to minimize investigator bias and to emphasize "rigorous

and systematic data collection procedures" (pp. 544-545).

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), one way to enhance the validity

of a qualitative research design is by finding "agreement on descriptive data" collected by

multiple researchers (p. 330). The validity of this research study was supported through a

literature matrix that was developed through an extensive literature review.

Content validity was established through a thorough review of the literature

(Chapter II) supported by a literature matrix. The subject of teacher leadership and its

importance is well documented in those places. Reeves's (2008) assertion that a

leadership crisis exists and that "a radical transformation toward teacher leadership is not

an option; it is a necessity" (p. 17) is an example of the content support in the literature

for this topic and instrument development.

Data Collection

Day and Bobeva (2005) suggested that a Delphi study implementation process

consists of three stages. The first stage, exploration, consists of the Delphi planning, the

selection of participants, and the pilot study. The second stage, distillation, consists of

the implementation of the Delphi rounds. The number of rounds is variable and

dependent upon the purpose of the research. The third stage, utilization, consists of the

analysis of the Delphi study results and utilization of the Delphi results and experience

(Day & Bobeva, 2005).

The researcher presented an abstract and gave a brief explanation to county school district superintendents at a superintendents' meeting at the Riverside County Office of Education regarding the purpose and methodology of the research study (see Appendix A). The researcher requested permission from the school district superintendents to contact high school principals who would be asked to identify three to four effective teacher leaders, based on the six most prominent characteristics of effective teacher leaders found in the literature review, to serve as expert panel members for the research study. Nine of the superintendents gave immediate approval for the study by signing a copy of the abstract, and one additional superintendent granted permission after being contacted separately. One district was excluded from the study due to late notification of a requirement to submit a formalized request to conduct research within the district, and a second district was excluded because the researcher is employed in that district. Eight of 23 Riverside County school districts granted permission for the research study.

Site principals at 24 Riverside County high schools within the participating districts were contacted by e-mail and were asked for permission to contact teachers on their staff. The principals were asked to identify three or four effective teacher leaders, based on the six most prominent characteristics of effective teacher leaders found in the literature review, to serve as research study expert panel members (see Appendix B). Site principals at 17 of the 24 high schools contacted responded to the request for names of effective teacher leaders and provided contact information for 68 teachers to serve as expert panel members.

Teachers identified as effective teacher leaders by their site principals were contacted by e-mail once Brandman University IRB approval was received (Appendix

C). Prospective participants were provided a Letter of Invitation for Participation, a

Written Informed Consent Request, and a Participant's Bill of Rights (Appendices D, E,

and F). Thirty-six teachers responded to the request to participate and provided informed

consent. All communications with the teachers were conducted one to one throughout

the study to maintain confidentiality.

Round 1

Teachers who submitted informed consent received an estimate of how much time

would be required to contribute to the study, contact information for the researcher, and

an electronic link to participate in Round 1 of the study. Within the electronic

questionnaire, participants received directions for completing the Round 1 questionnaire,

the deadline for completion, and clarification of terms used within the questionnaire (see

Appendix G).

Responses and judgments from the expert panelists were extracted from a series

of open-ended questions. Three questions were developed to guide Round 1 of this

Delphi study:

1. What professional learning opportunities best support the implementation of effective

   teacher leadership?

2. What do teacher leaders identify as barriers to the implementation of effective teacher

   leadership?

3. What do teacher leaders identify as facilitators to the implementation of effective

   teacher leadership?

Round 2

The expert panelists from Round 1 participated in Round 2. As is typical of a Delphi study, responses to the first round of open-ended questions were analyzed and categorized into Likert-scale questions that focused on degree of importance and were used for Round 2 (Turoff & Linstone, 2002; see Appendix H). Pilot participants were asked to provide feedback on this round of questions. Suggestions were noted and utilized in the second round.

Three questions were developed to guide Round 2 of this Delphi study:

1. To what degree are the professional learning opportunities identified in Round 1 important in implementing teacher leadership?

2. To what degree is it important to overcome the barriers identified in Round 1 to implement teacher leadership?

3. To what degree are the facilitators identified in Round 1 important in implementing teacher leadership?

Round 3

The Round 2 responses were used to develop the Round 3 questionnaire (Appendix I). The questions were more focused and provided greater understanding of the boundaries of the study. Pilot participants were asked to provide feedback on this round of questions. As with previous rounds, suggestions made were noted and utilized in making modifications to the Round 3 questionnaire.

Three questions were developed to guide Round 3 of this Delphi study:

1. Of the professional learning opportunities identified as most important in Round 2, what is the best approach to implementing each one?

2. Of the barriers identified as most important to overcome in Round 2, what are the most effective strategies for overcoming each one?

3. Of the facilitators identified as most important in Round 2, what are the most effective strategies for implementing each one?

Data Analysis

Data collected in this Delphi study were analyzed in three stages. Due to the nature of this study, qualitative data collected from each round were used to develop the questionnaire for the subsequent round.

Round 1

Three separate open-ended questions on teacher leadership were developed upon which expert panelists reflected and provided input. Specifically, the expert panel identified the professional learning opportunities that best support implementation of effective teacher leadership, and the barriers and facilitators to the implementation of effective teacher leadership. Responses and judgments from each panelist were extracted, and duplicate responses were consolidated. A cutoff point of 10 was used to identify the top responses, which were used to generate the questionnaire for Round 2.

Round 2

In the second round of the Delphi study, expert panelists were asked to rank the consolidated Round 1 responses using a Likert scale. Panelists ranked the degree of importance of each of the top 10 responses from Round 1 from *not at all important* to *very important*. The mean was computed for each response, and the top five to 10 responses for each question were identified. Data from Round 2 were used to construct a final instrument for Round 3.

Round 3

In the third round of the Delphi study, expert panelists were asked, based on the top five to 10 responses identified in Round 2, to identify the common elements necessary for developing teacher leaders. In addition, panelists were asked, based on the Round 2 results, to identify the most effective approach to provide professional learning opportunities for developing teacher leaders. Responses from Round 3 were extracted, duplicate responses were consolidated, and a summary of the findings was shared with the expert panel. The findings, presented in Chapter IV of this dissertation, add to the body of knowledge regarding teacher leadership, specifically developing the ability of teachers to move forward independently.

Limitations

All research studies have limitations. Cone and Foster (2006) indicated that limitations tend to come from two areas: "(a) decisions made about how to conduct the study in the first place and (b) problems that came up when running it" (p. 277). The most significant limitation of this study is that the quality of responses to questions was based on the expert panel (Yousuf, 2007). Other limitations include that the researcher had to choose participants selectively and that a Delphi method can be time consuming, which can cause panel members to lose interest. In addition, Day and Bobeva (2005) argued that the design of the data collection instrument is critical and that while it "depend[s] a good deal upon the number of questions asked, . . . there are no clear rules for this" (p. 109). Lastly, the sample for this study was limited to Riverside County, which may not be reflective of all counties in California.

Summary

Chapter III included the purpose statement, research questions, and research design. The chapter also provided a description of the methodology, the population and sample, instruments and instrument field-tests/validity, data collection, data analysis, and limitations. The objective of Chapter III was to describe the rationale for conducting a qualitative research study using a Delphi method as the data collection technique.

CHAPTER IV: RESEARCH, DATA COLLECTION, AND FINDINGS

Overview

Chapter IV provides a frame of reference and understanding of the research through the presentation and analysis of data and through a summary of findings for the current study. The chapter restates the purpose of the study and the research questions. It also offers a description of the methodology used, the population, and the sample.

Purpose Statement

The first purpose of this study was to identify the key learning opportunities necessary to build teacher leadership, the most difficult barriers to overcome in implementing teacher leadership, and the most important facilitators of implementing teacher leadership as identified by teacher experts. The second purpose of this study was to determine the best approaches to implementation of the identified learning opportunities, the most effective methods of overcoming the identified barriers, and the most effective strategies for implementing the facilitators that support teacher leaders as identified by teacher experts.

Research Questions

The following research questions were used to guide this study.

Delphi Round 1

1. What professional learning opportunities best support the implementation of effective teacher leadership?

2. What do teacher leaders identify as barriers to the implementation of effective teacher leadership?

3. What do teacher leaders identify as facilitators to the implementation of effective teacher leadership?

Delphi Round 2

1. To what degree are the elements of professional learning opportunities identified in Round 1 important in implementing teacher leadership?

2. To what degree is it important to overcome the barriers identified in Round 1 to implement teacher leadership?

3. To what degree are the facilitators identified in Round 1 important in implementing teacher leadership?

Delphi Round 3

1. Of the elements of professional learning opportunities identified as most important in Round 2, what is the best approach for implementing each one?

2. Of the barriers identified as most important to overcome in Round 2, what are the most effective strategies for overcoming each one?

3. Of the facilitators identified as most important in Round 2, what are the most effective strategies for implementing each one?

Research Methods and Data Collection Procedures

This research study focused on identifying the key professional learning opportunities for teacher leadership and the best approaches for implementing those opportunities as a way of helping to move teachers forward independently. Using the Delphi method as a qualitative research design, the researcher was able to obtain descriptive data through a "philosophical orientation called *phenomenology*, which focuses on people's experience from their perspective" (Roberts, 2010, p. 143). This

research study utilized a policy Delphi model, which "works toward discovering the strongest pro and con arguments about different resolutions for a specific policy issue" (Stitt-Gohdes & Crews, 2004, p. 3).

Consistent with a Delphi method, the instruments used in this study collected "the most reliable consensus of a group of experts" through an electronic format within a three-round process (Okoli & Pawlowski, 2004). In the first questionnaire, the expert panelists were provided with open-ended statements asking them to identify the professional learning opportunities that best support effective teacher leadership and the barriers and facilitators to effective teacher leadership. Results from this round were used to rank the participant responses within each category by importance. A cutoff point was used to identify the top responses.

The top responses identified during the first round were used to construct a Likert-scale questionnaire. This questionnaire asked that the expert panelists indicate the degree of importance of the top responses from Round 1.

Responses to the questionnaire from the second round were used to construct a final instrument for Round 3. With this instrument, based on the top five to 10 responses identified in Round 2, expert panel members identified common elements necessary for developing teacher leaders and the most effective way to provide professional learning opportunities for developing teacher leaders.

Population

The population for this research study included public high school teachers from Riverside County, California. At the time of this study, there were 21 districts with public high schools within Riverside County. Principals were asked to identify teacher

leaders who possessed the six most prominent characteristics for effective teacher leaders found in the literature review.

Sample

This research study used a purposeful sampling of effective high school teacher leaders from Riverside County, California. High school principals were asked to identify three to four teachers who possessed the characteristics of effective teacher leaders. The characteristics used by high school principals to select teacher leaders were determined by the six most prominent characteristics for effective teacher leaders found in the literature review. These six characteristics are as follows:

1. embody and project the belief that teachers make a difference (Collay, 2011);

2. promote professional learning communities through open communication and reflective actions (Marzano et al., 2005);

3. endeavor to improve and excel pedagogically through continuous learning (Reeves, 2008);

4. address obstacles within the organization's culture by focusing on the needs of all students (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009);

5. take ideas to implementation by creating systems of support and networking within all levels of the organization (Crowther, 2009); and

6. recognize, nurture, and celebrate success through collective responsibility and high expectations (Blasé & Blasé, 2006).

Superintendents from nine districts granted permission for research within their districts, and 17 principals within those districts provided the names of 68 teachers as prospective participants in the research study. A Letter of Invitation for Participation, a

Written Informed Consent Request, and a Participant's Bill of Rights were sent

electronically to each of the 68 teachers from 17 public high schools. Thirty-six teachers

provided informed consent to participate as expert panel members and were sent

electronic questionnaires for each of the three rounds. Of the 36 prospective panel

members, 29 responded to the first questionnaire, 28 responded to the second electronic

questionnaire, and 22 responded to the last electronic questionnaire.

Presentation and Analysis of Data

Findings from the data collection are presented by Delphi rounds. Responses

were analyzed qualitatively according to the research questions addressed within each of

the three rounds.

Round 1

The first round of the Delphi study included three open-ended questions that were

designed to solicit a broad range of responses (see Appendix G). The questions were

posed to a panel of effective teacher leader experts via an electronic questionnaire, and 29

participants responded. The three questions in Round 1 were as follows:

1. What professional learning opportunities best support the implementation of effective

   teacher leadership?

2. What do teacher leaders identify as barriers to the implementation of effective teacher

   leadership?

3. What do teacher leaders identify as facilitators to the implementation of effective

   teacher leadership?

Clarification was provided for the commonly used terms contained within the

research questions. *Professional learning opportunities* were defined as professional

development, *facilitators* were defined as those elements that bring about a positive outcome, and *barriers* were defined as those elements that impede progress.

Delphi I: Research Question 1. The first question in Round 1 was, "What professional learning opportunities best support the implementation of effective teacher leadership?" Although expert panel members were asked to identify professional learning opportunities that best support the implementation of effective teacher leadership, all but two respondents identified elements of professional learning rather than specific topics. Of the two respondents who did not provide specific elements of professional learning opportunities, one stated that "the AVID [Advancement Via Individual Determination] professional development opportunities I've received, both as a trainer and a participant have by far been my best support to help me implement effective teacher leadership." The second respondent stated, "I really don't know if a leader can be trained. But I also believe that many 'good' teachers can be effective leaders."

Responses from the first question in Round 1 of the Delphi process were extracted and thematically consolidated based on the *elements* of professional learning opportunities. For example, responses regarding professional learning opportunities that best support the implementation of effective teacher leadership that included presentation of current concepts; learning small chunks of essential information; learning some of the newest and innovative techniques; learning that is relevant, organic, and responsive to the times; learning that relates to the individual school environment; learning about research-based educational strategies; and learning that addresses relevant issues were

consolidated as professional learning that addresses current issues and needs. Other

responses from the expert panel were similarly consolidated and are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Professional Learning Opportunities That Best Support the Implementation of Effective Teacher Leadership

Included element	Frequency of response
Collaboration	11
Address current issues/needs	10
Allow for practice/practical application	9
Peer mentoring/coaching/modeling	6
Training on teacher leadership skills	3
Peer observation	3
A trusting and safe environment	2
Training provided by peers	2
Teacher input into training	2
Opportunities outside campus or district	1
Empowerment of teacher leaders	1
Exposure to the organization's vision	1
AVID training	1
Not sure that leaders can be trained	1

Note. $N = 29$.

As indicated in Table 1, members of the expert panel identified nine key

professional learning opportunity elements that support the implementation of effective

teacher leadership. The nine key elements are professional learning opportunities that

include collaboration, addressing current issues and needs, peer mentoring/coaching/

modeling, peer observations, a trusting and safe environment, training on teacher

leadership skills, teacher-led training, practice and practical application, and teacher input.

Table 1 summarizes the frequency of responses to the question that asked panelists to identify which professional learning opportunities best support the implementation of effective teacher leadership. The four most frequently identified elements of professional learning opportunities that best support the implementation of effective teacher leadership were collaboration (11 of 29 responses), addressing current issues/needs (10 of 29 responses), allowing for practice and practical application (nine of 29 responses), and providing coaching and mentoring (six of 29 responses). Other elements of professional learning opportunities that best support the implementation of effective teacher leadership as reported by multiple expert panel members included training on teacher leadership skills (three of 29 responses), peer observations (three of 29 responses), a trusting and safe environment (two of 29 responses), training provided by peers (two of 29 responses), and teacher input into training (two of 29 responses). Opportunities outside the campus or district, empowerment of teacher leaders, exposure to the organization's vision, and AVID training had a frequency of one response. One expert panelist added, "I really don't know if a leader can be trained."

Delphi I: Research Question 2. The second question in Round 1 was, "What do teacher leaders identify as barriers to the implementation of effective teacher leadership?" Responses from the second question in Round 1 of the Delphi process were extracted and thematically consolidated. As indicated in Table 2, members of the expert panel identified 10 barriers to the implementation of effective teacher leadership. The 10 barriers included a lack of time, resistant staff members, a lack of understanding as to the

skills needed for effective teacher leadership, a lack of support from colleagues, a lack of

support from administration, a lack of resources that support teacher leadership,

overburden by current level of responsibility on teachers, a lack of teacher leadership

opportunities, implementation of new programs too frequently, and a fear of failure.

Table 2

Barriers to the Implementation of Effective Teacher Leadership

Barrier	Frequency of response
Lack of support from colleagues	14
Lack of time	12
Lack of support from administration	11
Lack of resources that support teacher leadership	8
Resistant teachers	5
Overburden by current level of responsibility on teachers	5
Lack of understanding of teacher leadership	3
Lack of teacher leadership opportunities	2
Implementation of new programs too frequently	1
Fear of failure	1

Note. $N = 29$.

Table 2 summarizes the frequency of responses to the question that asked

panelists to identify the barriers to the implementation of effective teacher leadership.

The five most frequently identified barriers to the implementation of effective teacher

leadership were a lack of support from colleagues (14 of 29 responses), a lack of time (12

of 29 responses), a lack of support from administration (11 of 29 responses), a lack of

resources that support teacher leadership (eight of 29 responses), and resistant teachers

(five of 29 responses). A few responses from panelists regarding a lack of support from

colleagues and resistant teachers included, "Sometimes the staff is non-committal and

opposed to any idea presented by their peers and therefore there is no back up or support from our own ranks," "Infighting within departments is a big drain on the energies of everyone and when that happens, teachers don't want to be told what to do especially from other teachers," "There are just some weak teachers who either don't want to learn or just can't," and "Refusal/rebellion against teacher leadership exists because of the stigmas surrounding it."

Other barriers to the implementation of effective teacher leadership as reported by multiple expert panel members included overburden by current level of responsibility on teachers (five of 29 responses), a lack of understanding of teacher leadership (three of 29 responses), and a lack of teacher leadership opportunities (two of 29 responses). The implementation of new programs too frequently and a fear of failure had a frequency of one response.

Delphi I: Research Question 3. The third question in Round 1 was, "What do teacher leaders identify as facilitators to the implementation of effective teacher leadership?" Responses from the third question in Round 1 of the Delphi process were extracted and thematically consolidated. As indicated in Table 3, members of the expert panel identified 12 facilitators to the implementation of effective teacher leadership. The 12 facilitators included time, a supportive administration, a positive work environment, coaching, collaboration, training on developing teacher leadership, trust and respect among teachers, participation in school-wide decision making, teacher buy-in, opportunities to lead, a safe environment for risk taking, and relevant professional development.

Table 3

Facilitators to the Implementation of Effective Teacher Leadership

Facilitator	Frequency of response
Time	18
Supportive administration	14
Positive work environment	8
Coaching	7
Collaboration	7
Training on developing teacher leadership	6
Trust and respect among teachers	5
Participation in school-wide decision making	5
Teacher buy-in	4
Opportunities to lead	4
Safe environment for risk taking	2
Relevant professional development	1

Note. $N = 29$.

Table 3 summarizes the frequency of responses to the question that asked

panelists to identify the facilitators to the implementation of effective teacher leadership.

Two of the responses from the expert panelists were provided significantly more

frequently as facilitators to the implementation of effective teacher leadership. These

responses were time (18 of 29 responses) and a supportive administration (14 of 29

responses). Other frequently identified facilitators to the implementation of effective

teacher leadership were a positive work environment (eight of 29 responses), coaching

(seven of 29 responses), collaboration (seven of 29 responses), training on developing

teacher leadership (six of 29 responses), trust and respect from teachers (five of 29

responses), participation in school-wide decision making (five of 29 responses), teacher

buy-in (four of 29 responses), and opportunities to lead (four of 29 responses). A safe

environment for risk taking had a frequency of two responses, and relevant professional development had a frequency of one response.

Round 2

Responses to the first round of open-ended questions were analyzed and categorized into Likert-scale questions. In Round 2, expert panelists who participated in Round 1 were asked to rate the degree of importance of the nine top responses from Round 1. The degree of importance was rated as *not at all important* (1), *somewhat important* (2), *moderately important* (3), or *very important* (4).

Questions were posed to the expert panel via an electronic questionnaire, and 28 of the 29 participants from Round 1 responded. The three questions in Round 2 were as follows:

1. To what degree are the elements of professional learning opportunities identified in Round 1 important in implementing teacher leadership?

2. To what degree is it important to overcome the barriers identified in Round 1 to implement teacher leadership?

3. To what degree are the facilitators identified in Round 1 important in implementing teacher leadership?

Clarification was provided for the commonly used terms contained within the research questions. *Professional learning opportunities* were defined as professional development, *elements* were described as components, *facilitators* were defined as those elements that bring about a positive outcome, and *barriers* were defined as those elements that impede progress. A focus was placed on the term *elements* based on feedback from the pilot-study participants, who shared that responses showed the

elements of professional learning opportunities were more important than the type of professional learning opportunity. Clarification was provided within the Delphi II questionnaire.

      Delphi II: Research Question 1. The first question in Round 2 was, "To what degree are the elements of professional learning opportunities identified in Round 1 important in implementing teacher leadership?" Responses from the first question in Round 1 of the Delphi process were extracted and thematically consolidated. Panel members' mean ratings of the degree of importance of each of the professional learning opportunity elements identified in Round 1 are summarized in Table 4. The mode frequency and mode for responses in Round 2 are also included.

      Table 4 identifies the mean for responses to the degree of importance of professional learning opportunity elements identified in Round 1. Expert panelists identified the need for collaboration (mean = 3.39; mode = 4) as the most important element of professional learning opportunities. Also identified as important elements of professional learning opportunities were coaching, modeling, and mentoring (mean = 3.36; mode = 4) and addressing current and relevant site-specific needs (mean = 3.36; mode = 4). Three additional elements of professional learning opportunities identified as important were practice and practical application (mean = 3.29; mode = 4), training provided by teachers for teachers (mean = 3.29; mode = 3), and opportunities identified by teachers (mean = 3.29; mode = 4). Finally, professional learning opportunities that promote a safe, risk-taking environment (mean = 2.96; mode = 4), opportunities for peer observations (mean = 2.86; mode = 3), and opportunities on strategies for implementation

of teacher leadership (mean = 2.86; mode = 3) were also identified by expert panelists as important elements of professional learning opportunities.

Table 4

Degree of Importance of Professional Learning Opportunity Elements Identified in Round 1

Professional learning opportunity element	Mean	Mode frequency				Mode
		1	2	3	4	
Collaboration	3.39	0%	11%	39%	50%	4
Coaching, modeling, and mentoring	3.36	0%	11%	43%	46%	4
Address current and relevant site-specific needs	3.36	4%	18%	18%	61%	4
Practice and practical application	3.29	7%	11%	29%	54%	4
Provided by teachers for teachers	3.29	0%	11%	50%	39%	3
Opportunities identified by teachers	3.29	4%	14%	32%	50%	4
Promote a safe, risk-taking environment	2.96	14%	18%	25%	43%	4
Opportunities for peer observations	2.86	10%	25%	33%	32%	3
Opportunities on strategies for implementation of teacher leadership	2.86	7%	25%	43%	25%	3

Delphi II: Research Question 2. The second question in Round 2 was, "To what degree is it important to overcome the barriers identified in Round 1 to implement teacher leadership?" Responses from the second question in Round 1 of the Delphi process were extracted and thematically consolidated. Panel members' mean ratings of the degree of importance of overcoming the barriers identified in Round 1 are summarized in Table 5. The mode frequency and mode for responses to Research Question 2 of the Delphi II are also included.

Table 5

Degree of Importance of Overcoming the Barriers Identified in Round 1 to Implement Teacher Leadership

Barrier	Mean	Mode frequency				Mode
		1	2	3	4	
Lack of support from administration	3.46	7%	4%	25%	64%	4
Overburden by current level of responsibilities	3.25	4%	18%	29%	50%	4
Lack of time	3.21	4%	11%	46%	39%	3
Resistant teachers	3.11	4%	32%	14%	50%	4
Lack of resources	3.11	4%	18%	43%	36%	3
Lack of support from colleagues	3.00	7%	14%	50%	29%	3
Lack of understanding as to the skills needed for effective teacher leadership	2.96	4%	25%	43%	29%	3
Lack of teacher leadership opportunities	2.61	14%	29%	39%	18%	3

Table 5 identifies the mean for responses to the degree of importance of overcoming the barriers to the implementation of teacher leadership identified in Round 1. Expert panelists identified the lack of support from administration (mean = 3.46; mode = 4) as the most important barrier to overcome for the implementation of teacher leadership. Also identified as important barriers to overcome were overburden by current level of responsibilities on teachers (mean = 3.25; mode = 4) and a lack of time (mean = 3.21; mode = 3). Three additional important barriers to overcome for the implementation of teacher leadership were a lack of resources (mean = 3.11; mode = 3), resistant teachers (mean = 3.11; mode = 4), and a lack of support from colleagues (mean = 3.00; mode = 3). Finally, a lack of understanding as to the skills needed (mean = 2.96; mode = 3) and a

lack of teacher leadership opportunities (mean = 2.61; mode = 3) were also identified by expert panelists as important barriers to the implementation of teacher leadership.

Delphi II: Research Question 3. The third question in Round 2 was, "To what degree are the facilitators identified in Round 1 important in implementing teacher leadership?" Responses from the third question in Round 1 of the Delphi process were extracted and thematically consolidated. Panel members' mean ratings of the degree of importance of the facilitators identified in Round 1 are summarized in Table 6. The mode frequency and mode for responses to Research Question 3 of the Delphi II are also included.

Table 6

Degree of Importance of the Facilitators Identified in Round 1 to Implement Teacher Leadership

Facilitator	Mean	Mode frequency				Mode
		1	2	3	4	
A supportive administration	3.71	0%	7%	14%	79%	4
A positive work environment	3.54	0%	7%	32%	61%	4
Opportunities for teachers to be a part of school-wide decision making	3.43	0%	11%	36%	54%	4
Time for collaboration among peers	3.39	7%	4%	32%	57%	4
Trust and respect among teachers	3.32	4%	11%	36%	50%	4
A safe environment open to risk taking and innovation	3.25	0%	14%	46%	39%	3
Teacher buy-in and ownership for leading	3.21	11%	7%	32%	50%	4
Peer coaching	3.00	4%	25%	39%	32%	3
Identified authentic opportunities to lead	3.00	4%	21%	46%	29%	3
Training on developing teacher leadership	2.86	7%	25%	43%	25%	3

Table 6 identifies the mean for responses to the degree of importance of the facilitators to the implementation of teacher leadership identified in Round 1. Expert panelists identified a supportive administration (mean = 3.71; mode = 4) as the most important facilitator for the implementation of teacher leadership. The margin between the first and second most important facilitators was the largest compared to the difference between all subsequent facilitators. Also identified as important facilitators were a positive work environment (mean = 3.54; mode = 4) and opportunities for teachers to be a part of school-wide decision making (mean = 3.43; mode = 4). Additional important facilitators for the implementation of teacher leadership as identified by the expert panel were time for collaboration among peers (mean = 3.39; mode = 4), trust and respect among teachers (mean = 3.32; mode = 4), and a safe environment open to risk taking and innovation (mean = 3.25; mode = 3). Finally, teacher buy-in and ownership for leading (mean = 3.21; mode = 4), peer coaching (mean = 3.00; mode = 3), identified authentic opportunities to lead (mean = 3.00; mode = 3), and training on developing teacher leadership (mean = 2.86; mode = 3) were also identified by expert panelists as important facilitators to the implementation of teacher leadership.

Round 3

The third round of the Delphi study included three open-ended questions that were designed to solicit a broad range of responses (see Appendix I). The questions were posed to a panel of effective teacher leader experts via an electronic questionnaire, and 22 of the 29 original participants responded. The three questions in Round 3 were as follows:

1. Of the elements of professional learning opportunities identified as most important in Round 2, what is the best approach to implementing each one?

2. Of the barriers identified as most important to overcome in Round 2, what are the most effective strategies for overcoming each one?

3. Of the facilitators identified as most important in Round 2, what are the most effective strategies for implementing each one?

Clarification was provided for the commonly used terms contained within the research questions. *Professional learning opportunities* were defined as professional development, *elements* were described as components, *facilitators* were defined as those elements that bring about a positive outcome, and *barriers* were defined as those elements that impede progress. A focus was placed on the term *elements* based on feedback from the pilot-study participants, who shared that responses showed the elements of professional learning opportunities were more important than the type of professional learning opportunity. Clarification was provided within the Delphi III questionnaire.

Delphi III: Research Question 1. The first question in Round 3 was, "Of the elements of professional learning opportunities identified as most important in Round 2, what is the best approach to implementing each one?" The elements identified in Round 2 included collaboration; coaching, modeling, and mentoring; identified by teachers; by teachers for teachers; and a focus on site-specific issues and needs. In the Delphi III, expert panel members were asked to identify the best approach for implementing each of the identified Delphi II elements of professional learning opportunities. Responses from the first question in Round 3 of the Delphi process were extracted and thematically

consolidated based on the best approaches for implementing the *elements* of professional

learning opportunities for developing teacher leaders. For example, responses regarding

the best approaches for implementing collaboration as an element of professional

learning opportunities that best supports the implementation of effective teacher

leadership that included implementation as part of contract time, as structured

professional learning community (PLC) time, as time within the work day, as allotted

time during school hours, and as specific work hour times were consolidated as within

the regular school work day. Other responses from the expert panel were similarly

consolidated, are presented individually for each element, and are listed in table form.

 The best approach to implementing the element of *collaboration* for developing

teacher leaders, as identified by members of the expert panel responding to the first

question in Round 3, is through structured meeting time (16 of 22 responses). Other

approaches identified by panel members included collaboration within the regular school

work day (seven of 22 responses), within varied meeting locations (three of 22

responses), and through small groups (two of 22 responses). Unduplicated responses by

panelists regarding best approaches for implementing collaboration for developing

teacher leaders were through teacher-identified topics, through uninterrupted time,

through reflection time, without mandated reporting, through purposeful meeting time,

and by having midlevel leaders attend and take part in site principal meetings (see Table

7).

 The best approach to implementing the element of *coaching, modeling, and*

mentoring for developing teacher leaders, as identified by members of the expert panel

responding to the first question in Round 3, is through instructional/academic coaches

Table 7

The Best Approach to Implementing Collaboration *as an Element of Professional Learning Opportunities That Develop Teacher Leadership, Identified as Most Important in Round 2*

Best approach for collaboration	Frequency of response
Through structured meeting time	16
Within the regular school work day	7
Within varied meeting locations	3
Through small groups	2
Through teacher-identified topics	1
Through uninterrupted time	1
Through reflection time	1
Without mandated reporting	1
Through purposeful meeting time	1
By having midlevel leaders attend and take part in site principal meetings	1

Note. $N = 22$.

(seven of 22 responses). Other approaches identified by panel members included through observation of good practice in place (six of 22 responses), through structured time for interaction (six of 22 responses), and by creating an environment open to developing teacher leadership (six of 22 responses). Three of the 22 expert panelists identified training teachers to be coaches and identifying teachers who are respected by peers to be mentors as the best approaches to implementing coaching, modeling, and mentoring. Two of the 22 panelists suggested identifying teachers with areas of expertise/experience and providing training to be leaders as the best approaches to implementing the element of coaching, modeling, and mentoring (see Table 8). There were no unduplicated responses by panelists.

Table 8

The Best Approach to Implementing Coaching, Mentoring, and Modeling *as an Element of Professional Learning Opportunities That Develop Teacher Leadership, Identified as Most Important in Round 2*

Best approach for coaching, mentoring, modeling	Frequency of response
Instructional/academic coaches	7
Through observation of good practices in place	6
Through structured time for interaction	6
Create an environment open to developing teacher leadership	6
Train teachers to be coaches	3
Identify teachers who are respected and can serve as mentors	3
Identify teachers with areas of expertise/experience	2
Provide training to be leaders	2

Note. $N = 22$.

The best approach to implementing professional learning opportunities *identified by teachers*, as identified by members of the expert panel responding to Round 3, is by asking teachers what they need (14 of 22 responses). The only two other approaches identified by panel members were creating an environment open to input and offering options (see Table 9). There were no unduplicated responses by panelists.

Table 9

The Best Approach to Implementing Professional Learning Opportunities Identified by Teachers *That Develop Teacher Leadership, Identified as Most Important in Round 2*

Best approach for professional learning identified by teachers	Frequency of response
Ask teachers what they need	14 of 22
Create an environment open to input	6 of 22
Offer options	2 of 22

Note. $N = 22$.

The best approach to implementing professional learning opportunities *by teachers and for teachers*, as identified by members of the expert panel responding to Round 3, is by identifying teacher "experts" on topics and letting them share (nine of 22 responses). Other approaches identified by panel members included giving teachers time to collaborate formally and informally, creating coaching positions, and through peer observations. The only unduplicated response by panelists regarding the best approach for implementing professional learning opportunities by teachers and for teacher was by using teachers from other sites to minimize preconceptions (see Table 10).

Table 10

The Best Approach to Implementing Professional Learning Opportunities by Teachers and for Teachers *That Develop Teacher Leadership, Identified as Most Important in Round 2*

Best approach for opportunities by teacher and for teachers	Frequency of response
Identify teacher "experts" on topics and let them share	9
Give teachers time to collaborate formally and informally	7
Create coaching positions	3
Through peer observations	3
By using teachers from other sites to minimize preconceptions	1

Note. N = 22.

The best approach for implementing the element of *a focus on site-specific issues and needs* for developing teacher leaders, as identified by members of the expert panel responding to the first question in Round 3, is by involving teachers in defining the need (11 of 22 responses). One half of the panelists agreed that involving teachers in defining the need was the best approach. Other approaches identified by panel members included through discussion and collaboration (five of 22 responses), by ensuring support from administration (three of 22 responses), and through teacher training (three of 22

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responses). Two of the 22 expert panelists identified implementing a focus on site-specific issues and needs through the use of data as the best approach. Unduplicated responses by panelists included implementing a focus on site-specific issues and needs by allowing the time needed to determine the need, by focusing on targeted needs rather than overarching ones, by working within small groups, and through rigorous curriculum design and data teams (see Table 11).

Table 11

The Best Approach for Implementing a Focus on Site-Specific Issues and Needs *as an Element of Professional Learning Opportunities That Develop Teacher Leadership, Identified as Most Important in Round 2*

Best approach for a focus on site-specific issues and needs	Frequency of response
Involving teachers in defining the need	11
Through discussion and collaboration	5
By ensuring support from administration	3
Through teacher training	3
Through the use of data to decide what is needed	2
By allowing the time needed to determine the need	1
By focusing on targeted needs rather than overarching ones	1
By working within small groups	1
Through rigorous curriculum design and data teams	1

Note. $N = 22$.

Delphi III: Research Question 2. The second question in Round 3 was, "Of the barriers identified as most important to overcome in Round 2, what are the most effective strategies for overcoming each one?" The barriers identified in Round 2 included a lack of support from administration, overburden by current level of responsibilities on teachers, a lack of time, resistant staff members, a lack of resources, a lack of support

from colleagues, a lack of understanding as to the skills needed for effective teacher leadership, and a lack of teacher leadership opportunities. In the Delphi III, expert panel members were asked to identify the most effective strategies for overcoming each of the barriers identified in Round 2. Responses from the second question in Round 3 of the Delphi process were extracted and thematically consolidated based on the most effective strategies for overcoming the barriers to implementing professional learning opportunities for developing teacher leaders. For example, responses regarding the most effective strategies for overcoming the lack of support from administration that included reminding administration of the importance of support, asking for a meeting with administration to discuss concerns, identifying issues or barriers from all stakeholders, working collaboratively with administration to address barriers, reminding administration to encourage teachers to share what they do in the way of leadership, communicating to administration that teachers want to be involved, asking administration for input and suggestions, and more communication were consolidated as informing/communicating with administration regarding challenges and concerns. Other responses from the expert panel were similarly consolidated, are presented individually for each barrier, and are listed in table form.

The most effective strategy for overcoming *a lack of administrative support* as a barrier to the implementation of professional learning opportunities that develop teacher leadership was informing/communicating with administration regarding challenges and concerns (nine of 22 responses). Four expert panel members also identified asking for assistance from other stakeholders and providing opportunities for administration to experience what teachers do as effective strategies. In addition, reminding teachers to

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lead up (three of 22 responses), providing training to administration about cultivating

teacher leadership (two of 22 responses), and removing ineffective administrators (two of

22 responses) were also identified as effective strategies for overcoming this barrier to

the implementation of professional learning opportunities that develop teacher leadership.

Unduplicated responses by panelists regarding effective strategies included relying on a

site's internal memory, reminding the administration to organize the process while

allowing it to be teacher driven, encouraging administration to be seen on campus in a

communicating relationship with teachers, encouraging both parties to find common

rallying points and build from there, and arranging meetings that are meaningful between

teachers and administration (see Table 12).

Table 12

The Most Effective Strategies for Overcoming a Lack of Administrative Support *as a Barrier to the Implementation of Professional Learning Opportunities That Develop Teacher Leadership, Identified as Most Important in Round 2*

Most effective strategies for overcoming a lack of administrative support	Frequency of response
Inform/communicate with administration regarding challenges and concerns	9
Ask for assistance from other stakeholders	4
Provide opportunities for administration to experience what teachers do	4
Teachers should lead up	3
Provide training to administration about cultivating teacher leadership	2
Remove ineffective administrators	2
Sites need to rely on its internal memory	1
Remind administration to organize the process while allowing it to be teacher driven	1
Encourage administration to be seen on campus in a communicating relationship with teachers	1
Encourage finding common rallying points and build from there	1
Arrange meetings that are meaningful between teachers and administration	1

Note. N = 22.

The expert panel was not in agreement as to the one most effective strategy for overcoming the *overburden by current level of responsibilities on teachers* as a barrier to the implementation of professional learning opportunities that develop teacher leadership. The panel identified involving more teachers in site work (five of 22 responses) and encouraging teachers to ask for help/communicate challenges (five of 22 responses) as equally effective. Four expert panel members also identified reducing the number of teacher class preparations/student load as an effective strategy. In addition, having teachers learn to say "no" and to delegate (three of 22 responses) and providing release time for teachers as needed when fulfilling leadership roles (two of 22 responses) were also identified as effective strategies for overcoming the overburden by current level of responsibilities on teachers as a barrier to the implementation of professional learning opportunities that develop teacher leadership. Two expert panel members indicated that they were unable to provide possible strategies for overcoming the overburden by current level of responsibilities on teachers. Unduplicated responses by panelists regarding effective strategies included rewarding teachers who provide leadership, developing teacher buy-in through a transparent process, developing a consistent vision and message along with realistic timelines, and hiring more teachers (see Table 13).

There was little difference between the top two responses from the expert panel regarding the most effective strategy for overcoming *a lack of time* as a barrier to the implementation of professional learning opportunities that develop teacher leadership. The top two responses were building time into existing schedules (11 of 22 responses) and incorporating professional learning opportunities into the existing meeting times (10

Table 13

The Most Effective Strategies for Overcoming the Overburden by Current Level of
Responsibilities *as a Barrier to the Implementation of Professional Learning Opportunities That
Develop Teacher Leadership, Identified as Most Important in Round 2*

Most effective strategies for overcoming the overburden on teachers by current level of responsibilities	Frequency of response
Involve more teachers in site work	5
Encourage teachers to ask for help /communicate challenges	5
Reduce teacher class preparations and/or student load	4
Teachers need to learn to say "no" and/or to delegate	3
Provide release time for teachers as needed when fulfilling leadership roles	2
No solutions to this situation	2
Reward teachers who provide leadership	1
Develop teacher buy-in through transparent process	1
Develop consistent vision and message along with realistic timelines	1
Hire more teachers	1

Note. $N = 22$.

of 22 responses). The panel also identified reconstructing/reconfiguring the existing

school day (five of 22 responses) and creating common prep time for teachers to work

together (four of 22 responses) as effective strategies. In addition, two expert panel

members identified utilizing technology as an effective strategy for overcoming a lack of

time as a barrier to the implementation of professional learning opportunities that develop

teacher leadership. Unduplicated responses by panelists regarding effective strategies

included working closely with the union to develop a reasonable plan, prioritizing what is

important and saying no to what is not, focusing on specific topics that can be covered in

minutes rather than hours, and stopping the practice of using teachers for administrative

work that drains teachers of time, energy, and focus (see Table 14).

Table 14

The Most Effective Strategies for Overcoming a Lack of Time *as a Barrier to the Implementation of Professional Learning Opportunities That Develop Teacher Leadership, Identified as Most Important in Round 2*

Most effective strategies for overcoming the lack of time	Frequency of response
Build time into existing schedule	11
Incorporate professional learning opportunities time into the existing meeting times	10
Reconstruct/reconfigure the existing school day	5
Create common prep time for teachers to work together	4
Utilize technology	2
Work closely with union to develop a reasonable plan	1
Prioritize what is important and say no to what is not	1
Focus on specific topics that can be covered in minutes rather than hours	1
Stop using teachers for administrative work and which drains teachers of time, energy, and focus	1

Note. $N = 22$.

The most effective strategy for overcoming *resistant teachers* as a barrier to the implementation of professional learning opportunities that develop teacher leadership was being open to and encouraging input from resistant teachers (seven of 22 responses). Other effective strategies identified by the expert panelists were identifying those teachers who can model leadership for others (four of 22 responses), providing opportunities for team building and finding common ground (three of 22 responses), and encouraging participation of resistant teachers in their areas of expertise (two of 22 responses). Two expert panel members indicated that they were unable to provide possible strategies for overcoming the barrier of resistant teachers. In particular, one panel member stated, "Don't know how to make colleagues care when they do not." Communicating a shared vision, making sure one voice is delivering the same message,

counseling resistant teachers, accepting that teachers want to be better whether it appears like that or not, encouraging resistant teachers to move on to a different organization, and not worrying about the resistant teachers if they are otherwise effective were unduplicated responses by members of the expert panel regarding effective strategies for overcoming resistant teachers as a barrier to the implementation of professional learning opportunities that develop teacher leadership (see Table 15).

Table 15

The Most Effective Strategies for Overcoming Resistant Teachers *as a Barrier to the Implementation of Professional Learning Opportunities That Develop Teacher Leadership, Identified as Most Important in Round 2*

Most effective strategies for overcoming resistant teachers	Frequency of response
Be open to and encourage input from resistant teachers	7
Identify those teachers who can model leadership for others	4
Provide opportunities for team building and finding common ground	3
Unsure what to do	2
Encourage participation of resistant teachers in their areas of expertise	2
Communicate a shared vision	1
Make sure one voice is delivering the same message	1
Counsel resistant teachers	1
Accept that teachers want to be better whether it appears like that or not	1
Encourage resistant teachers to move on to a different organization	1
Do not worry about the resistant teacher if they will work for the benefit of students	1

Note. $N = 22$.

The most effective strategy for overcoming *a lack of resources* as a barrier to the implementation of professional learning opportunities that develop teacher leadership was budgeting strategically and with intent to support professional learning (nine of 22

responses). Other strategies identified as being of equal effectiveness as indicated by the

expert panelists were searching for cost-effective resources (five of 22 responses) and

finding other funding sources (five of 22 responses). Three expert panel members

indicated that they were unable to provide possible strategies for overcoming the barrier

of a lack of resources. The only unduplicated response by panelists regarding the most

effective strategies for overcoming a lack of resources as a barrier to the implementation

of professional learning opportunities that develop teacher leaders was keeping ideas and

opportunities grounded in reality (see Table 16).

Table 16

The Most Effective Strategies for Overcoming a Lack of Resources *as a Barrier to the
Implementation of Professional Learning Opportunities That Develop Teacher Leadership,
Identified as Most Important in Round 2*

Most effective strategies for overcoming a lack of resources	Frequency of response
Budget strategically and with intent to support professional learning	9
Search for cost-effective resources	5
Find other funding sources	5
Unsure	3
Keep ideas and opportunities grounded in reality	1

Note. *N* = 22.

Delphi III: Research Question 3. The third question in Round 3 was, "Of the

facilitators identified as most important in Round 2, what are the most effective strategies

for implementing each one?" The facilitators identified in Round 2 included a supportive

administration, a positive work environment, opportunities for teachers to be a part of

school-wide decision making, time for collaboration among peers, and trust and respect

among teachers. In the Delphi III, expert panel members were asked to identify the most

effective strategies for implementing each of the facilitators identified in Round 2. Responses from the third question in Round 3 of the Delphi process were extracted and thematically consolidated based on the most effective strategies for implementing the facilitators to the implementation of professional learning opportunities for developing teacher leaders. For example, responses regarding the most effective strategies for implementing a supportive administration that included working alongside teachers as fellow collaborators, spending bonding time between administrators and teachers, having administrators and teachers working together as a team, and teamwork to create a cohesive bond within staff were consolidated as providing bonding time for administrators and teachers. Other responses from the expert panel were similarly consolidated, are presented individually for each facilitator, and are listed in table form.

The most effective strategy for facilitating *a supportive administration* for the implementation of professional learning opportunities that develop teacher leadership according to the expert panel was by creating a culture of open communication (six of 22 responses). Five expert panel members also identified hiring administrators who understand the development of teacher leaders and providing bonding time for administrators and teachers as effective strategies. Three additional panelists identified assuming positive intentions and coaching/mentoring administrators as effective strategies. In addition, asking teachers what is missing and where administrators can grow (two of 22 responses) was also identified as an effective strategy for facilitating a supportive administration for the implementation of professional learning opportunities that develop teacher leadership. Unduplicated responses by panelists regarding effective strategies included allowing for mistakes, providing time and resources, setting clear

expectations, hiring invested administrators, modeling expected behaviors, and pulling in

staff members to assist on current projects or in areas of need (see Table 17).

Table 17

The Most Effective Strategies for Implementing a Supportive Administration *as a Facilitator to the Implementation of Professional Learning Opportunities That Develop Teacher Leadership, Identified as Most Important in Round 2*

Most effective strategies for facilitating a supportive administration	Frequency of response
Create a culture of open communication	6
Hire administrators that understand the development of teacher leaders	5
Provide bonding time for administrators and teachers	5
Assume positive intention	3
Coach/mentor administrators	3
Ask teachers what is missing and where the administrator needs to grow	2
Allow for mistakes	1
Provide time and resources	1
Set clear expectation	1
Hire invested administrators	1
Model expected behavior	1
Pull in staff members to assist on current projects or in areas of need	1

Note. *N* = 22.

The most effective strategy for facilitating *a positive work environment* for the

implementation of professional learning opportunities that develop teacher leadership

according to the expert panel was by providing opportunities for growing "the team" (six

of 22 responses). Three expert panel members also identified encouraging a

collaborative environment, recognizing staff, being encouraging, and having open

communication as effective strategies. In addition, demonstrating respect (two of 22

responses) was also identified as an effective strategy for facilitating a positive work

environment for the implementation of professional learning opportunities that develop

teacher leadership. Unduplicated responses by panelists regarding effective strategies

included having clear expectations and an understanding of what is needed to be

successful and having good site leadership (see Table 18).

Table 18

The Most Effective Strategies for Implementing a Positive Work Environment *as a Facilitator to the Implementation of Professional Learning Opportunities That Develop Teacher Leadership, Identified as Most Important in Round 2*

Most effective strategies for facilitating a positive work environment	Frequency of response
Provide opportunities for growing "the team"	6
Encourage a collaborative environment	3
Recognize staff	3
Be encouraging	3
Have open communication	3
Demonstrate respect	2
Have clear expectations and an understanding of what is needed to be successful	1
Have good site leadership	1

Note. N = 22.

There was a significant margin between the number one and number two

strategies identified by expert panelists with regard to facilitating *opportunities for*

teachers to be a part of school-wide decision making for the implementation of

professional learning opportunities that develop teacher leadership. The most effective

strategy identified was providing a variety of opportunities where teachers can contribute

(16 of 22 responses). Four expert panel members identified including more teachers on

site leadership teams and maintaining an environment with open communication as

effective strategies. Two additional panelists identified including teachers in a

conversation about site issues and surveying/asking for teacher input as effective

strategies. Unduplicated responses by panelists regarding effective strategies included

using the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) process and providing

peer mentoring (see Table 19).

Table 19

The Most Effective Strategies for Implementing Opportunities for Teachers to be a Part of School-Wide Decision Making *as a Facilitator to the Implementation of Professional Learning Opportunities That Develop Teacher Leadership, Identified as Most Important in Round 2*

Most effective strategies for facilitating opportunities for teachers to be a part of school-wide decision making	Frequency of response
Provide a variety of opportunities where teachers can contribute	16
Include more teachers on site leadership teams	4
Maintain an environment with open communication	4
Include teachers in conversation about site issues	2
Survey/ask for teacher input	2
Use the WASC process	1
Provide peer mentoring	1

Note. $N = 22$.

The most effective strategy for facilitating *time for collaboration among peers* for

the implementation of professional learning opportunities that develop teacher leadership

according to the expert panel was by providing time within the regular work day (nine of

22). Other strategies identified by panel members included accepting informal as well as

formal collaboration (seven of 22 responses), providing opportunities outside of the

regular work day (six of 22 responses), proving common preps within teams (three of 22

responses), and encouraging the use of technology (two of 22 responses). Unduplicated

responses by panelists regarding effective strategies included working with the union and

not making collaboration an accountability issue (see Table 20).

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Table 20

The Most Effective Strategies for Implementing Time for Collaboration Among Peers *as a Facilitator to the Implementation of Professional Learning Opportunities That Develop Teacher Leadership, Identified as Most Important in Round 2*

Most effective strategies for facilitating time for collaboration among peers	Frequency of response
Provide time within the regular work day	9
Accept informal as well as formal collaboration	7
Provide opportunities outside of the regular work day	6
Provide common preps within teams	3
Encourage the use of technology	2
Work with the union	1
Do not make collaboration an accountability issue	1

Note. N = 22.

The expert panel was not in agreement as to the one most effective strategy for facilitating *trust and respect among peers* for the implementation of professional learning opportunities that develop teacher leadership. The top two responses were creating opportunities to spend time together and team build (four of 22 responses) and staying positive (four of 22 responses). Two expert panelists also identified allowing the building of trust and respect to happen over time and encouraging open communication as effective strategies. This questionnaire item resulted in the largest number of unduplicated responses by panelists. Identified effective strategies included demonstrating transparency, demonstrating leadership, having background knowledge, allowing teachers to be leaders by bringing them into leadership team meetings, providing teachers with leadership training on how to deal with resistant teachers, creating teacher-driven steering committees, sending teachers surveys, providing teachers with feedback, expecting the administration to take the lead in modeling and valuing

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respect, holding people accountable, having teachers identify and select teacher leaders,

keeping confidentiality, giving people space to express themselves, finding common

ground, and treating others as professionals (see Table 21).

Table 21

The Most Effective Strategies for Implementing Trust and Respect Among Peers *as a Facilitator to the Implementation of Professional Learning Opportunities That Develop Teacher Leadership, Identified as Most Important in Round 2*

Most effective strategies for facilitating trust and respect among peers	Frequency of response
Create opportunities to spend time together and team build	4
Stay positive	4
Allow the building of trust and respect to happen over time	2
Encourage open communication	2
Demonstrate transparency	1
Demonstrate leadership	1
Have background knowledge	1
Allow teachers to be leaders by bringing into leadership team meetings	1
Provide teachers leadership training on how to deal with reluctant teachers	1
Create teacher-driven steering committees	1
Send teachers surveys	1
Provide teachers with feedback	1
Expect the administration to take the lead in modeling and valuing respect	1
Hold people accountable	1
Have teachers identify and select teacher leaders	1
Keep confidentiality	1
Give people space to express themselves	1
Find common ground	1
Treat others as professionals	1

Note. N = 22.

CHAPTER V: FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The call for education reform has become increasingly urgent as educational institutions attempt to achieve breakthrough results and increase student achievement in an environment where adequate yearly progress is tied to the success or failure of a school. Yet, there is limited research in the area of cultivating teacher leadership school-wide. This study sought to identify the key learning opportunities necessary to build teacher leadership, the most difficult barriers to overcome, and the most important facilitators in implementing teacher leadership school-wide. This study examined effective high school teacher leaders' perceptions of the best approaches to implementation of the identified learning opportunities, the most effective methods of overcoming the identified barriers, and the most effective strategies for implementing the facilitators.

Identifying the key characteristics necessary to build teacher leadership and providing the appropriate professional development opportunities will empower teachers to realize their ability to move forward independently. It will also assist schools and local educational agencies (LEAs) seeking to develop effective teacher leadership, specifically developing the ability of teachers school-wide to move forward independently.

Chapter I of this study provided the educational context and introduction for the research study presented. Chapter II consisted of a review of the literature related to the study on (a) transformational change in education, (b) principal leadership, (c) teacher leadership roles, (d) developing teachers to move forward independently, (e) obstacles to teacher leadership, (f) facilitators to teacher leadership, and (g) traits of effective teacher

leadership. Chapter III explained the research design and methodology of the study. Chapter III included the explanation of the population, sample, and data-gathering procedures, as well as the procedures used to analyze the data collected. Chapter IV presented, analyzed, and provided a discussion of the findings of the study. Chapter V offers a summary of the study and a summary of the major findings, unexpected findings, and conclusions as they relate to the research questions. Recommendations for action and further research, and concluding remarks and reflections are also presented.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was twofold. The first purpose of this study was to identify the key learning opportunities necessary to build teacher leadership, the most difficult barriers to overcome in implementing teacher leadership, and the most important facilitators of implementing teacher leadership as identified by teacher experts. The second purpose of this study was to determine the best approaches to implementation of the identified learning opportunities, the most effective methods of overcoming the identified barriers, and the most effective strategies for implementing the facilitators that support teacher leaders as identified by teacher experts.

Research Questions

The following research questions were used to guide this study.

Delphi Round 1.

1. What professional learning opportunities best support the implementation of effective teacher leadership?

2. What do teacher leaders identify as barriers to the implementation of effective teacher leadership?

3. What do teacher leaders identify as facilitators to the implementation of effective teacher leadership?

Delphi Round 2.

1. To what degree are the professional learning opportunities identified in Round 1 important in implementing teacher leadership?

2. To what degree is it important to overcome the barriers identified in Round 1 to implement teacher leadership?

3. To what degree are the facilitators identified in Round 1 important in implementing teacher leadership?

Delphi Round 3.

1. Of the professional learning opportunities identified as most important in Round 2, what is the best approach to implementing each one?

2. Of the barriers identified as most important to overcome in Round 2, what are the most effective strategies for overcoming each one?

3. Of the facilitators identified as most important in Round 2, what are the most effective strategies for implementing each one?

Methodology

A policy Delphi method was used to gather qualitative data for this study, which adds to the body of knowledge regarding teacher leadership, specifically developing the ability of teachers to move forward independently. Data collected in this Delphi study were analyzed in three stages through the use of electronic questionnaires distributed in three rounds. Due to the nature of this study, qualitative data collected from each round were used to develop the questionnaire for the subsequent round.

Site principals at 24 Riverside County high schools within the participating districts were contacted by e-mail and were asked for permission to contact teachers on their staff. The principals were asked to identify three or four effective teacher leaders, based on the six most prominent characteristics of effective teacher leaders found in the literature review, to serve as research study expert panel members (see Appendix B). Site principals at 17 of the 24 high schools contacted responded to the request for names of effective teacher leaders and provided contact information for 68 teachers to serve as expert panel members. Thirty-six teachers responded to the request to participate and provided informed consent.

Twenty-nine of the 36 prospective expert panel members (74%) responded to the Round 1 electronic questionnaire. Three separate open-ended questions on teacher leadership were developed upon which expert panelists reflected and provided input. Responses and judgments from each panelist were extracted, and duplicate responses were consolidated. A cutoff point of 10 was used to identify the top responses, which were used to generate the questionnaire for Round 2.

Twenty-eight of the 29 expert panelists from Round 1 (97%) responded to the Round 2 electronic questionnaire. In the second round of the Delphi study, expert panelists were asked to rank the consolidated Round 1 responses using a Likert scale. Data from Round 2 were used to construct a final instrument for Round 3.

Twenty-two of the 29 expert panelists from Round 1 (76%) responded to the third and final electronic questionnaire. Responses from Round 3 were extracted, duplicate responses were consolidated, and a summary of the findings was shared with the expert panel. The findings, presented in Chapter IV of this dissertation, add to the body of

knowledge regarding teacher leadership, specifically developing the ability of teachers to move forward independently.

Population

The population for expert panel participants in this study consisted of public high school teacher leaders in Riverside County, California. The set of characteristics used by high school principals to select teacher leaders was determined by the six most prominent characteristics for effective teacher leaders found in the literature review. These six characteristics are as follows:

1. embody and project the belief that teachers make a difference (Collay, 2011);

2. promote professional learning communities through open communication and reflective actions (Marzano et al., 2005);

3. endeavor to improve and excel pedagogically through continuous learning (Reeves, 2008);

4. address obstacles within the organization's culture by focusing on the needs of all students (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009);

5. take ideas to implementation by creating systems of support and networking within all levels of the organization (Crowther, 2009); and

6. recognize, nurture, and celebrate success through collective responsibility and high expectations (Blasé & Blasé, 2006).

Sample

This study used a purposeful sampling of effective public high school teacher leaders from Riverside County, California. Permission was solicited from district superintendents for the researcher to contact high school principals within their districts.

High school principals were asked to identify three to four teachers who possessed the characteristics of effective teacher leaders to serve as members of the expert panel for this Delphi study. The set of characteristics used by principals to select teacher leaders was determined by the six most prominent characteristics for effective teacher leaders found in the literature review.

Major Findings

The findings of this study have dual significance. First, there is limited research in the area of cultivating teacher leadership school-wide, and the findings add to that body of knowledge. Second, the findings from this study are encouraging for schools and LEAs seeking to develop effective teacher leadership, specifically developing the ability of teachers school-wide to move forward independently.

A summary of the key findings is presented in this chapter as determined in Chapter IV. Major findings from each round of the Delphi study are presented and organized by research question and by round.

Round 1

Round 1 of the Delphi study included three open-ended questions that were designed to solicit a broad range of responses. The questions were posed to a panel of effective teacher leaders via an electronic questionnaire.

Research Question 1. The first question in Round 1 was, "What professional learning opportunities best support the implementation of effective teacher leadership?" An expert panel of teacher leaders was asked to identify the professional learning opportunities that best support the implementation of effective teacher leadership. The three most frequent responses were *collaboration*, *addressing current site issues/needs*,

and *allowing for practice and practical application*. The analysis of responses identified two significant findings. Responses indicated that teacher leaders believe that teachers themselves must lead whatever professional learning needs to take place for teacher leadership to grow. In addition, instead of providing suggestions as to specific professional learning opportunities, 96% of the respondents identified an element of professional learning as what best supports the implementation of effective teacher leadership. This focus on elements of professional learning opportunities indicates that teacher leaders believe that it is a focus on the elements, not specific professional learning opportunities, that leads to the implementation of effective teacher leadership.

Research Question 2. The second question in Round 1 was, "What do teacher leaders identify as barriers to the implementation of effective teacher leadership?" Members of the expert panel were asked to identify the barriers to the implementation of effective teacher leadership, and two major findings emerged. Findings suggested that teacher leaders believe that *a lack of time* and *a lack of support from colleagues and administration* are the greatest barriers to effective teacher leadership. While responses from panelists clearly indicated that a lack of time is a concern for teacher leaders, they did not elaborate further. More passionate responses accompanied descriptions regarding the lack of support from colleagues and administration, suggesting that teachers believe that the existence of this support is foundational for the implementation of effective teacher leadership.

Research Question 3. The third question in Round 1 was, "What do teacher leaders identify as facilitators to the implementation of effective teacher leadership?" For Research Question 3, findings emerged from the responses by expert panelists regarding

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the facilitators to the implementation of effective leadership. The facilitators suggested most frequently by panel members related to the themes of *time* and *supportive administration*. These responses correlated to and supported the responses from the second question regarding the foundational role of time and support in the implementation of effective teacher leadership.

Round 2

Responses to the first round of open-ended questions were analyzed and categorized into Likert-scale questions. In Round 2, expert panelists who participated in Round 1 were asked to rate the degree of importance of the top nine responses from Round 1.

Research Question 1. The first question in Round 2 was, "To what degree are the elements of professional learning opportunities identified in Round 1 important in implementing teacher leadership?" Responses from the first question in Round 1 were extracted and thematically consolidated. Based on the mean rating of the degree of importance of each of the responses from Round 1, expert panelists identified *collaboration* as the most important element of professional learning opportunities. The data revealed, however, that teacher leaders identified *coaching, mentoring, and modeling* as only minimally less important, suggesting an overarching theme of the interaction between teachers as an important part of implementing teacher leadership. This conclusion was supported by additional comments from the expert panel regarding the importance of *opportunities for peer observations* and training *provided by teachers for teachers*. An additional finding emerged as panelists also rated *addressing current*

and relevant site-specific needs as one of the most important elements of professional learning opportunities.

Research Question 2. The second question in Round 2 was, "To what degree is it important to overcome the barriers identified in Round 1 to implement teacher leadership?" Three major findings surfaced in the qualitative analysis of the expert panelists' perceptions. Two findings were recurring and the third emerged from the Round 2 responses. The first recurring finding was the identification of the *lack of support from administration* as the most important barrier to overcome for the implementation of teacher leadership. This was supported by the Round 1 comments by panelists who indicated a deep concern regarding "weak administrators who do not follow through with what they say they will do," "feeling that they [teachers] are being used or are being manipulated by administration," and "[a] lack of empowerment by insecure administrators." The second recurring finding was that of *a lack of time* as an important barrier to overcome and one that panelists indicated affects a wide range of areas. Panelists' responses from Round 1 indicated that a lack of time affects teachers' ability to "put the latest theories into practice, to reflect, and to refine their practice," to "collaborate with other teachers," and to "allow for on-going support, monitoring, mentoring, reflection, and feedback."

Lastly, an emerging finding was the need to address an *overburden by current level of responsibilities on teachers* if the implementation of teacher leadership is to be adequately addressed. The concern of teacher leaders regarding the feeling of being "overextended" and susceptible to "teacher burn-out" was clearly indicated in Round 1 of the study.

Research Question 3. The third question in Round 2 was, "To what degree are the facilitators identified in Round 1 important in implementing teacher leadership?" During this round, signs of consensus began to occur with the identification of *a supportive administration* as one of the most important facilitators. In Round 2, 79% of the expert panelists identified a supportive administration as *very important*, and 14% identified it as *moderately important*.

When the expert panelists were asked to rate the degree of importance of the facilitators identified in Round 1, four additional findings emerged. They included the importance of a *positive work environment*, *opportunities for teachers to be a part of school-wide decision making*, *time for collaboration among peers*, and *trust and respect among teachers*.

Round 3

In Round 3 of the Delphi study, expert panelists were provided with open-ended questions designed to solicit a broad range of responses regarding the most effective approach for supporting the elements of professional learning opportunities. The open-ended questions were also designed to identify the most effective strategies for overcoming the barriers and for implementing the facilitators that were identified as most important in Round 2 for developing effective teacher leaders.

Research Question 1. The first question in Round 3 was, "Of the elements of professional learning opportunities identified as most important in Round 2, what is the best approach to implementing each one?" Expert panel members overwhelmingly agreed as to the best approach to implementing three of the most important elements of professional learning opportunities. The best approach to implementing collaboration

was *through structured time* (73%), the best approach to implementing learning

opportunities identified by teachers was *by asking teachers what they need* (66%), and

the best approach to implementing a focus on site-specific issues and needs was *by

involving teachers in defining the need* (50%).

While there was no consensus as to the best approach to implementing coaching,

modeling, and mentoring or for implementing professional learning by teachers for

teachers, findings from the responses by panelists indicated a belief by teacher leaders

that the strategies used must involve teachers themselves rather than support from sources

outside of the teacher ranks. Findings further suggested that teacher ownership for the

development of teacher leadership is essential.

Research Question 2. The second question in Round 3 was, "Of the barriers

identified as most important to overcome in Round 2, what are the most effective

strategies for overcoming each one?" The expert panel in this study identified

informing/communicating with administration regarding challenges and concerns as the

best strategy for overcoming the barrier of a lack of administrative support when

attempting to implement professional learning opportunities that develop teacher

leadership. Other strategies suggested by the panelists included *asking for assistance

from other stakeholders*, *providing opportunities for administration to experience what

teachers do*, and *encouraging teachers to lead up*.

When panelists were asked to identify the best strategy to overcome the

overburden by current level of responsibilities on teachers, no clear consensus emerged,

suggesting that teacher leaders struggled to find any one agreed-upon strategy.

Suggested strategies included *involving more teachers in site work*, *encouraging teachers*

to ask for help/communicate challenges, *reducing teacher class preparations and/or student load*, and *teachers needing to learn to say "no" and/or to delegate*.

Expert panelists identified *building time into the existing schedule* and *incorporating professional learning opportunities into existing meeting times* as the two most effective strategies for overcoming the barrier of a lack of time. For overcoming the barrier of resistant teachers, the expert panel believed that the most effective strategy was allowing them to have a voice by *being open to and encouraging input from those resistant teachers*. The most effective strategy for overcoming a lack of resources as a barrier to the implementation of professional learning opportunities that develop teacher leadership, as identified by the expert panel, was *budgeting strategically and with intent to support professional learning*.

Research Question 3. The third question in Round 3 was, "Of the facilitators identified as most important in Round 2, what are the most effective strategies for implementing each one?" Expert panel members were able to reach consensus on the most effective strategies for three of the five facilitators for the implementation of professional learning opportunities that they identified in Round 2. The most effective strategy for facilitating a positive work environment, as identified by the expert panel members, was *providing opportunities for growing "the team."* Panel members overwhelmingly identified *providing a variety of opportunities where teachers can contribute* (73%) as the best strategy for implementing opportunities for teachers to be a part of school-wide decision making as a facilitator to the implementation of professional learning opportunities that develop teacher leadership.

When panelists were asked to identify the best strategy for facilitating time for collaboration among peers and creating trust and respect among teachers, no clear consensus emerged, suggesting that teacher leaders struggled to find any one agreed-upon strategy. Suggested strategies for facilitating time for collaboration among peers included *providing time within the regular work day*. Strategies for facilitating trust and respect among teachers included *creating opportunities for teachers to spend time together and team build* and *staying positive*.

Unexpected Findings

Two unexpected findings emerged from this research study. The first emerged during Round 1 of the research study. While the intent of the first research question in Round 1 was to identify the specific professional learning opportunities that develop teacher leadership, instead the expert panel of effective teacher leaders almost unanimously provided responses that identified elements of professional learning opportunities that need to be in place before specific professional learning can take place.

The second unexpected finding began to emerge from the responses in Round 1 and continued through Round 3. Based on the responses from the expert panel, teachers are able to find and provide solutions for addressing most barriers to teacher leadership; however, they struggle to find solutions to the barriers that deal with adult interaction.

Conclusions

The goal of this study was to obtain the expert opinions of effective teacher leaders regarding the key learning opportunities necessary to build teacher leadership, the most difficult barriers to overcome in implementing teacher leadership, and the most important facilitators of implementing teacher leadership. In addition, the objective of

this study was to determine the best approaches to implementation of the identified learning opportunities, the most effective methods of overcoming the identified barriers, and the most effective strategies for implementing the facilitators that support teacher leaders as identified by teacher experts.

Based on the findings of this study, to implement professional learning opportunities that develop effective teacher leadership, several elements must be in place. An environment that encourages and supports c*ollaboration* must exist. Teachers need to have the opportunity to talk to each other about the new strategies they have learned. This collaboration time can take place either during the course of the regular school day or during regularly scheduled collaboration time. In addition, there must be an opportunity for *practice and practical application* of newly learned information or instructional strategies. For effective teacher leadership to develop, teachers must also feel that they have a voice in *addressing current issues/needs*. Therefore, the professional learning opportunities must be relevant and responsive to site needs.

Although teacher leaders identified *a lack of support from administration* as a recurring theme, they indicated that *a lack of support from their own colleagues* is the most important barrier to developing teacher leadership. Findings from this study indicate that it is essential to have an environment that includes a supportive administration and supportive colleagues. Developing effective teacher leadership is facilitated through a supportive environment and challenged without a supportive one. Both administrators and teachers need to have a better understanding of the importance of developing effective teacher leadership for the ultimate success of students.

While *time* was identified as the third most important barrier to the development of effective teacher leadership, it was mentioned as the most important facilitator. Provision of time is essential for developing effective teacher leadership. It is needed for teachers to be able to collaborate on a variety of issues.

Recommendations for Action

This study gathered data from expert teacher leaders related to the implementation of professional learning opportunities that develop effective teacher leaders. Findings showed, however, that there are elements of professional learning opportunities that must be addressed for professional learning to take place. Several implications for developing effective teacher leadership can be found in this study. The following are recommendations for practice:

1. Schools and districts must restructure the school day to create time for teachers to interact. Simply creating new responsibilities for teachers within current structures will not be effective. While the idea of restructuring may seem overwhelming, even small changes could have an impact. Schools and districts must create regular opportunities for teachers to meet and to collaborate on a variety of issues. Implementation opportunities can include regular weekly collaboration time by scheduling "late-start" or "early release" days. Other designated time that encourages teacher collaboration includes common preparation time and "'houses' within larger schools where . . . a cohort of teachers work together" (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009, p. 93). Also, it is important to ask teachers to provide insight about how to increase collaboration.

2. Schools and districts must provide teachers with information on teacher leadership as regular practice during collaboration time and during staff and department meetings. Because working with peers is essential to the work of teacher leaders, it is crucial to include strategies for working with adults, including resistant teachers, as an integral part of professional learning opportunities.

3. LEAs must bridge the disconnect that currently exists between what teachers and what administrators believe is needed to develop effective teacher leadership. LEAs must provide administrators with current information and professional learning on the development of effective teacher leadership to ensure teachers are supported in this new role. Understanding the importance of providing an environment that supports the development of teacher leaders is essential. This information can be disseminated as an integral part of role-specific and districtwide administrator meetings. LEAs must encourage site administrators to find ways to increase teachers' influence within the school environment, to support teachers to take on leadership roles, and to recognize them for their efforts.

4. Schools and districts must provide professional learning that includes opportunities for teachers and administrators to continue the development of a shared model of decision making in their schools. They must include the integration of site-specific current needs within the context of the professional learning opportunity.

5. Schools and districts must provide opportunities for teachers to participate in peer observations and debriefings, self-reflection, practicing teacher leadership skills, and mentoring and coaching colleagues.

Recommendations for Further Research

Findings from this study suggest the following recommendations for further research:

1. Conduct a replication study to determine whether there would be a difference in findings from middle school teacher perceptions.

2. Conduct a replication study to determine whether there would be a difference in findings from elementary school teacher perceptions.

3. Conduct a study to determine whether there would be a difference in findings from principals' perceptions.

4. Conduct a study to determine whether there would be a difference in findings from a random sampling of all teachers at a school site rather than those selected by their principals based on a set of characteristics of effective teacher leaders.

5. Conduct a study to determine whether increasing professional learning opportunities to develop teacher leadership results in an increase in student achievement.

6. Conduct a study to determine whether increasing professional learning opportunities to develop teacher leadership results in an increase in teacher efficacy.

7. Conduct a study to determine the different structures necessary to support an environment that would facilitate the development of effective teacher leadership.

8. Conduct a replication study to determine whether there would be a difference in findings from representatives of teacher associations or unions.

Concluding Remarks and Reflections

The educational landscape in the United States has changed in the last 20 years, and this change has created a learning environment different from what has been in place

since the early 20th century (Murphy, 2002). With the introduction of the Common Core State Standards have come paradigm shifts in the role of schools and, ultimately, of teachers. Yet, while there has been a focus on advocating the need for a 21st-century education model focused primarily on what capabilities students need to be college and career ready, we have not adequately addressed the needs of our teachers to do the work necessary to prepare our students for their lives beyond high school.

Having spent 8 years as a principal at a comprehensive high school, I can attest to how hard teachers work and how much they care. My experience is that most teachers are dedicated to their students, to their schools, and to their profession. There is also, however, an abundance of frustration from teachers as they attempt to change to meet the needs of a 21st-century educational landscape that exists within an early 20th-century structure.

I was surprised to learn that there is a disconnect between what teachers indicate they need to be effective teacher leaders and what is often provided by those charged with helping teachers develop as effective leaders. Professional learning opportunities are important; however, teachers remind us that there are other fundamental needs that must be met before they can move forward independently. This study provides findings and recommendations for practices to support LEAs and schools as they create an environment, structures, and strategies for teachers to develop as effective teacher leaders.

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APPENDICES

Superintendents Meeting Abstract

Dissertation Title
Teacher Leadership: Developing the ability of teachers to move forward independently—A Delphi study of selected high school teachers in Riverside County, California

Purpose Statement
The first purpose of this study is to identify the ***key learning opportunities*** necessary to build teacher leadership, the ***most difficult barriers*** to overcome in implementing teacher leadership, and the ***most important facilitators*** of implementing teacher leadership as identified by teacher experts. The second purpose of this study is to determine ***the best*** approaches to implementation of the identified learning opportunities, ***the most effective*** approaches for overcoming the identified barriers, and ***the most effective*** approaches for implementing the facilitators that support teacher leaders as identified by teacher experts.

Methodology
Consistent with a **Delphi method**, the instruments used within this study will collect **perceptual data** from an **expert panel of high school teachers** from Riverside County, California through an electronic format within a **three round process**. The expert panel will consist of effective high school teacher leaders selected by high school principals based on the five most prominent set of characteristics of effective teacher leaders found in the literature review.

- **Round 1:** The expert panel will be provided with open ended response questions to identify the professional learning opportunities which best support effective teacher leadership and the barriers and facilitators to the implementation of effective teacher leadership. Results will be used to rank the participant responses within each category by importance from highest to lowest. A cut point will be used to identify the top responses.

- **Round 2:** The top responses from first round will be used to construct a Likert-scaled questionnaire asking the expert panel to indicate the degree of importance of the top responses in round one.

- **Round 3:** Within this instrument, based on the top five to ten responses identified in round two, expert panel members will identify common elements necessary for developing teacher leaders and the most effective way in which to provide professional learning opportunities for developing teacher leaders.

Request of Superintendent
I am asking for your permission to conduct research within your district. I would like permission to contact high school principals within your district who will recommend

participants to serve on an expert panel for my study based on set characteristics of effective teacher leaders.

Approved:_____ Date: 4-25-14 District_____

APPENDIX B

E-mail Request to High School Principals

Mr./Mrs./Ms./Dr._____,

Your Assistant Superintendent, _____, has granted me permission to conduct research in the _____ District. This email is to ask for your assistance.

I am currently a doctoral student in Organizational Leadership in the Brandman University School of Education and am the Director of College and Career Readiness in the Beaumont Unified School District. My doctoral research study is on *effective teacher leader perceptions* on *teacher leadership* and *how to develop the ability of teachers to move forward independently*.

As a former high school principal, I appreciate that your time is very important. I would like permission to contact teacher leaders from your site to serve as expert panel members for my study. At this time, I am requesting the **names and contact email** of **3 – 4 teachers** that you believe **possess** the six most prominent **characteristics of effective teacher leaders**:

1. embody and project the belief that teachers make a difference;
2. promote professional learning communities through open communication and reflective actions;
3. endeavor to improve and excel pedagogically through continuous learning;
4. address obstacles within the organization's culture by focusing on the needs of all students;
5. take ideas to implementation by creating systems of support and networking within all levels of the organization; and
6. recognize, nurture, and celebrate success through collective responsibility and high expectations.

I would like to gather teachers' contact information by **Friday, August 22, 2014**, to begin survey administration by the beginning of September and upon approval from Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Participating teachers will be asked to respond to three rounds of questionnaires during the month of **September 2014** and will receive a **$10 gift card,** if they so choose. Participation in this study will be voluntary and **confidential**. The name of teachers, schools, and school districts will not be reported in the findings and all communication with be conducted on a one to one basis.

Should you have any question, please contact me at (951) 536-3758. Your assistance and the participation of your teachers is greatly appreciated.

Marilyn Saucedo
Director, College and Career Readiness (k-12)
Beaumont Unified School District

APPENDIX C

Brandman University Institutional Review Board Approval

BRANDMAN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
IRB APPLICATION ACTION – APPROVAL
COMPLETED BY BUIRB

IRB ACTION/APPROVAL

Name of Investigator/Researcher: Marilyn M. Saucedo

☐ Returned without review. Insufficient detail to adequately assess risks, protections and benefits.

☐ Approved/Certified as Exempt form IRB Review.

☐ Approved as submitted.

☑ Approved, contingent on minor revisions (see attached)

☐ Requires significant modifications of the protocol before approval. Research must resubmit with modifications (see attached)

☐ Researcher must contact IRB member and discuss revisions to research proposal and protocol.

Level of Risk: ☐ No Risk   ☐ Minimal Risk   ☐ More than Minimal Risk

IRB Comments:

Application requires the following revisions: 1) Need permission letter or approval to conduct research study from the Riverside Department of Education or from the Riverside Superintendent; 2) Clarify the processes which the researcher will maintain confidentiality of each participant when using Google Docs (for example: information will not be shared with the group of participants but will be communicated 1:1 with the researcher); 3) Clarify that the participant will have the option to not receive the $10 gift card if he or she does not want it; and 4) Clarify the language in the Informed Consent to include the participants provided the Bill of Rights.

IRB Contact

Name: Laura Feren, PhD

Telephone: _____   Email: feren@brandman.edu

IRB Certification Number: 08191405   Date: 8/21/2014

Revised IRB Application   ☑ Approved   ☐ Returned

Name: Laura Feren

Telephone: _____   Email: feren@brandman.edu   Date: 9/8/2014

Brandman University IRB Rev, 3.20.14   Adopted   November 2013

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Letter of Invitation for Research Subjects

INFORMATIONAL LETTER FOR RESEARCH SUBJECTS

August 2015

Dear Study Participant:

I am a doctoral candidate in the field of Organizational Leadership in the Department of Education at Brandman University. I am conducting a study on secondary teachers' perception on the key learning opportunities necessary to build teacher leadership and the barriers and facilitators of implementing teacher leadership. In addition, the study will determine the best approaches to implementing the learning opportunities and the most effective approaches for overcoming the barriers and for implementing the facilitators that support teacher leaders.

Because ***you have been identified as an effective teacher leader***, I am asking your assistance in the study by participating in a series of electronic questionnaires. These questionnaires will be administered in three rounds over a three week period. Each round will take ***approximately 10 to 15 minutes to complete***. Rounds will be administered in one week intervals and you will have the opportunity to respond to each round at your convenience within the one week time period designated for each round.

If you agree to participate in the electronic questionnaire, you may be assured that it will be ***<u>completely confidential</u>***. No names will be attached to any notes or records from the interview. All information will remain in locked files accessible only to the researchers. No employer will have access to the electronic questionnaire information. You will be free to withdraw from the study at any time. Further, you may be assured that the researches are not in any way affiliated with your employing agency.

The research director, *Marilyn M. Saucedo* is available in by phone at (951) 536-3758, to answer any questions you may have. Your participation would be greatly valued.

Sincerely,

Marilyn M. Saucedo

APPENDIX E

Informed Consent Form

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Teacher Leadership: Developing the ability of teachers to move forward independently—A Delphi study of selected secondary teachers in Riverside County, California

BRANDMAN
UNIVERSITY 16355
LAGUNA CANYON ROAD
IRVINE, CA 92618

RESPONSIBLE INVESTIGATOR: Marilyn M. Saucedo

TITLE OF CONSENT FORM: Consent to Participate in Research

PURPOSE OF STUDY: The first purpose of this study is to identify the key learning opportunities necessary to build teacher leadership, the most difficult barriers to overcome in implementing teacher leadership, and the most important facilitators of implementing teacher leadership as identified by teacher experts. The second purpose of this study is to determine the best approaches to implementation of the identified learning opportunities, the most effective approaches for overcoming the identified barriers, and the most effective approaches for implementing the facilitators that support teacher leaders as identified by teacher experts.

In participating in this study I agree to participate in three rounds of electronic survey questionnaires administered in one week intervals over a period of three weeks. Each survey will take no longer than 10 – 15 minutes to complete. You will be sent an invitation before each round with explicit instruction for completion of the subsequent questionnaire.

  a) Round one of the electronic questionnaire will require participants to type responses to three open ended questions.

  b) Round two of the electronic questionnaire will require participants to rank the degree of importance of items related to responses to round one question using a predetermined Likert scale.

  c) Round three of the electronic questionnaire will require participants to provide responses to open ended questions based on rankings generated from round 2.

I understand that:

a) The potential risks for participation in this study are minimal. Identification of all participants will be anonymous throughout the study although email addresses of participants will be necessary for participation in the electronic survey questionnaires.

b) The benefits of this study to me include a $10.00 gift card following the final survey in round three. Potential benefits to the field of education include adding to the body of knowledge regarding teacher leadership, specifically developing the ability of teachers to move forward independently.

c) I understand that I may decline the $10.00 gift card if I so choose.

d) Any questions I have concerning my participation in this study will be answered by Marilyn M. Saucedo, M.Ed., at (951) 536-3758.

e) I understand that I may refuse to participate or may withdraw from this study at any time without any negative consequences. Also, the Investigator may stop the study at any time.

f) I also understand that no information that identifies me will be released without my separate consent and that all identifiable information will be protected to the limits allowed by law. If the study design or the use of the data is to be changed, I will be so informed and my consent re-obtained. I understand that if I have any questions,
    comments, or concerns about the study or the informed consent process, I may write or call the Office of the Executive Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, Brandman University, and 16355 Laguna Canyon Road, Irvine, CA 92618, (949) 341-7641.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: I acknowledge that I have received a copy of this form and the "Research Participant's Bill of Rights."

I have read the above and understand it and hereby consent to the procedure(s) set forth.

_____
Printed Name of Participant

_____ _____
Signature of Participant   Date

APPENDIX F

Research Participant's Bill of Rights

Any person who is requested to consent to participate as a subject in an experiment, or who is requested to consent on behalf of another, has the following rights:

1. To be told what the study is attempting to discover.
2. To be told what will happen in the study and whether any of the procedures, drugs or devices are different from what would be used in standard practice.
3. To be told about the risks, side effects or discomforts of the things that may happen to him/her.
4. To be told if he/she can expect any benefit from participating and, if so, what the benefits might be.
5. To be told what other choices he/she has and how they may be better or worse than being in the study.
6. To be allowed to ask any questions concerning the study both before agreeing to be involved and during the course of the study.
7. To be told what sort of medical treatment is available if any complications arise.
8. To refuse to participate at all before or after the study is started without any adverse effects.
9. To receive a copy of the signed and dated consent form.
10. To be free of pressures when considering whether he/she wishes to agree to be in the study.

If at any time you have questions regarding a research study, you should ask the researchers to answer them. You also may contact the Brandman University Institutional Review Board, which is concerned with the protection of volunteers in research projects.

The Brandman University Institutional Review Board may be contacted either by telephoning the Office of Academic Affairs at (949) 341-9937 or by writing to the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, Brandman University, 16355 Laguna Canyon Road, Irvine, CA, 92618.
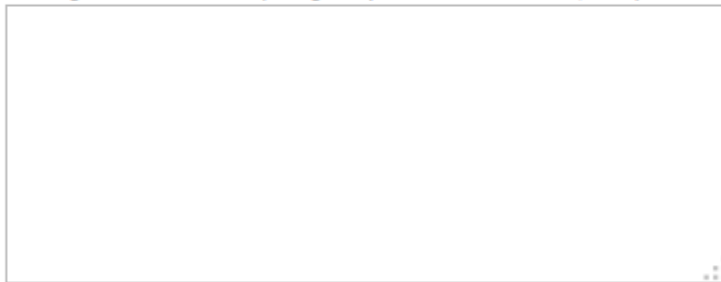
Delphi Study Round 1 Questionnaire

Delphi Study Questionnaire - Round 1

Please provide a brief but thorough response to the following questions related to your perceptions regarding professional learning opportunities, barriers, and facilitators of effective teacher leadership in public high schools.
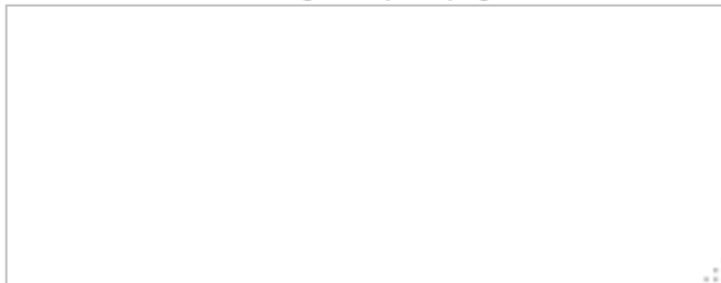
* Required

What professional learning opportunities best support the implementation of effective teacher leadership? *

Professional learning is professional development or "the primary means that schools utilize to strengthen the development and performance of educators at all levels in order to improve student learning and achievement" (Georgia Department of Education, 2014).
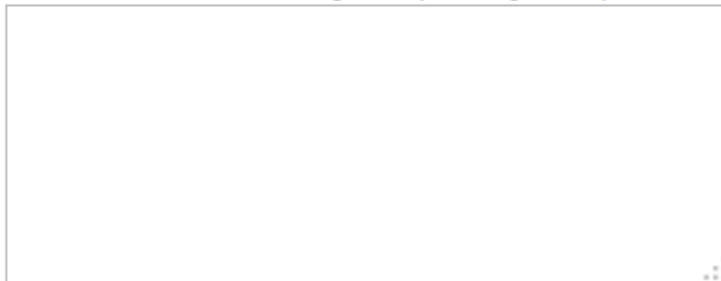
What do teachers identify as barriers to the implementation of effective teacher leadership? *

A barrier is defined as something that impedes progress.

What do teachers identify as facilitators to the implementation of effective teacher leadership? *

A facilitator is defined as something that helps to bring about a positive outcome.

Delphi Study Round 2 Questionnaire

Delphi Study Questionnaire - Round 2
* Required

Professional Learning Opportunities
READ INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY:

To what degree are the professional learning opportunities identified in Round 1 important in implementing TEACHER LEADERSHIP? Mark the degree of importance of each opportunity listed below in relation to each other AFTER reviewing all items in this section first.

Professional learning that includes an opportunities for collaboration. *

	1	2	3	4	
Not at all important	○	○	○	○	Very important

Professional learning that includes opportunities for coaching, modeling, and mentoring. *

	1	2	3	4	
Not at all important	○	○	○	○	Very important

Professional learning that includes opportunities for practice and practical application. *

	1	2	3	4	
Not at all important	○	○	○	○	Very important

Professional learning that addresses current and relevant site-specific needs. *

	1	2	3	4	
Not at all important	○	○	○	○	Very important

Professional learning that promotes trusts and a safe, risk-taking environment.

	1	2	3	4	
Not at all important	○	○	○	○	Very important

Professional learning provided by teachers for teachers. *

	1	2	3	4	
Not at all important	○	○	○	○	Very important

Professional learning that provides opportunities for peer observation. *

	1	2	3	4	
Not at all important	○	○	○	○	Very important

Professional learning opportunities identified by teachers. *

	1	2	3	4	
Not at important	○	○	○	○	Very important

Professional learning opportunities on strategies for implementation of effective teacher leadership. *

	1	2	3	4	
Not at all important	○	○	○	○	Very important

Professional learning opportunities based on teacher input *

	1	2	3	4	
Not at all important	○	○	○	○	Very Important

Delphi Study Questionnaire - Round 2

Barriers

READ INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY:

To what degree is it important to overcome the barriers identified in Round 1 to implement TEACHER LEADERSHIP? Mark the degree of importance of each barrier listed below in relation to each other AFTER reviewing all items in this section first.

Resistant staff members *

Unwilling to make changes; apathetic; fear of failure

	1	2	3	4	
Not at all important	○	○	○	○	Very important

Lack of time *

	1	2	3	4	
Not at all important	○	○	○	○	Very important

Lack of understanding as to the skills needed for effective teacher leadership *

	1	2	3	4	
Not at all important	○	○	○	○	Very important

Lack of support from administration *

(Could include a lack of communication, trust, empowerment, or recognition.)

	1	2	3	4	
Not at all important	○	○	○	○	Very important

Lack of resources that support teacher leadership *

(Could include funding, training, technology, or opportunities.)

	1	2	3	4	
Not at all important	○	○	○	○	Very important

Lack of support from colleagues *

(Could include refusal to be lead, creation of friction, lack of respect, failure to adhere to behavioral norms, or lack of buy-in.)

	1	2	3	4	
Not at all important	○	○	○	○	Very important

Overburden by current level of responsibilities on teachers *

	1	2	3	4	
Not at all important	○	○	○	○	Very important

Lack of teacher leadership opportunities *

	1	2	3	4	
Not at all important	○	○	○	○	Very important

Lack of teacher leadership opportunities *

	1	2	3	4	
Not at all important	○	○	○	○	Very important

Delphi Study Questionnaire - Round 2

Facilitators

READ INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY:

To what degree are the facilitators identified in Round 1 important in implementing TEACHER LEADERSHIP? Mark the degree of importance of each facilitator listed below in relation to each other AFTER reviewing all items in this section first.

Peer Coaching *

(Could allow for observation, suggestions for improvement, constructive feedback, reflection, mentoring, and/or advising.)

	1	2	3	4	
Not at all important	○	○	○	○	Very important

Time for collaboration among peers *

	1	2	3	4	
Not at all important	○	○	○	○	Very important

Training on developing teacher leadership *

	1	2	3	4	
Not at all important	○	○	○	○	Very important

Trust and respect among teachers *

	1	2	3	4	
Not at all important	○	○	○	○	Very Important

A supportive administration that empowers teachers *

	1	2	3	4	
Not at all important	○	○	○	○	Very important

A safe environment open to risk taking and innovation *

	1	2	3	4	
Not at all important	○	○	○	○	Very important

Identified authentic opportunities to lead *

(Opportunities within the school day for teachers to model teacher leadership to peers - formally and informally)

	1	2	3	4	
Not at all important	◯	◯	◯	◯	Very important

Opportunities for teachers to be a part of school-wide decision-making *

(Could include involving teachers in site level decision-making, in providing possible solutions to issues, and/or in school-wide events.)

	1	2	3	4	
Not at all important	◯	◯	◯	◯	Very important

Teacher buy-in and ownership for leading *

	1	2	3	4	
Not at all important	◯	◯	◯	◯	Very important

A positive work environment *

	1	2	3	4	
Not at all important	◯	◯	◯	◯	Very important

Delphi Study Round 3 Questionnaire

Delphi Study Questionnaire - Round 3
* Required

Professional Learning Opportunities

Of the professional learning opportunities identified as most important in Round 2, what is the BEST APPROACH to implementing each one?

Professional learning that includes an opportunity for collaboration *

What is the best approach for implementing this element into professional learning opportunities?

[text box]

Professional learning that includes opportunities for coaching, modeling, and mentoring. *

What is the best approach for implementing this element into professional learning opportunities?

[text box]

Professional learning that addresses current and relevant site-specific needs. *

What is the best approach for implementing this element into professional learning opportunities?

[text box]

Professional learning provided by teachers for teachers. *

What is the best approach for implementing this element into professional learning opportunities?

Professional learning opportunities identified by teachers. *

What is the best approach for implementing this element into professional learning opportunities?

Delphi Study Questionnaire - Round 3

Barriers

Of the barriers identified as most important to overcome in Round 2, what are the most effective strategies for overcoming those barriers?

Lack of support from administration *

List some suggestions on how to overcome this barrier. (List as many as you feel appropriate.)

Lack of time *

List some suggestions on how to overcome this barrier. (List as many as you feel appropriate.)

Lack of support from colleagues (other teachers)

List some suggestions on how to overcome this barrier. (List as many as you feel appropriate.)

Lack of resources that support teacher leadership. *

List some suggestions on how to overcome this barrier. (List as many as you feel appropriate.)

Overburden by current level of responsibilities on teachers *

List some suggestions on how to overcome this barrier. (List as many as you feel appropriate.)

Delphi Study Questionnaire - Round 3

Facilitators

Of the facilitators identified as most important in Round 2, what are the most effective strategies for implementing those facilitators?

Trust and respect among teachers *

List some specific strategies that need to be implemented to bring this facilitator (positive outcome) about? (List as many as you feel appropriate.)

Time for collaboration among peers *

List some specific strategies that need to be implemented to bring this facilitator (positive outcome) about? (List as many as you feel appropriate.)

A supportive administration that empowers teachers *

List some specific strategies that need to be implemented to bring this facilitator (positive outcome) about? (List as many as you feel appropriate.)

Opportunities for teachers to be a part of school-wide decision-making *

List some specific strategies that need to be implemented to bring this facilitator (positive outcome) about? (List as many as you feel appropriate.)

A positive work environment *

List some specific strategies that need to be implemented to bring this facilitator (positive outcome) about? (List as many as you feel appropriate.)