LEARNING ABOUT TEACHER LEADERSHIP THROUGH THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER LEADERS

by

SHARON WING YAN LAU

M.A., The University of British Columbia, 2007
B.Ed., The University of British Columbia, 2001
B.Sc., The University of British Columbia, 2000

DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

in the

Educational Leadership Program

Faculty of Education

© Sharon Wing Yan Lau 2012

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

Fall 2012

APPROVAL

Name: **Sharon Wing Yan Lau**

Degree: **Doctor of Education (Educational Leadership)**

Title of Thesis: ***Learning about Teacher Leadership Through the Lived Experiences of High School Teacher Leaders***

Examining Committee:

         Chair: Dr. Geoff Madoc-Jones, Limited Term Senior Lecturer

---

Dr. Sharon Bailin, Professor Emeritus
Senior Supervisor

Dr. Fred Renihan, Adjunct Professor
Co-Supervisor

Dr. Dan Laitsch, Associate Professor
Committee Member

Dr. Bruce Beairsto
Internal Examiner
Adjunct Professor, Faculty of Education
Simon Fraser University

Dr. Willow Brown
External Examiner
Associate Professor, School of Education
University of Northern British Columbia

Date Defended/Approved: September 11, 2012

ii

PARTIAL COPYRIGHT LICENCE

SFU

The author, whose copyright is declared on the title page of this work, has granted to Simon Fraser University the right to lend this thesis, project or extended essay to users of the Simon Fraser University Library, and to make partial or single copies only for such users or in response to a request from the library of any other university, or other educational institution, on its own behalf or for one of its users.

The author has further granted permission to Simon Fraser University to keep or make a digital copy for use in its circulating collection (currently available to the public at the "Institutional Repository" link of the SFU Library website (www.lib.sfu.ca) at http://summit/sfu.ca and, without changing the content, to translate the thesis/project or extended essays, if technically possible, to any medium or format for the purpose of preservation of the digital work.

The author has further agreed that permission for multiple copying of this work for scholarly purposes may be granted by either the author or the Dean of Graduate Studies.

It is understood that copying or publication of this work for financial gain shall not be allowed without the author's written permission.

Permission for public performance, or limited permission for private scholarly use, of any multimedia materials forming part of this work, may have been granted by the author. This information may be found on the separately catalogued multimedia material and in the signed Partial Copyright Licence.

While licensing SFU to permit the above uses, the author retains copyright in the thesis, project or extended essays, including the right to change the work for subsequent purposes, including editing and publishing the work in whole or in part, and licensing other parties, as the author may desire.

The original Partial Copyright Licence attesting to these terms, and signed by this author, may be found in the original bound copy of this work, retained in the Simon Fraser University Archive.

Simon Fraser University Library
Burnaby, British Columbia, Canada

revised Fall 2011

Ethics Statement

SFU

The author, whose name appears on the title page of this work, has obtained, for the research described in this work, either:

    a. human research ethics approval from the Simon Fraser University Office of Research Ethics,

or

    b. advance approval of the animal care protocol from the University Animal Care Committee of Simon Fraser University;

or has conducted the research

    c. as a co-investigator, collaborator or research assistant in a research project approved in advance,

or

    d. as a member of a course approved in advance for minimal risk human research, by the Office of Research Ethics.

A copy of the approval letter has been filed at the Theses Office of the University Library at the time of submission of this thesis or project.

The original application for approval and letter of approval are filed with the relevant offices. Inquiries may be directed to those authorities.

Simon Fraser University Library
Burnaby, British Columbia, Canada

update Spring 2010

ABSTRACT

As more researchers have studied the benefits of treating schools and learning as complex systems, educators have taken this to a more practical level by encouraging leadership capacity at the grassroots level. On the whole, teacher leadership is used as both an improvement strategy and an empowerment tool to improve our schools.

In British Columbia, Canada, the concept of teacher leadership is gaining increased attention; however, its practical application is less well understood. While recent literature has pointed to the value of looking at the complexity and the distributed framework of teacher leadership, very little research to date can provide empirical evidence on the impact that these ideas have on teachers. In particular, it is not clear how different facets of teacher leadership experiences influence teachers' beliefs, understandings, and emotions, and how these shape emergent practices of leadership.

In this study, eights teacher leaders in a large urban school district in British Columbia participated in one-on-one interviews in an effort to add to our understanding of teacher leadership based on these teachers' lived experiences. The research data were presented as eight vignettes revealing i) what teachers derived from their lived experiences in shaping their role as leaders of teacher-led initiatives, and ii) how teachers' lived experiences in school initiatives (re)defined their future role as leaders. The participants drew from the personal, professional, cultural, socio-political, and structural dimensions of the work environment and spoke about common themes in their leadership experiences. Furthermore, as a group, they demonstrated certain personal and professional attributes that defined their positions as teacher leaders.

The understanding gained from this study enriches our existing views of teacher leadership. By examining this phenomenon through the lens of distributed framework, this study brings contribution to the reconceptualization and future development of teacher leadership practices.

Keywords: teacher leadership; teacher leaders; distributive framework of leadership; leadership tension; school reform; professional learning communities

DEDICATION

This is dedicated to all teachers who believe that collectively they are leaders in mobilizing positive change on student learning.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to sincerely thank my committee members, Dr. Sharon Bailin, Dr. Fred Renihan, and Dr. Dan Laitsch, whose insights and encouragement have strengthened the quality of this thesis project.

I am forever indebted to my parents, C.Y. Lau and Betty Wong. My opportunities in school and life would not be possible if not for their guidance and support. I also want to thank my brother Xavier, my sister-in-law Tania, and my nephew Ryan for giving me the courage to dream big.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

x

LIST OF FIGURES

Chapter 1.   THE PROBLEM

1.1. INTRODUCTION

In conversations with educational colleagues, it is obvious that terms like 'teacher leaders' and 'teacher leadership' are becoming popular catch phrases. Principals talk more frequently about the need to build teacher leadership capacity in their schools. District-level staffs also seek to work with teachers in order to collaborate on issues affecting the future direction of education.

But what is teacher leadership? More importantly, what does teacher leadership mean to the teacher leaders themselves? What would teacher leaders illuminate about their lived experience? What would they have to say about learning through the complexities of teacher leadership? As teacher leaders, how might they enlighten a fuller understanding of their practice to those who work in, around, and outside the field of education?

1.2. BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM

In Canada, the socio-political climate values self-identity and freedom of expression. This is evident in efforts to preserve the voice and tradition of various social / cultural groups or in the use of web-based media such as online forums and blogs. The global workforce is marked by business organizations advancing beyond typical operations and manuals as they learn to capitalize on the ensemble of knowledge and skill-sets of their employees (Senge, 2006). In this environment, teachers' roles have also changed, conceptually at the very least, during the past few decades in North America.

In British Columbia, the provincial government is responsible for setting benchmarks for student achievement and learning outcomes, although increasingly it is devolving responsibility for its own traditionally legislated mandate (Hargreaves, 1994a). Schools and school districts are now looked upon to ensure that there is continued conversation about good teaching practices designed to provide students with opportunities to engage in deep, meaningful learning. The success of any curricular or pedagogical reforms depends heavily on what teachers do locally within their classrooms and schools (Darling-Hammond and Bransford, 2005). Aside from being experts in their subject areas, teachers are expected to step into new roles as initiators and implementers of school-based projects. Whether one thinks of these changes as a social progression towards human empowerment, as a form of economic efficiency, or as a desperate response to political restructuring, they have led to a recent move toward encouraging teachers to be leaders of educational change.

What does it mean to be a teacher leader in the 21st century? Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) argue that teachers "who are leaders lead within and beyond the classroom, identify with and contribute to a community of teacher learners and leaders, and influence others towards improved education practice" (p. 5). For Lambert (2003), teacher leaders are "those whose dreams of making a difference have either been kept alive or have been reawakened by engaging with colleagues and working within a professional culture" (p. 33). Although numerous educators and researchers have attempted to define the term 'teacher leader'; it is evident that *who* teacher leaders are is difficult to define. Were we to turn our focus to *what* teacher leaders do, we would likely be inundated by sweeping statements in the literature that depict leaders as those who:

> exercise informal leadership…by sharing their expertise, volunteering for new projects and bringing new ideas to the school…by helping their colleagues to carry out their classroom duties, and by assisting in the improvement of classroom practice through the engagement of their colleagues in experimentation and the examination of more powerful instructional techniques (Leithwood, Jantzi and Steinback, 1999, p. 117).

Until recently, much of the literature on teacher leadership has been theoretically (see, for example, Burns, 1978; Senge, 2006; Wenger and Synder, 2000) or conceptually grounded (see, for example, Crowther, Kaagan, Ferguson, and Hann, 2002; Katzenmeyer and Moller, 2001; Lambert, 2003; Margolis, 2008; Sergiovanni, 2000). By and large, the focus on teacher leadership has been described as a paradigm shift that advocates teachers as agents of systemic change. The general belief is that it empowers people who work at the frontline of the teaching profession by enabling them to conduct action research, to participate in committees, to resolve issues, and to lead implementations that can enhance the wellbeing of their schools.

However, there is a small selection of literature (see, for example, Donaldson, M., Johnson, S.M., Kirkpatrick, C.L., Marinell, W., Steele, J.L., and Szczesiul, S.A., 2008; Fitzgerald, T., 2009; Hargreaves, 1994a; Little, 1995) that challenges what we think we know about teacher leaders and their work, suggesting that what is experienced in practice is often detached from the theoretical ideals that are sometimes portrayed on paper. In the face of a scant body of empirical studies, what is certain is that "we know relatively little about the *how* of school leadership, that is knowledge of the ways in which school leaders develop and sustain those conditions and processes necessary for innovation" (Spillane, Halverson, and Diamond, 2004, p. 4). What comes along with being called a "teacher leader" is a set of issues that are more complex than what was first anticipated by early authors. As a result of their new role, teacher leaders face many changes to the personal, professional, cultural, socio-political and structural dimensions of their work (Spillane and Diamond, 2007; Spillane et al., 2004). Equally significant is the tension that exists within each of these dimensions (Fitzgerald, 2009; Hargreaves, 1994a; Johnson and Donaldson, 2007; Little, 2003). How do teacher leaders maintain hope, professionalism, personal empowerment, collaborative relationships and moral values in a system that also breeds helplessness, professional autonomy, egalitarianism, bureaucracy, and political power? These conflicted dynamics come together to shape the way teachers make sense of and understand leadership, and in turn, the capacity and limitation of their leadership experience to help (re)conceptualize the meaning of their work. Teachers encounter unique leadership experiences that frame the different perspectives from which they generate beliefs, feelings, and understandings about their role as leaders.

1.3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Teachers' lived experiences are critical to the study of teacher leadership. This study moves away from a focus on what we hope teachers can and should do for our schools and instead focuses on the daily experiences and stories as points of scrutiny in revealing the way leadership is understood, defined, and acted upon by teacher leaders themselves. Teachers are asked more and more to lead in bottom-up initiatives, an expectation which, in turn, influences and (re)defines their work. This study attempts to examine the experiences of teacher leaders who have led such initiatives. The goal is to explore the successes, struggles, inner emotions, and underlying beliefs that teacher leaders experience in their leadership role. Essentially, it is an exploration of what life is like for teacher leaders. What meanings do they draw from their own experience of leading groups? How do they come to understand their leadership role in light of their lived experiences? This study represents an attempt to capture descriptions that can give meaning to teacher leadership in its complexity and fullness. It explores the following research questions:

- How do teachers derive meaning from their lived experiences (e.g., personal, professional, cultural, social, and structural dimensions of teacher leadership experiences) to help shape their role as leaders in teacher-led initiatives?
- How do teachers' lived experiences of leading teacher-led initiatives (re)define how they feel, envisage and enact their future role as teacher leaders, as well as the way they make sense of future leadership practices?

1.4. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROBLEM

Recent interest in professional learning communities and organizational change have accelerated the push for more educational leaders. Increasingly, teachers are perceived to be the missing piece that can successfully lead schools through new initiatives and reforms (Reeves, 2009). Creating middle leaders out of teachers can become the business of the day; however, it may be problematic to treat teacher leadership as an unexamined norm of school practices. From my own experience of

speaking with teachers and from what can be inferred in the literature, the realities of teacher leadership are very complex and involve multi-faceted dynamics that are different from the experiences of high-ranking school leaders such as principals and school district administrators. Institutionalizing the work of teacher leaders can suppress the unanticipated challenges and potential benefits of this form of leadership. Questions regarding "where norms come from, how they arose, how they came to take their present form, and how they can be changed and developed over time" need to be asked (Eriksen, 2004, p. 27).

Educators should be unrelenting in their efforts to foster teacher leadership practice because it reflects a fundamental value of our society – democratic citizenship (Cronin, 1987). We expect our neighbors to engage actively and responsibly as citizens. For this to occur, people from all walks of life, regardless of their race, gender, educational background or economic status, should be active members in the public sphere. If democratic citizenship is a virtue that is valued in societies, and if schools are a microcosm of this bigger system, then educators have to accept and live up to these similarly-held expectations in and through their work. Schools should be places where staff and community members work collaboratively towards moral undertakings (Murphy, 2002). Teachers need to be fully involved in making decisions and carrying out initiatives and programs that affect their students' lives. Teachers need not be fearful about their activism, but instead should see it as their duty and right to serve the needs of their school communities (Frost, 2008). Teacher participation in the democratic life of a school needs to be strong and their leadership is essential to our deep-seated values of democracy.

Sadly, "many schools teach aspiring leaders to learn the hard lessons of survival at the expense of the hope, the desire, and the ability to make changes in the conditions of student learning" (Halverson, 2004, p. 104). There are many teachers in our schools who struggle to make change happen and whose efforts "are thwarted by the framework of controls and normative expectations embedded in their work environments" (Kowalski, 1995, p. 253). Sometimes, teachers give up. At other times, they remain unwavering in their commitment to make a difference. Their narratives need to come to the foreground, and all kinds of experiences need to be embraced because, while "excellence makes the goal correct…wisdom makes what leads to it correct" (Aristotle, 2002, p. 187). It is in the

5

lived experiences of teacher leadership that educators learn about their leadership capacity to defend our moral purposes of schooling and to do justice to students entrusted to their care.

This study is a ground-level project that describes leadership experiences as told by teachers themselves. I believe that their everyday life experiences can be captured and used to understand teacher leadership. Narrative provides a critical piece for understanding how teacher leaders (re)negotiate their roles in fulfilling the moral mission of public education. Moreover, their stories may reveal entrenched struggles that teachers face in their lived experiences of school leadership. The significance of my research is to share and to bring personal stories to the foreground, so that the deeper meanings, the realities and the assumptions, can be drawn from practices of teacher leadership.

1.5. CONTEXT OF TEACHER LEADERSHIP

While it may be more manageable to study teacher leadership in separate components, this approach does not reflect the complexity of teachers' experiences. Human experience unfolds from and through what Habermas calls a lifeworld and a systemsworld (Ericksen, 2004). Although the two are interrelated, it is worthwhile to define them individually here in order to decipher their differences. On the phenomenon of teacher leadership, Sergiovanni (2000) claims:

> When we talk about the stuff of culture, the essence of values and beliefs, the expression of needs, purposes, and desires of people, and about the sources of deep satisfaction in the form of meaning and significance, we are talking about the lifeworld of schools and of parents, teachers, and students…The systemsworld, by contrast, is a world of instrumentalities, of efficient means designed to achieve ends. The systemsworld provides the foundation for the development of management and of organizational and financial capital…The former is a world of purposes, norms, growth, and development, and the latter is a world of efficiency, outcomes, and productivity (p. 5).

The world of teacher leadership transpires through complex constructs of relationships and structures. Bearing this in mind, this study is responsive to both the contexts of lifeworld and of systemsworld in which teacher leadership takes place.

1.6. DEFINITION OF TEACHER LEADERSHIP

Since its origin in ancient civilization, leadership theories have evolved through time to reflect changes in our understanding of and the values we attach to leadership. The most significant shift in recent times is the transition from transactional leadership to transformational leadership. The industrial age was defined by a focus on performance and skills, organizations depended on leaders who could supervise and control business logistics. As such, leaders were seen as authority figures who managed from the top of the hierarchy. For the past several decades, the attention has focused instead on the need to support employees in fulfilling their personal potential. We need leaders who have high ethical and moral standards. They might not have formal positional power, but they bring their teams to excellence by virtue of building relationships, encouragement, and positive modeling in their organizations. In this study, the understanding of teacher leadership is grounded on the principle of transformational leadership. My frame of reference for this study is captured in Crowther, Ferguson and Hann's (2009) definition of teacher leadership:

> Teacher leadership is essentially an ethical stance that is based on views
> of both a better world and the power of teachers to shape meaning
> systems. It manifests in new forms of understanding and practice that
> contribute to school success and to the quality of life of the community in
> the long term (p. 10).

1.7. DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Presently, there are many opportunities for teachers to exercise their leadership skills. Locally, teachers can be representatives on school planning teams. At the district level, they can be leaders of numeracy, literacy, or other curriculum-focused initiatives. Beyond that, they can be presenters at conferences, reviewers for new textbooks or advisory members for new provincial mandates. This study, however, focuses on teacher-led school-level initiatives – where teacher groups are formed, organized and run by teachers to improve student learning at their own schools. By virtue of how these projects and groups are often started, these teachers have a personally and professionally vested interest in their initiatives when they decide to 'take things on.' Rather than being appointed to a leadership role, these leaders volunteer their time and service to school initiatives about which they are passionately concerned. As a result, the events that unfold thereafter can have huge emotional as well as practical ramifications.

1.8. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study is susceptible to researcher bias because I teach in the same school district as my research participants. I have a professional relationship with teachers in my district and I am supportive of many school initiatives that my colleagues are a part of. Furthermore, my observations and interpretations are likely influenced by my own experiences with teacher leadership. Therefore, I use both source (more than one school in the district is involved in the research), and method (using face-to-face interviews and reflection journals) interventions to minimize any prejudices and assumptions that I might have.

This research has a low ecological validity. The context and circumstances of each participant is unique and different. It is reasonable to assume that findings may vary in a different district, in different schools, with different participants, or when studied by a different researcher. This research is a story of the lived experiences of different teachers re-living part of who they are by recounting the dialogues, relationships, and

interactions that are embedded in their leadership work. Therefore, there is limitation to the generalizability of the findings of this study because each teacher's narrative contains its own plots and actors. Each story breathes unique richness and nuances into our understanding of teacher leadership.

1.9. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

Teacher-led initiative:

A school-based group, committee or initiative that is started, organized and run by teachers. Although administrators, students or parents may be involved as participants, these groups are guided by the efforts and interests of the teaching staff to improve student learning.

1.10. ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

This chapter has laid out the introductory comments demonstrating the significance of the research. The study has the potential to inform our current understanding of teacher leadership by inviting key players to the discussion. It aims to learn about teacher leadership in and through the complexities within the respective contexts of the personal, social and structural fabrics of teacher leadership.

Chapter 2 begins by outlining three defining features of teacher leadership: professional collaboration, improvement to teaching and learning, and community building. This is followed by an overview of theoretical, conceptual, and empirical studies that inform this field. The remaining section draws from recent advances and research gaps in the literature, bringing attention to our understanding of leadership by examining it through a distributed perspective framework.

Chapter 3 focuses on the research methodology. The chapter starts with a description of the research context. It lays out the rationale for using qualitative research as the methodology, with details given about sample selection and research instruments.

As well, it outlines the data collection, data management, and data explicitation methods used in this study.

In Chapter 4, the qualitative findings from the research data are presented and analyzed. By reconstructing the participants' narratives, a retelling of eight individual stories is used to illustrate their lived experiences. By attuning to the way the participants speak about their role as educational leaders, their stories are used to reconceptualize how they make sense of and frame their leadership work. The distributed framework is used as my chosen lens for analyzing the data.

Chapter 5 is the discussion section of the study. Emergent themes are synthesized to capture the essence of how teacher leadership is understood and felt from the participants' complex positioning. As well, the themes are elaborated to inform how insights on distributed perspective can reshape the phenomenon of teacher leadership. In the conclusion, the possibility of moving forward in research and practice to embrace teacher leadership as a collective learning experience is explored.

Chapter 2.   LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. INTRODUCTION

The literature on educational reform has given rise to discussions of the role of teacher leadership in schools. However, the term 'teacher leader' remains elusive and is sometimes used loosely under an umbrella of other terms such as team leaders, committee chairs, department heads, and grade-specific coordinators. Along with other definitions that I have provided in Chapter 1, Harris and Muijs (2003) believe that teacher leaders "are, in the first place, expert teachers, who spend a majority of their time in the classroom but take on different leadership roles at different times" (p. 6). While some writers think that the role of teacher leaders should be flexible and accommodating to growing changes, others argue that teacher leaders should hold formal positions with clearly defined responsibilities and expectations (Miller and O'Shea, 1992; Johnson and Donaldson, 2007). Despite these different views, teacher leaders exude a strong presence in schools. They are "ordinary citizens, bound by the usual limitations and imperfections. Yet they were doing what appeared to their colleagues, principals, and communities to be extraordinary things" (Crowther et al., 2002, p. 11).

2.2. DEFINING ASPECTS OF TEACHER LEADERSHIP

The extraordinary things that teacher leaders do have been captured in numerous documents written by authors such as Frank Crowther (2002), Andy Hargreaves (1994a; 1994b), and Ann Lieberman (1992). Implicit in their writings are three recurring themes – professional collaboration, a focused improvement on teaching and learning, and community building. These conceptions of teacher leadership reflect the professional, school, and historic-cultural contexts of present times. The following sections describe how educational researchers define teacher leadership.

2.2.1. PROFESSIONAL COLLABORATION

First, the work of teacher leadership is defined as a collaborative enterprise, "a 'banding together' with other teachers to promote professional development and growth and the improvement of educational services" (Harris and Muijs, 2005, p.17). These professional collaborations may take many forms, from serving on school teams and committees to co-creating lesson activities and team-teaching. Teacher leadership endorses inclusive ways of building the profession by "engaging teachers in meaningful and timely debate(s) about professionalism and issues of professional conduct" (Harris and Muijs, 2003, p.23). In contrast to the traditional structure where teachers were expected to plan and teach alone in their classrooms, this viewpoint respects a body of professional knowledge that is generated and shared among its members (Frost, 2008). Rather than working in isolation, collaboration nurtures a collective educative practice that comes from teachers interacting with one another (Harris and Muijs, 2003). Collegiality is established through honoring "collaborative environments which encourage involvement, professional development, mutual support and assistance in problem solving" (Hopkins, West, and Ainscow, 1996, p. 177). Harris and Muijs (2003) suggest that when teachers work together and begin to recognize their leadership capacity, it builds a stronger profession. This position views teacher leadership as the means to strengthen accountability and professionalism within the teaching field.

2.2.2. FOCUSED IMPROVEMENT ON TEACHING AND LEARNING

Second, the work of teacher leadership is more effective when it involves a focused improvement on teaching and learning, where teachers facilitate "principled action to achieve whole-school success" (Crowther et al., 2002, p.10). Schools are crowded with messages pulling in different and sometimes opposing directions, resulting in a plethora of curriculum strands, educational philosophies, learning objectives, teaching strategies, and assessment practices. For example, how useful are smartboards and tablets in today's classrooms? How does teaching look different between discovery and constructivist learning methods? Does distance learning enhance or impede the work that teachers do in the classroom? How does policy on student promotion and retention reflect values of the school community? Teacher

leaders encourage each other to confront these and other questions because if "schools are to become better at providing learning for students then they must also become better at providing opportunities for teachers to innovate, develop and learn together" (Harris and Muijs, 2003, p. 9). When teachers engage in these types of discussions, they are inquiring into the underlying visions that they collectively have for their schools (Glickman, Lunsford, and Szuminski, 1995). This puts attention on the students and their learning needs. In this way, teachers are more conscious about making informed decisions as a staff. This position highlights the work of teacher leadership in refocusing the fundamental purposes of teaching and learning.

2.2.3.   COMMUNITY BUILDING

Third, the work of teacher leadership brings students, teachers, administrators, and parents together to foster a learning community that "respects diversity, confronts differences…create(s) knowledge…and offer(s) challenge and support" (Lieberman and Miller, 2004, p.13). It values the contribution that each person, regardless of age or position, can bring to education. It stresses not only the learning of students, but as well that of teachers, parents, and administrators (Fullan, 1993). For teachers who value the opportunities to work with all members of the school community, they have a chance to build "relationships and connections among individuals within a school" where "behaviors and practices…are undertaken collectively" (Harris and Muijs, 2005, p.17). Fitzgerald and Gunter (2008) argue that at this level, teacher leadership takes on a significant historic-cultural shift from a modernist to a post-modernist view: one that questions the bureaucratic, top-down management of schooling in order to consider the possibility of distributed teamwork; one that quiets people who are traditionally placed at the top in order to amplify voices that have long been suppressed; and one that focuses less on doing things that are conventionally expected of one in their position in order to do what is right. These efforts build relationships by enabling leadership potential in every individual, particularly those at the bottom of the hierarchy. This position views the work of teacher leadership as one that creates a democratic environment for all parties in a learning community.

These three definitions present some diverse concepts of what teacher leaders do. However, few connections are being made to create a comprehensive picture of

what teacher leadership looks like. What is suggested in the literature is that the work of teacher leadership is plentiful and broad. Many authors agree that teacher leaders are now in positions to break significant ground by forging a new professionalism and vision regarding their work in education (Fullan, 2007; Hargreaves and Shirley, 2009; Sergiovanni, 2007). This belief underpins a large body of writings in existing literature that use theoretical and conceptual frames to examine teacher leadership in schools. This literature is discussed in more detail in the next section.

2.3. THEORETICAL ARGUMENTS FOR TEACHER LEADERSHIP

As far back as the late 1980s, literature on teacher leadership began to surface in the United States in response to long-standing problems such as low-performing schools and wide achievement gaps among different cultural and socio-economic student populations. Writers such as Roland Barth (1988), Linda Darling-Hammond (1990), Ann Lieberman (1992), and Judith Little (1988) represent early advocates of teacher empowerment. They argue that teachers, as drivers of change, have the capacities to make a positive impact on students and schools.

Views arising outside the educational field also paved the way for schools to explore different types of leadership in schools, making teacher leadership part of a much bigger movement in restructuring how knowledge, people, and organizations work together. Wenger and Snyder (2000) write about creating "communities of practice" in business organizations. They claim that the spontaneity of communities can "galvanize knowledge sharing, learning and change" (Wenger and Snyder, 2000, p. 139). Senge (2006) pushes further the concept of communities and argues the need to reach a stage of metanoia – a shift of mind. He suggests that organizations are living 'systems'. Systems thinking involves "a shift of mind from seeing parts to seeing wholes, from seeing people as helpless reactors to seeing them as active participants in shaping their reality, from reacting to the present to creating the future" (Senge, 2006, p. 69). In medical research, scientists are turning to complexity theory to learn how discrete parts can be examined as interconnected elements of a larger whole (Gleick, 1987; Johnson,

14

2001; Weaver, 1948). Changes in these disciplines coincide with a similar movement in education and each brings the idea of complexity science to their respective field.

2.3.1. ARGUMENTS FOR EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

By recognizing the complexities in learning structures, Davis, Sumara and Luce-Kapler (2000) believe that teachers play a role in liberating the diversities and creativity within education. They believe that schools should address ways of teaching and learning that would offer students ongoing opportunities to engage in shared interpretations of past, current and imagined understandings (Davis, Sumara, and Luce-Kapler, 2000). Aside from changes that are taking place in pedagogy, grassroots leadership has also come into vogue in response to the complexities within the educational setting. This is evident from various ideas that are introduced in the literature over the past forty years: servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1977); citizenship leadership (Couto, 1992); transformational leadership (Burns, 1978); and distributed framework of leadership (Harris and Spillane, 2009) are among the examples.

Servant leadership describes leaders who willingly give themselves to others (Greenleaf, 1977). They are attuned to challenges in their organizations and find ways to address the needs of the team. By taking care of other people's needs, they become leaders by serving the greater goods of the community (Greenleaf, 1977). Similar to this is citizenship leadership, where those who get involved in leadership work are compelled by a sense of duty to help people who are impoverished. To attain more equality in their communities, they make their "political, economic, and social system accountable for whom it serves and fails to serve" (Couto, 1992, as cited in Wren, 1995, p. 15). In transformational leadership, leaders try to renew the mission and values of the organization. Both the leaders and followers elevate each other's potential to achieve higher levels of accomplishment (Burns, 1978). According to Bass (1990), a transformational leader is charismatic, inspiring, empathetic to individual consideration, and gets excited by intellectual stimulation.

2.3.2.   ARGUMENTS FOR DISTRIBUTED FRAMEWORK OF LEADERSHIP

Distributed leadership views leadership as a more vibrant phenomenon where different components interact and collaborate; it allows leaders and followers "throughout the system to make sense of what is happening and it gives meaning to unfolding events impacting on the system" (Branson, 2010, p. 99). Spillane et al. (2004) argue that more attention needs to be paid to studying the leadership phenomenon as constructed through the relationships that each teacher forges with his / her surroundings; it is the people, events and places that give meaning to the concept of teacher leadership. They point to the interrelationships that exist among leaders, followers and situations (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Spillane's Framework for Understanding Leadership Practice

(Figure reproduced with permission from Spillane et al., 2004, p. 11)
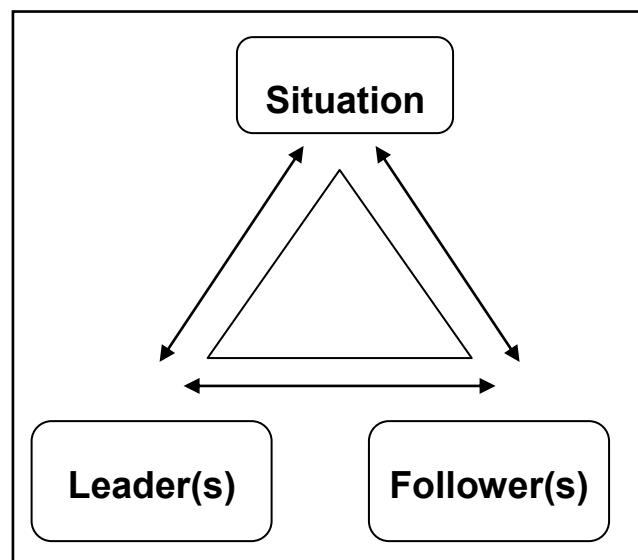
They argue that school leadership should be understood as a phenomenon that arises from and in between these three areas (Spillane and Coldren, 2011). By leaders, they speak about both formally designated leaders, such as superintendents and school administrators, and informal leaders, such as teachers and parents. By followers,

Spillane and Coldren (2011) point to school leadership as a day-to-day practice that is transformed through the relationships between leaders and followers. The ways leaders interact with their followers, and vice versa, influence the type of participation that comes forth. By situations, they refer to the application of organizational routines and tools in shaping leadership practice (Spillane and Coldren, 2011). Routines and tools can range from management of academic standards and school meetings to protocols for teacher evaluations and classroom assignments. According to Spillane and Coldren (2011), a distributed perspective defines school leadership as "the interactions of school leaders, followers and aspects of their situation. This perspective…helps us to think about…leadership practice in ways that highlight the interactional and contextual nature of that practice" (p. 30). The authors also propose the use of a distributed perspective to "analyze leadership activity and generate evocative cases for practitioners to interpret and think about…their ongoing leadership practice" (Spillane et al., 2004, p. 4). They argue that the adoption of this perspective allows researchers and practitioners to focus their understanding on the interconnected dynamics that happen between different areas of a leadership initiative (Spillane and Coldren, 2011).

There is value in encapsulating the interrelationships that unfold within teachers' experiences. Teacher leadership is a complex phenomenon, and it consists of embedded systems that are linked reciprocally and multidirectionally to one another. Spillane et al. (2004) point out that:

> in order to understand leadership practice, leaders' thinking and behavior and their situation need to be considered *together*, in an integrated framework. [They] argue that understanding the *what* of leadership is essential; but that without a rich understanding of *how* leaders go about their work, and *why* leaders do and think what they do, it is difficult to help school leaders think about and revise their practice (p. 8).

They urge educators to look beyond predefined concepts to appreciate leadership activity as "a product of what the actor knows, believes, and does in and through particular social, cultural and material contexts" (Spillane et al., 2004, p. 10). In other words, research that examines theories-in-use, as ways to understand leadership

practices, has the potential to embrace the authentic stories of teacher leaders. This type of research focus is crucial to learning about school leadership. "By making the 'black box' of school-leadership practice more transparent through the generation of rich knowledge about how leaders think and act to change instruction, it can help leaders identify the dimensions of their practice, articulate the relations among these dimensions, and think about changing their practice" (Spillane et al., 2004, p. 29).

Although there are different arguments to Greenleaf, Couto, Burns, and Spillane's viewpoints, they all encourage organizations, including schools, to explore leadership at the grassroots level. Toward the end of the 20th century, educators began to infuse the idea of bottom-up empowerment into local school settings. What began as a solution for 'fixing' problems in the school system emerged instead as a new leadership approach that supports and sustains teacher capacities (Katzenmeyer and Moller, 2009). This effort prompted an interest in academia that explored the more practical constructs of teacher leadership.

2.4. CONCEPTUAL ARGUMENTS

Under societal pressure for increased accountability and market demands for a more competitive curriculum that better prepares students for a knowledge workforce, some writers see the inevitability of schools dispersing leadership responsibilities to a wider membership (Hargreaves, 1994b). Others see leadership development as an avenue to foster teacher empowerment and professional learning communities (Fullan, 2001). There are also those who view bottom-up leadership as a reform process that restructures the bureaucracy of the school system (Brunner, Hammel and Miller, 2010). Regardless of the underlying intention, there is a burgeoning interest in education to enhance leadership across the system. In an attempt to provide a conceptual framework for teacher leadership, I depict certain professional, cultural, structural, and personal conditions that are conducive to this new environment.

2.4.1.   PROFESSIONAL ETHOS

The need for a strong professional ethos has been pointed out by many authors to be a key component in bringing about teacher leadership. However unique and challenging the circumstances might be from school to school, classroom to classroom, and student to student, teacher leaders take it upon themselves to participate in projects that enhance the quality of the learning environment. Both individually and as a group, teachers believe in honoring their professionalism by acting in the best interest of students and communities (Sergiovanni, 2005). Such teachers are more likely to work with colleagues and leverage a critical mass in the drive to enhance the overall quality of the school environment. This entails viewing teaching as a collegial undertaking and welcoming classrooms as a learning space for all, breaking down the balkanized, assembly-line model of schooling that was once thought to be the one best and only way to deliver education (Pellicer and Anderson, 1995). They use research and professional knowledge to make informed decisions about instructional and learning strategies that are most suitable for their students. As well, teachers who participate in local and (inter)national organizations lead by rallying for opportunities to hear from and to be heard by others (Mihans, 2008). When teachers hold themselves and each other accountable to certain expectations, they are exercising their internal responsibility to lead rather than submitting to external authority (Pellicer and Anderson, 1995). By engaging in continual learning with their colleagues, teacher leaders can leverage human / social capital within the profession. Authors such as Anderson and Pellicer (1995) believe that teacher leadership comes from engendering a professional spirit that upholds the standard and ethical commitment of teaching.

2.4.2.   CULTURE

"Leadership originates in the leader's mind and heart, and plays out in relationships with those whose minds and hearts the leader influences. Inevitably, a leadership dynamic involves at least two people trying to achieve a common end" (Crowther et al., 2002, p. 95). When teachers commit to a cause and join together as partners, they agree to set aside personal differences and find the common values that exemplify what they *all* care deeply about. Fullan (2001) believes that this is the type of

culture that mobilizes the work of teacher leadership in a school community.   Teacher leaders have the ability to change the school culture from one that is reclusive to one that is collaborative; they reshape that culture by developing a common ground of values, beliefs, and commitment bounded by trust and empathy (Crowther et al., 2009). Although collegiality is important, it is not coerced. Rather, the culture builds upon an energy that compels everyone in the team to do more for his / her school. Learning communities are strengthened by the fact that voices are heard and that students, parents, teachers and administrators all find their particular way to make a difference (Crowther et al., 2009). In the midst of individual differences, people create the collective vision that holds them together as a group, and this collaborative culture is the place that nurtures teacher leadership (Fullan, 2001).

2.4.3.   ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

School structure is an area that has gained increased attention from researchers and practitioners as they share opinions as to what supports or impedes teacher leadership. While a main focus of informal leadership is on the teachers themselves, school administrators undoubtedly play a key role in its shaping. They initiate team collaboration by breaking down staff dependency in a top-down, bureaucratic system. This involves relinquishing power on their part to allow for "participative decision making, shared governance, and site-based management" (Bredeson, 1995, p. 27). These intentions can be seen by the way staff meetings are carried out or by the process through which teachers are consulted on school-based issues. Donaldson et al. (2008) argue that for real change to happen, there needs to be a formalization of teacher leadership roles – "their responsibilities, rights, selection process – and embedding them in a system of supports [that] may make it possible for these roles to work as intended" (p. 1108). These authors point to a lack of awareness around implementing structures that can help teacher leaders establish the legitimacy and recognition they need to carry out school-wide initiatives. Negotiation for time, resources, class schedules, teaching assignments, and salary compensation are often pushed to the periphery of teacher leadership efforts. Katzenmeyer and Moller (2009) suggest that successful teacher leadership "depends on the context in which it takes place. School leaders with

exemplary schools make teacher leadership a priority and take risks to provide teacher leaders what they need to succeed" (p. 98).

2.4.4. PERSONAL SKILLS

Teacher leaders are highly-capable individuals. Personal skills such as inspiring a shared vision, goal-setting, challenging the process, and managing work priorities are identified as important behaviors of an educational leader (Crowther et al., 2009). Interpersonal skills are also important; teacher leaders who intimately know their colleagues' "unrecognized needs, fears, desires, anxieties, and impulses…sustain positive educational change and move schools to being true 'learning organizations'" (Margolis, 2008, p. 307). Professional development should provide training opportunities for teachers and student-teachers to become leaders (Creighton, 1997; Smylie and Denny, 1990). Learning skills such as mentoring adults, leading groups, doing action research, and engaging in reflective practices increase the capacity and self-efficacy that teachers require to carry out leadership work (Harris and Muijs, 2003).

As the aforementioned writers have pointed out, implementing changes in schools needs to be conceptualized at the professional, cultural, structural, and personal levels because "public education is full of diversity"; teacher leadership plays a role by recognizing "its strength and vulnerabilities as a living system" (Hargreaves and Fink, 2006, p. 165). This point is echoed by Lambert (2003), who speaks about sustaining leadership as an integrative and generative endeavor. She believes that by understanding teacher empowerment as a form of synergy, it helps teachers to think more effectively about meeting the needs of learners and workers in schools.

2.5. EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

Going from theory to practice, empirical research illustrates how teacher leadership (as defined and theorized previously) is experienced in the field. In Canada, Leithwood, Mascall, Strauss, Sacks, Memon, and Yashkina (2007) conducted one of the most ambitious studies on distributed leadership. They interviewed 67 teachers, administrators, and district personnel from eight elementary and secondary schools in an

Ontario school district. The study examined leadership functions and personal characteristics of non-administrative school leaders, as well as influencing factors on distributed leadership development. Leithwood et al. (2007) found that non-administrative leaders tend to specialize in certain leadership functions such as building collaborative processes and managing committees and programs in schools. Their data referred to characteristics such as having a commitment to initiatives, interpersonal skills and a caring attitude as personal qualities that one would find among exemplary non-administrative leaders (Leithwood et al., 2007). Also, interviewees indicated that their leadership capacities were fostered through enabling opportunities, norms and structures in the workplace.

In Britain, Harris and Townsend (2007) evaluated the impact of the *Developing Leaders Programme*. This study drew data from a cohort of 139 teacher-participants belonging to a group that provides support and coaching for teachers to lead school-wide and cross-school projects. This program was grounded on the premise that when teachers exercise lateral leadership, the impact on student development and school performance are positively enhanced. Based on the data they gathered from questionnaires and interviews, they found that the *Developing Leaders Programme* served as a catalyst for change because it provided teachers with opportunities to make decisions and to implement initiatives around teaching and learning (Harris and Townsend, 2007).

Lieberman and Miller (2004) described case studies of four American teachers who belonged to large-scale teacher leadership groups such as the *National Writing Project* and the *Carnegie Academy for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*. Because they were allowed to learn through reflection and sharing with colleagues, these teachers were motivated to lead and to do their part in reconceptualizing the professional community (Lieberman and Miller, 2004).

According to research findings, teacher empowerment could exist as a "determined, explicit, and widespread…strategy for school improvement" (Leithwood et al., 2007, p. 63). Leithwood et al. (2007) described personal and cultural conditions that allowed a group of teachers to be informal leaders at a local school district. In their studies, Harris and Townsend (2007) and Lieberman and Miller (2004) studied

leadership program development offered at the national level and found that teacher leaders expressed a strong sense of professional engagement by being involved in the programs. The participants were supported by these associations to use what they have learned to develop various leadership practices at their schools to improve learning and teaching. The initiatives were diverse, consisted of small and big scale projects that focused on enhancing the structural, social, professional and personal dynamics of teacher leadership.

However, this research also identifies directions for continued learning about the environment in which teacher leaders find themselves and the collaborative atmosphere they attempt to facilitate. Teacher participants, from three separate studies, have remarked about facing various challenges of school leadership like working in the space between teachers and administrators (Lieberman and Miller, 2004), being equitable and open to all parties in the school community (Wasley, 1992), and building sustainability with transient leadership teams (Harris and Muijs, 2005). Reports of teacher leaders who have to work against the status quo are portrayed in many empirical studies; hence, these data are worth paying attention to.

2.6. RESEARCH GAPS

Theoretical and conceptual work in this field is accumulating rapidly, much of it written alongside other types of literature on school reforms and the changing political climate of schooling. Regardless of this, there are still many blank and blind spots in the field (Heck and Hallinger, 1999). Of particular interest to my study is the lack of personal accounts of the experiences of teacher leaders. I would like to use my research as an opportunity to bring life to their stories. Literature on teacher leadership tends to put a minor focus on *how* this phenomenon is felt or understood by teachers (Fitzgerald and Gunter, 2008). Moreover, very few studies look into the specifics of teacher leadership, such as teacher leader-teacher dynamics (Margolis, 2008), differentiated roles of teacher leaders (Donaldson et. al., 2008), sustainability of teacher leadership capacity (Lambert, 2003), and the way in which policy agenda influences teacher leadership (Fitzgerald and Gunter, 2008). Unless a concerted effort is put into understanding how these aspects

interact, it is less likely that schools will experience the benefits that they purport to gain from empowering the teaching community.

There is a groundswell of research that welcomes the promise of teacher empowerment; however, the literature also reveals barriers and challenges faced daily by those working on the frontline of the school system (see, for example, Lieberman and Miller, 2004; Wasley, 1992). In one case study, Hallett (2007) described the "leadership struggle" as the "hidden, often-ugly relational 'underside' of leadership that is glossed over by a myopic focus on success" (p. 86). Many teacher leaders have "serious questions about how their new roles and responsibilities should be defined", others "fear the chasm the new roles might place between them and their colleagues" (Pellicer and Anderson, 1995, p. 13). Harris and Townsend (2007) also found many examples of teachers feeling pressured and frustrated with their leadership work. These findings point to a gap in the literature between the theoretical underpinnings and the practical complexities of teacher leadership.

2.7. TENSIONS WITHIN TEACHER LEADERSHIP

Upon examining the theoretical, conceptual and empirical studies on teacher leadership, a new understanding begins to emerge of its complex nature. The way teachers and administrators grapple with these tension influences whether the community is open to or resistant towards teacher leadership. When schools are embattled by contradictions, the result is that "community wanes in a school, feelings of belonging, of being part of something important, of having a common purpose, are weakened, and parents, teachers, and students experience a lack of connectedness, disorientation, and isolation," all of which are the very things that effective leadership tries to address (Sergiovanni, 2000, p. 14). More than a decade ago, Deal and Peterson (1994) wrote explicitly about the polarization experienced by school principals. The next section draws from existing literature to elucidate how similar discord is played out in the personal, professional, cultural, social and structural dimensions of teacher leadership.

2.7.1.   PERSONAL DIMENSION

According to research, teachers who engage in leadership work report personal growth in communication and interpersonal skills over time. When teacher leaders have opportunities to share learning activities or to advocate for particular teaching strategies, they become more confident about public speaking. They learn to listen to the needs of their colleagues, and use relevant data and personal experiences to make persuasive cases for their positions (Katzenmeyer and Moller, 2001). Gradually, teacher leaders become an influential force at their schools as they learn techniques and skills to engage staff in common projects. In interviewing participants from a teacher leadership development program, *Leadership for Tomorrow's Schools,* Lieberman and Miller (2004) received the following response:

> The experience has made a huge difference in my life. Most important has been having the opportunity to share assumptions, developing a common language, being involved in joint inquiry, finding a direction for my work, learning to craft a framework from shared learning, and seeing how to use existing resources to build capacity to get direct work done (p. 50).

As positive as these findings might be, research also reveals that teachers go through personal battles within their leadership roles (Katzenmeyer and Moller, 2001). They often feel incompetent about managing group conflicts. Many of them are novice negotiators; the pressure to be open to views from all sides while trying to settle on an agreed-upon decision proves to be overwhelming (Wasley, 1992). Classroom teachers also feel they lack the skills, training, and positional power that school administrators have, which affects the type of leadership work they are willing to take on (Katzenmeyer and Moller, 2001; Patterson, 1993). By "significantly expanding teachers' authority without educating them to use it well", teachers lose faith in their own ability to affect change (Goodlad, 1990, p. 27).

2.7.2. PROFESSIONAL DIMENSION

Comparisons are often made between being a professional in the teaching field and in the medical field. Although teachers are called "professionals", teaching tends to be "constructed as technical work to be managed, viewed as a prescribed set of skills, behaviors, and techniques to be mastered and evaluated" (Lieberman and Miller, 2004, p. 10). The concept of "teacher leadership" holds the capacity to democratize the school environment and to honor the strengths and voices of teachers as professionals. Teachers are entrusted to use professional knowledge to make decisions unique to their students and schools, to turn to research studies and development workshops when their own capacities fall short, and to maintain a professional standard of excellence. Within communities of practice, they are recognized for their ability to promote professional networks that foster team learning and teacher empowerment. Indeed, researchers find these benefits attested to in their interviews with teacher leaders (Lieberman and Miller, 2004).

As teacher leaders work to strengthen the system through the building of professional communities, professional norms can sometimes restrict their effort to build a more collaborative working culture. Johnson and Donaldson (2007) identify these traditional norms as egalitarianism, autonomy and deference to seniority. These norms can be constraining if they place boundaries around teachers' work – boundaries that try to equalize teachers' competencies; boundaries that try to isolate the teaching space; and boundaries that try to regulate the hierarchy of the teaching ranks. Teacher unions formalize these ideas by establishing a seniority system and standardized pay-scale. While the underlying intention was to set standards and eliminate unfairness, it confines, and arguably denies, the growth of the teaching profession.

Traditional norms of autonomy, egalitarianism, and seniority are persistent and pervasive. These values are grounded in the egg-crate management structure from the industrial era, where work is repetitive and workers are replaceable. They "reinforce the privacy of the individual's classroom, limit the exchange of good ideas among colleagues, and suppress efforts to recognize expert teaching. Ultimately, they cap a school's instructional quality far below its potential" (Johnson and Donaldson, 2007, p. 13). This seems to be the antithesis of what teachers are capable of in a learning

community. In one of her articles, Little (2003) comments precisely on this contested ground. She writes that "even in groups that espouse an interest in reform, norms of professional interaction may privilege 'non-interference' over advice-giving, and individual autonomy over collective obligations" (Little, 2003, p. 413). In this environment, autonomy may not be regarded by teachers as having professional freedom but rather may be used as an excuse to hide one's weaknesses. Egalitarianism may not be regarded by teachers as bearing communal accountability but rather may be used as a glass ceiling that bars good teaching practices. Seniority may not be seen by veteran teachers as having the experience to shoulder increased responsibilities but rather may be used to secure their status in the school system. It "remains common in accounts of teacher collaboration or community-building for authors or speakers to make some reference to the 'threat' evoked by practices that entail disclosure of teaching problems or uncertainties, and to underscore the need for 'safety' and 'trust' as the necessary conditions for such practices" (Little, 2003, p. 413).

2.7.3.   CULTURAL DIMENSION

Common usage of the word 'collaboration' tends to obscure the many forms of collaboration that exist in practice. The kind of collaboration that schools aim to achieve involves:

> joint work, mutual observation, and focused reflective inquiry in ways that extend practices critically. [In] searching for better alternatives in the continuous quest for improvement,…these collaborative cultures build collective strength and confidence in communities of teachers who are able to interact knowledgeably and assertively with the bearers of innovation and reform; able and willing to select which innovations to adopt, which ones to adapt, and which ones to resist or ignore, as best befits their purposes and circumstances (Hargreaves, 1994a, p. 195).

Hargreaves believes that in the absence of critical reflection, teachers harbour "contrived collegiality" that preserves the hierarchical structure of the school system. This type of collaboration is:

bounded or restricted…with teachers focusing on rather safer activities of sharing resources, materials and ideas, or on planning units of study together in a rather workaday fashion, without reflecting on the value, purpose, and consequences of what they do, or without challenging each others' practices, perspectives and assumptions…collegiality can be reduced to congeniality (Hargreaves, 1994a, p. 194).

The tension arises as people move between collaborative cultures and contrived collegiality, as would be the case when principals consult staff for ideas but retain their authoritative power to command from the top, or when teachers work in committee groups but take refuge in their autonomy to do as they please in the classroom. The new culture calls for a more horizontal power structure yet school norms continue to promote the dominance of administrators over teachers, of academic subjects over elective courses, of department heads over teachers, of veteran teachers over new teachers, and of teachers over students. The "iron cage of rationality… dehumanizes societies where people struggle to find meaning in life" and "arguably institutionalize[s] the bureaucracy of leadership" (Eriksen, 2004, p. 22; Fitzgerald, 2009, p. 63). This is inherent in the metaphors we use in education. One example is the description of school being like a "family". While family values of support and care are fitting portrayals of schools, the symbolic meaning behind a family patriarch can be a hidden barrier to creating a collaborative workplace.

2.7.4.   SOCIO-POLITICAL DIMENSION

As teachers increase their involvement in building professional communities and improving conditions of teaching and learning, external forces are also attempting to define (but sometimes unintentionally constrain) teachers' work. The move by schools to encourage teachers to become change agents occurs in the midst of, and rubs against, other actors in the community who also have a vested interest in improving the state of our schools.

The invitation to bring different stakeholders together has pushed discourse on education towards becoming more public and controversial. It is crowded with district

directives, staff visions, parental needs, student desires, as well as community demands. They all speak from their vantage point that reflects what they believe the mission of schooling should be; they also have strong opinions regarding what should be done to achieve these goals and who should do it. Participation in public life is necessary for building a healthy and vibrant culture, especially when different groups come together in an effort to achieve a common end. In education, these ends need to abide by our virtue to educate all students, to "be able to place the good of one's community before one's own narrow interest [and] to experience the good of one's community as one's own good" (Strike, 2007, p. 137).

The "tension between the intrinsic undesirability of certain means of influence and their unavoidability as instruments is one of the most poignant and troubling problems in our lives as social and political beings" (Dahl and Stinebrickner, 2003, p. 51). To understand the socio-political dimension of teacher leadership, it is important to discern how leadership is displayed through one's choice of influence. Influence can be manifested through the leaders' relationships with others, the way they shape agendas and structures within the organizations, or in the level of awareness they have in mobilizing leadership opportunities (Dahl and Stinebrickner, 2003). As such, leadership work, through exercising and receiving influence, can have a huge impact on the social and political makeup of an organization.

2.7.5.   STRUCTURAL DIMENSION

The structural dimension of school practices is the final element in teacher leadership tension. Routines, school meetings, policies, and procedures reflect value-laden beliefs that can enhance or impede efforts to support teacher leadership. As Diamond and Spillane note, "aspects of the situation do not simply 'affect' what school leaders do as some sort of independent variable(s); the situation is constitutive of leadership and management practice" (Spillane and Diamond, 2007, p. 10). This dualistic relationship between agency and structure is described by Giddens (1986) as the Theory of Structuration. Structural artifacts influence, as much as they are influenced by, how leadership practices are lived out.

For decades, principals and teachers have relied on school routines to be their operational blueprint. While structures such as timetables, standard block classes, and staff meetings are considered helpful routines in running a school, they "can be inefficient if they become so habitual as to inhibit creative or innovative thinking among organizational members" (Spillane and Diamond, 2007, p. 33). For example, in British Columbia, one would find class percentages, letter grades and computer-generated comments on a high school report card, even though this information is limited in terms of providing students with constructive details to improve their learning. For the most part, B.C. high schools still adhere to a 10-month rotation system, with distance education and year-round schooling slowly emerging as alternative options. In undertaking the former activities, teachers become carriers, as opposed to being creators, of structures. Procedures and orders in the school system can become the "overall determinant or 'programmer' of social conduct", "grinding out 'docile bodies' who behave like automata" and leaving the status quo unchallenged (Giddens, 1986, pp. 16 and 30).

Coldren (2007) illustrated how conventional structures can be manipulated to allow distributed leadership to thrive in schools. He depicted the case of one elementary school where student assessment data, writing folders, and lesson plans became the tools for improving instructional strategies. The principal and teachers at this school renegotiated traditional boundaries and redefined their leadership roles. By looking at each student's writing sample, they provided descriptive feedback to the students and as well used the students' work to enhance their own teaching strategies. The school also endorsed a supportive environment where students and teachers could comfortably confront their mistakes and find ways to use artifacts differently so that learning communities could flourish. In their work, Spillane and Diamond (2007) described other case studies where teachers changed staff meetings from being underutilized as sites for disseminating information into forums that entertained vibrant discussions. Teachers created new schedules and calendars to find the time they needed to work collectively on projects. In all these examples, "the ability of leaders to create routines that alter the existing system of practice in schools is a powerful capacity not only for shaping the traditions of teaching and learning but also for providing inspiration through symbiotic leadership" (Spillane and Diamond, 2007, p. 58).

2.8. SUMMARY OF THE LITERATURE SECTION

Our current understanding of teacher leadership originates from, but is not limited to, ideas of servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1977), citizenship leadership (Couto, 1992), and transformational leadership (Burns, 1978). The various definitions of teacher leadership speak to the complexity of this phenomenon. Teacher leaders make varying contributions through building professional collaboration, improving teaching and learning, and enhancing the learning communities. The broad range within leadership work has prompted researchers to explore the personal, professional, cultural, socio-political, and structural components of teacher leadership. Moreover, Hargreaves (1994a) points out that the "postmodern world is fast, compressed, complex and uncertain", which presents "immense problems and challenges for… teachers who work within them" (p. 90). The complexities within this space are where teachers come to negotiate and derive meaning from their leadership contribution. Spillane (2004) suggests using a distributed framework as a lens for exploring different dimensions of teacher leadership, by seeing the phenomenon as an interaction between leaders, followers and situations.

This study allows us to listen to and to understand teacher leaders and the work that they strive to achieve. What teacher leaders have to say can improve current practices and thinking behind teacher leadership. Novak (2008) writes:

> Passions need to be connected to care if it is to endure; leadership needs
> to listen if it is going to expand; education needs to deepen experience, if
> it is to matter; and inviting needs to be a creative modus operandi if
> flames are going to glow and grow (p. 36).

This research, in allowing the experiences of teacher leadership to endure, expand, matter, and grow, will hopefully contribute to leadership research as it knits together important ideas from the tension and distributed phenomenon within teacher leadership. The purpose of my research is to allow teacher leadership stories to surface and to highlight leadership practices that enable teachers to draw from and to bring life to their leadership experiences.

Chapter 3.   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. RESEARCH CONTEXT

The implementation of school-wide initiatives deeply impacts all teachers in one way or another. Some staff members become so disillusioned about reforms that they dissociate themselves from being part of any change process; some feel the work they have done is being ignored; and others are unyielding in their efforts and continue to take part in projects despite a lack of school-wide support. This mixed bag of reactions and emotions can create an ideological, and sometimes physical, rift among staff. Regardless of what a teacher's position might be on teacher-led initiatives, such experiences allow for renegotiation of one's working relationship with colleagues.

Each reaction arises from a set of contextual, socio-political, professional and personal circumstances. There is value in listening to different viewpoints because each adds a unique perspective to teacher leadership when varied opinions are heard together. The context of my research lies in the lived experiences of teacher leaders whether they are positive or negative experiences.

3.2. RATIONALE FOR RESEARCH CONTEXT

It is not uncommon to find authors dedicating an entire article to itemizing the roles and responsibilities of teacher leaders, or providing a checklist that schools can follow to bring about teacher empowerment. One might find these descriptors reassuring. However, they may obscure a reality where one teacher understands the practice of leadership a bit differently from another teacher. Leander and Osborne (2008) attribute this to the "complex positioning" of teacher leadership. The way teachers position themselves and their work in relation to "multiple political and social

others" affects "how reform agendas are implemented and how leadership is constructed, negotiated, and enacted" (Leander and Osborne, 2008, pp. 23 and 24). A teacher's understanding of leadership is influenced by the position(s) he / she takes towards historical norms, established school culture, collegial interaction, and personal beliefs. Every day, teachers are exposed to multiple stimuli coming from various dimensions (e.g., personal, professional, cultural, socio-political and structural dimensions) of the work environment. Teacher leaders situate themselves in positions that enable them to take notice of certain phenomena. The things to which they choose to give their attention, or choose to ignore, are vital to the way they construct and make sense of their leadership experiences. As teachers "assume agency in constituting their subjectivities", they also open themselves up to be reshaped by the practices, conversations, and artifacts which they have previously positioned themselves against (Leander and Osborne, 2008, p. 25).

The idea of complex positioning provides a unique lens in the present research context. When teachers get involved in teacher-led initiatives, they are positioning their physical / mental / moral beings towards people and circumstances that bring substantial meanings to their present and future views of grassroots leadership. These meanings may not be obvious to others whose lives occupy a different space in the world of teacher leadership. In this study, "leadership in teacher-led initiatives" is treated as one type of complex positioning, and used as a situated position "to better understand micro and macro, personal and institutional, tensions of change" that shape the meaning of leadership as understood by a small group of teacher leaders (Leander and Osborne, 2008, p. 25).

3.3. RESEARCH METHOD

The use of qualitative research in the social science field has sometimes been criticized for its lack of rigor and generalizability, perceived by some as a form of free-style writing that is likened to unstructured, unvalidated thoughts that anyone can scribble on a piece of paper (Van Manen, 1990). In order for qualitative research to be taken seriously, it is necessary that it does not become a catch-all term for all and every

kind of writing exercise. Dunne (1999) argues the need for researchers to generate descriptive studies that:

> will tell stories about particular projects or episodes in the history of an organization or of one of its constituent parts, and they will do so with the kind of interpretative skill that can bring out the nuances of plot and character, the dense meshing of insights and oversights, of convergent or contrary motivations and interests, of anticipated or unanticipated responses from the internal environment (p. 717).

The following presents several research sensitivities that pertain to the context of this study, and makes arguments for the use of qualitative research in producing 'thick' and 'strong' descriptions of teacher leadership experiences.

3.3.1.   SENSITIVITY TO VOICE

Stories can be told as a single or as a collection of accounts; however, they can also be part of a larger dialogue in the form of a polyphony that draws meanings from multiple voices. Goodson claims that voice carries the meaning of one's life (Hargreaves, 1994a). To understand teacher leaders "either as a researcher, administrator, or colleague, it is not enough merely to witness the behavior, skills and actions…one must also listen to the voice of the teacher, to the person it expresses and to the purposes it articulates" (Goodson, quote from Hargreaves, 1994a, p. 249). Teachers' voice animates "significant stories of change" as they articulate their own transformative journeys of becoming leaders at their schools (Leander and Osborne, 2008, p. 44). It is about participating in a type of deliberation that MacIntyre calls "the articulation of practice" (Dunne, 2005). By speaking about "the work of teacher leaders and teacher communities at the level of practice", we could learn "how teachers marshal human and material resources in support of learning and reform, while also capturing the dilemmas and tensions with which teachers must contend" (Little, 2003, p. 414). Teacher leadership research done in this way can push discussions of authentic experiences into the public sphere.

Articulations of practice can intensify the collective wisdom and excellences that teachers achieve as a group. They also make us hear more clearly and loudly the struggles that teacher leaders face. By creating a community of discourse, teachers articulate their stories not as ends in themselves, but in hopes of arriving together at some enduring aspects of their leadership experience by mobilizing "intellectual capital and the transfer of innovation" (Frost, 2008, p. 346). The collective voices from teachers can encourage significant learning in the field of leadership research.

3.3.2.   SENSITIVITY TO EMERGENT EXPERIENCES

The development of teacher leadership is fluid and emergent. Given the opportunity, every teacher has the potential to step up and lead. Years of teaching experience is only one factor out of many that determine leadership competency. Aside from one's place in the career ladder, personal attributes such as desires and a sense of loyalty and responsibility are other mobilizing factors of self-empowerment. Therefore, it is to be expected that teachers move in and out of leadership roles throughout their careers. Schools also move between adopting and abandoning distributed leadership practices. A sincere effort at community building demands time set aside for talking, learning and doing. If we value the importance of leadership capacity, then time "is a precious resource that we give as a gift to the endeavors and people we believe in" (Lambert, 2003, p. 78).

Similarly, research on teacher leadership needs to capture this process as continuing and evolving. Particularly when the workplace is filled with skepticism and autocratic rules, it is inevitable that leadership capacity would move through many false and late starts. Boleman and Deal (1994) remind us that leaders "make a measurable difference in others' lives, even though those differences may be hard to assess and may not come to fruition for years after the fact" (p. 3). Research that labels teachers as leaders versus followers, or as supporters versus resisters of change, fails to appreciate the potential for leadership that is broadly distributed within a professional community and exercised by all of its members through dialogue and collaboration. Perhaps research might be more meaningful if we were to look at the way different leadership experiences are shaped by, and in turn help shape, the people and culture of a school.

Framing leadership research as an emergent undertaking grants hope and second chances for educators and schools to become better at what they do.

3.3.3. *SENSITIVITY TO LEADERSHIP COMPLEXITY*

In order to fully embrace one's experience of teacher leadership, research needs to explore all types of conflicted relationships stretching over the personal, professional, cultural, socio-political, and structural contexts in the workplace. These dimensions work together, in complex ways, to form the meanings and understandings of leadership that teachers have come to hold. At any one point in time, teachers may hold conflicting views of their role as leaders, resulting in an inconsistency between espoused morality -- what is said, and moral theories-in-use -- what is done (Halverson, 2004).

Some teacher leaders see themselves in positions of power and authority. They believe that many of their colleagues are waiting to be led, having attitudes of learned helplessness. At the risk of continuing the orthodoxy of school leadership, these teacher leaders feel justified acting as a middle rung on the organizational hierarchy. In contrast, there are teachers leaders who like to stay out of the limelight and work quietly behind the scene building collaborative cultures in their schools. They are uncomfortable with being called teacher leaders because they feel undeserving of the title. To a certain extent, they think the labeling can create a rift between themselves and their colleagues. It is evident that what we know about teacher leadership is pulled between "research and practice, ideals and reality, as well as policy and lived experience" (Margolis, 2008, p. 308).

These discords make teacher leadership an interesting yet complex phenomenon to study. Research in this field can inform the way teachers go about dealing with competing views about teacher empowerment. By sharing their stories, teachers can bring their experiences into teacher leadership research thereby inviting discussions about the convergence and divergence among theory, beliefs and practice.

3.3.4. SENSITIVITY TO DISTRIBUTED EXPERIENCES

Teacher leadership is not a self-contained phenomenon. It occurs in a symbiotic, as well as in an antagonistic, interplay among people, places and time. Dunne (2005) warns against doing research that focuses us "too exclusively with individual subjects" in such a way that insufficient attention is given "to the socio-political, institutional, and historical matrices within which individuals themselves are located" (p. 382). This pluralistic view is denoted by Spillane as the "distribution of leadership practice", a "powerful explanatory framework" which he believes can "generate evocative cases" and provide "insights into how school leaders act" (Spillane et al., 2004, p. 4). The "relations between the work of leaders and their social, material and symbolic situation" impact how leadership is perceived and understood in practice (Spillane et al., 2004, p. 28).

The study of teacher leadership should be embedded in a space of plurality where personal attributes, social relationships, school cultures, and organizational structures meld into a "comprehensive construct for understanding work-related behavior" (Kowalski, 1995, p. 245). A distributed research frame connects self, others, and the environment in an ongoing discourse that attempts to bring out the authenticity and nuances of leadership experience. Hence, research in teacher leadership finds its "intelligibility not in a predictable chain of causality but rather in the plot of a story that can be narrated only retrospectively" (Dunne, 2005, p. 380).

3.3.5. ARGUMENT FOR QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Leadership, according to Gardner (1995), is:

a process that occurs within the minds of individuals who live in a culture – a process that entails the capacities to create stories, to understand and evaluate these stories, and to appreciate the struggle among stories. Ultimately, certain kinds of stories will typically become predominant – in particular, stories that provide an adequate and timely sense of identity for individuals who live within a community or institution (p. 22).

The current research is an attempt to portray, in the same way that leadership manifests itself in lived practice, through the power of stories. If leadership is constructed through creating, understanding, and appreciating stories, then leadership research should reveal the underlying dynamics that influence how leaders create, understand, and appreciate stories in certain ways. The use of narratives can illuminate personal insights into teachers' practices. They can be a powerful form of understanding when teachers are given the chance to be storytellers of their own experiences. In a sense, it is neither the research nor the researcher, but the stories of teacher leaders that drive our concept of teacher empowerment. In *Researching Lived Experience,* Van Manen (1990) asks, "Aren't the most captivating stories exactly those which help us to understand better what is most common, most taken-for-granted, and what concerns us most ordinarily and directly?" (p. 19). Here, stories are significant because they are ordinary and familiar. It is a mistake to think that everyday phenomena "are simply repetitive forms of behaviour carried out 'mindlessly'. On the contrary, most social activity has to be 'worked at' continually by those who sustain it in their day-to-day conduct" (Giddens, 1986, p. 86).

According to Van Manen (1990), qualitative research brings out four fundamental themes that are inherent in all human phenomena: lived body, lived other, lived space and lived time. The lived world of teacher leadership can be understood by how a teacher 1) connects with his / her existential self, 2) maintains relationship with others, 3) occupies the space of work and profession, and 4) moves through past, present and future experiences. These concepts are embodied within my research question, with the goal of studying the practice / meaning (lived time) of teacher leadership through the personal (lived body), professional (lived other), cultural (lived other), socio-political (lived other) and structural (lived space) dimensions. Therefore, qualitative research, as defined in this context, enables the study of teacher leadership *emerging* from teachers' *voices* as they articulate the *complexity* and *distributed* elements of their experiences. By listening to teachers' most ordinary experiences, we can relate more intimately to their inner beliefs, emotions and understandings of leadership.

Teachers come to understand leadership through the experiences they form with past relationships and stories. In this study, looking back at the past entails more than remembering a distant occurrence. As teachers (re)connect with their past, they pull

memories to the foreground of their current experience and they can learn from the lessons offered. "Through meditations, conversations, day dreams, inspirations and other interpretive acts we assign meaning to the phenomena of lived life", making them more than a thing of the past; they become experiences of life that recur with "hermeneutic significance" (Van Manen, 1990, p. 37). It is through lived experiences that teachers come to reckon with their own identity as leaders and to understand the significance of teacher leadership. Van Manen (1990) notes that the aim of qualitative research is "to transform lived experience into a textual expression of its essence – in such a way that the effect of the text is at once a reflective re-living and a reflective appropriation of something meaningful" (p. 36). In learning about teacher leadership, stories are not simply recollected verbatim but they have the potential to illuminate unique and lingering understandings that constitute the lived experiences of teacher leaders. Nash (2002), a professor in philosophy of education and ethics, once described his life as "a continuing moral narrative...[in which he creates] unique and illuminating stories that give purpose and meaning to the life [he] leads" (p. 61).

It is with these understandings that I propose to use qualitative research as a methodology to study how teachers' lived experiences come to be, and in doing so, give lived meaning to the experience of teacher leadership. In Spillane's distributed framework, leadership is seen as a practice that occurs amongst leaders, followers and their situations. These three areas are categorized in more specific terms in my study; I am labeling leaders as the 'personal dimension', followers as the vested individuals and organizational beliefs within the 'professional, cultural and socio-political dimensions', and situations as the 'structural dimension'.

3.4. DEFINITION OF POPULATION AND SELECTION OF SAMPLE

I selected my research participants from a large urban school district in British Columbia. For my study, I used purposeful and snowball sampling methods to choose participants who have had rich professional experiences to comment on the phenomenon of teacher leadership. The criteria for selecting my research participants

included teachers who: i) were currently taking a leading role in teacher-led initiatives, and / or ii) had taken on a leading role in a teacher-led initiative in the previous 3 years. Irrespective of how successful the initiatives were, it was the teachers' passionate engagement in the initiatives that could answer what this research hoped to find out. Groenewald (2004) contends that both purposeful and snowball sampling are sound methods for locating research participants in a qualitative research study.

I made initial contact by e-mailing 18 secondary principals in the district. In the e-mail, I explained the purpose of my research and asked the principals to nominate teachers whom they thought would be suitable participants for this research. From this, I had six nominations and four teachers gave formal consent to participate in the study. In addition to this, from my own connection with the district's Leadership Academy Program, I asked my colleagues to nominate teacher leaders at their schools. Through this snowball sampling method, I gathered six names. Of this group, four teachers agreed to participate in this study. I accepted all eight participants who gave informed consent. Creswell (2003) suggests that approximately ten participants is an ideal number for an interview study. In order to meet the number of teacher leaders that is required to carry out this research, I did not have to reject any participants. My study population was diverse in age, teaching experiences, and teaching areas.

Each participant was fully informed of the intent as well as the procedures, benefits, risks, confidentiality, and significance of this research project (see Appendix A). They were asked to give informed consent to participate in the study before the interviews began. The methodology complied with ethical guidelines from The Office of Research Ethics at Simon Fraser University as well as the school district selected for the study.

3.5. RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

I used qualitative research methods to help gather thick narratives from teacher leaders. Two different instruments – reflection journals and interviews - were used to capture the complexities of teacher leadership.

3.5.1. REFLECTION JOURNALS

My journey toward becoming a teacher leader was the main driving force for doing this research study. Not only does my past play into how I feel about teacher leadership, it informs and constrains much of what I know and believe about the practice. As a researcher, I am cognizant that I bring certain assumptions into my work. Moustakas (1994) describes epoché as the process of "bracketing" prejudices so that "the actual nature and essence of things will be disclosed more fully, will reveal themselves to us and enable us to find a clearing and light to knowledge and truth" (p. 90). I used journal writing as an instrument to bracket the peculiarities of my personal experience. By writing about my own thoughts to the interview questions, I set aside my preconceptions and hoped to minimize any biases that I might have brought into the interviews and data analysis. Van Manen (1990) also emphasizes the place of writing in qualitative research. According to him, writing "fixes thought on paper. It externalizes what in some sense is internal" (Van Manen, 1990, p. 125). The act of writing is "to make some aspect of our lived world, of our lived experience, reflectively understandable and intelligible" (Van Manen, 1990, p. 126). Essentially, I wrote reflection journals to achieve two purposes. One was to make my own leadership experiences intelligible to others; the other was to recognize my own assumptions so that as a researcher, I could engage with my participants' stories as experienced and lived through their world.

3.5.2. INTERVIEWS

Eight high school teacher leaders participated in an in-depth face-to-face interview with me. Through the course of an audio-taped 2-hour interview that took place between June and November of 2010, participants reflected on their own experience of leading teacher-led initiatives. They reflected and interpreted their personal views on teacher empowerment. The intent was to engage participants in a reflexive process that revealed the circumstances, understanding, emotions and beliefs of their leadership practices. Through talk and stories, participants remembered moments of significance and unraveled how people, places and events came together to give meaning to their work. Therefore, the interview had "a hermeneutic thrust: it [was] oriented to sense-making and interpreting" (Van Manen, 1990, p. 98).

3.5.2.1. INTERVIEW FORMAT

The semi-structured interviews were guided by three generative narrative questions (see Appendix B). Under each section, there was a subset of more specific questions to help interviewees recount critical events / meanings of their lived experiences and to help them scrutinize the details of their experiences by weaving through various dynamics and dimensions of leadership. Every effort was made to ensure that the interviewees played a significant role in steering the course of the interview. I did so by being mindful about not interrupting the flow of the conversation. This point is particularly important in qualitative research where the interviewee is the person who holds the "power of knowledge" being the "only expert on the question of their own lives" (Czarniawska, 2004, p. 48). As well, interview techniques such as the use of silent, echo, uh-huh or tell-me-more probes were employed to give interviewees the time they needed to fully elaborate on their experience (Bernard and Ryan, 2010). Careful consideration was given to each interview location to ensure that it was free from background noise as well as being a comfortable setting for the participants.

3.5.2.2. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

This qualitative study used personal narratives to access what stories and / or episodes could reveal about the participants' lived experiences.

> To tell a story, said Aristotle, is to "speak of events as past and gone…nobody can 'narrate' what has not yet happened" (*Rhetoric,* Book III, Chapter 16, as quoted in Bernard and Ryan, 2010). A narrative poem, he said, "should have for its subject a single action, whole and complete, with a beginning, a middle, and an end" (*Poetics,* Section 3, Part 23, as quoted in Bernard and Ryan, 2010).

The interviews were structured to bring out a narration of lived experiences from beginning to end. I presented interviewees with 3 generative narrative questions and asked each to "present the history of an area of interest, in which [he or she has] participated, in an extempore narrative" (Hermanns, 1995, p. 183, as quoted in Flick, 2006, p. 173). These questions guided participants through different stages of the

phenomenon as they revealed how they have come to learn about and make sense of teacher leadership as a result of their role in a teacher-led initiative, starting from the time they began the initiative to when the interviews took place. The three stages were framed by the following prompts:

- I want you to tell your story of your leadership experience. Let us start from the beginning and you can tell me how you became involved in your initiative.
- Can you tell me what your experiences have been like as a teacher leader in this initiative?
- Based on what you have experienced, tell me how you feel and what you know now about teacher leadership. I would like you to consider the changes, struggles and growth that have occurred as a result of your involvement in leadership work.

For each generative question, I had a list of unstructured questions that allowed participants to comment more deeply on specific topics that came up during the interview. These topics reflected recent findings in the literature that addressed the tensions and distributed framework of teacher leadership. The list was by no means exhaustive and the questions asked depended heavily on what was and was not shared by the participants. The final part of the interview was what Flick (2006) calls the "balancing phase". In this section, participants were asked to reflect on their reconceptualization of leadership practice. These interview questions included:

- How would you define teacher leadership now?
- What does teacher leadership mean to you now as an educator?
- Have your own perceptions and understandings about teacher leadership changed throughout your leadership experience?
- Describe what this leadership experience has taught you about your role as a teacher leader.
- Describe something that you are surprised to learn about because of your past / current involvement as a teacher leader.

3.6. RELEVANCE OF RESEARCH DATA

Each story adds a piece of history to our collective leadership experience; it also opens up new paths of understanding and interesting possibilities for creating our life project of teacher leadership. Each teacher goes through a personal journey of retracing his / her footprints and plants new seedlings that shape the future dynamics of school leadership phenomenon. From what teachers have to say, we share the successes and challenges of their leadership experience. From their stories, we listen to them talk about their thinking and conviction. The connection "between what is out there, in its appearance and reality, and what is within [each teacher leader] in reflective thought and awareness, is in truth a wondrous gift of being human" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 65). The heart of this project is in producing a learning log that "keeps us forever awake, alive, and connected with what is and with what matters in life" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 65). This idea, in itself, communicates the value of (re)constructing teacher leadership stories that can join all those who participated in creating this project. Although there is much unpredictability in the participants' stories,

> explanations are possible because there is a certain teleology – sense of purpose – in all lived narratives…A life is lived with a goal but the most important aspects of life is the formulation and re-formulation of that goal. This circular teleology is what MacIntyre calls a *narrative quest*. A virtuous life, according to him, is a life dedicated to a quest for the good human life, where the construction of a definition of a 'good life' is a process that ends only when a life comes to an end (Czarniawska, 2004, p. 13).

In this research, eight teachers came together in a quest to seek the 'virtuous' life of teacher leadership.

3.7. COLLECTION AND MANAGEMENT OF DATA

Interview data was transcribed immediately after the interviews had taken place. After the transcription was completed, I began organizing the interview data by coding and chunking similar themes (Bernard and Ryan, 2010). I wrote a narrative for each participant. A copy of the narrative was e-mailed to every participant to check for content validity, as well as to review and / or to refuse the use of any personal information. The participants were asked to give final approvals to include their narratives in this report.

3.8. EXPLICITATION OF DATA

The purpose of data explicitation in qualitative research is to allow emergent themes to reveal themselves in the storylines of the participants' lived experiences. It was important to keep the integrity and truthfulness of their experiences intact by not reinterpreting, or misinterpreting, their lifeworld through my lens as a research-practitioner (Groenewald, 2004). From the data, I drew upon important quotes / narratives to illuminate the deeper meanings behind teachers' leadership experiences. The pile-sort method was used to capture the central themes of teacher leadership (Bernard and Ryan, 2010). It involved pulling out data, and repeatedly sorting out descriptive narratives into categories until I came to a set of exemplar quotes and expressions that could underscore the "immense richness of meaning" in teacher leadership (Van Manen, 1990, p. 105). According to Van Manen (1990), a researcher can give meaning to unique and essential experiences by i) drawing out themes that can bring "life to speech" and give meaning to "a certain way of standing in the world", and ii) using emergent themes as a hermeneutic tool to analyze "generally accepted conceptualizations" that are often "gloss[ed] over" and to "reveal a more thoughtful understanding of the nature of a certain topic" (pp. 170 and 171).

Unique experiences come from individual teachers recounting aspects of their leadership endeavor when they position themselves as leaders of a school initiative. I tried to capture this by examining how each teacher described his / her unique position

with himself or herself, with others, and with the environment. In doing so, I tried to understand how their personal, professional, cultural, social and structural environments came together to make leadership experience either fulfilling or frustrating. More importantly, the authenticity of each teacher's experience was embraced through bringing his / her voice to the foreground, and letting the power of his / her words and the rawness of his / her emotions shine through.

Aside from retelling individual stories, I also analyzed common ideas across all participants and synthesized key themes that could speak to the essential lived experiences of teacher leadership. By pointing out the significance of these themes, I wanted to bring attention to how teacher leadership is currently understood and felt by teacher leaders, as well as its impact on our future understanding of grassroots leadership. Stories were analyzed in a collective context such that the enduring aspects of leadership experience could help reconceptualize future practice of this phenomenon.

Through embracing teachers' stories both on an individual and collective level, I was trying to accomplish three things. One, I wanted to bring teachers' stories to a wider audience and to invite others to hear the fulfillments, struggles, and dilemmas from our teacher leaders. Two, I wanted to stimulate a more thoughtful inquiry in the public domain from where teacher leadership begins. Rather than simply using the views of groups like school administrators and politicians to generate our understanding of teacher leadership, it is more fitting to learn from teachers who are leading from the ground up and whose voices have strong bearings on how future practices of teacher leadership will take shape. Finally, I wanted to create personal diaries for teachers involved in this study, giving a sense of importance, credibility, and complexity to the leadership work in which they were engaged.

3.9. SUMMARY OF RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlined the rationale for using a qualitative research methodology to tap into teacher leaders' lived experiences. I established the purpose for using interviews as an appropriate method for examining leadership practices. As well, I

explained the data collection, data management, and data explicitation methods used in this study to capture the rich and deeply lived experiences of teacher leaders.

Chapter 4.   PRESENTATION OF DATA AND DATA ANALYSIS

4.1. INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH DATA

Data from this study are presented as a collection of vignettes about eight teacher leaders in an urban school district. Each story penetrates through different experiences; these insights allow the participants, researcher, and the readers to reposition their respective understandings by inviting them to consider what they did not previously know about leadership. In this chapter, the data is laid out in the context of two research questions: i) how do teachers derive meaning from their lived experiences to help shape their role as leaders of teacher-led initiatives, and ii) how do teachers' lived experiences of leading school initiatives (re)define how they feel, envisage, and enact their future role as teacher leaders, as well as the way they make sense of future leadership practices.

4.1.1.   ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH DATA

From the data, I drew out 323 quotes from the interviews that captured some significant information about teacher leadership. Each quote was typed out on a separate piece of paper and labeled with the participant's name, interview date, and a code to describe the quote. The following codes were created:

- Personal reasons for initial involvement in teacher leadership
- Professional reasons for initial involvement in teacher leadership
- Cultural reasons for initial involvement in teacher leadership
- Socio-political support for initial involvement in teacher leadership
- Identifying an absence of or a need for school initiatives

- Providing better learning experiences for students and teachers
- Seeking continuous opportunities to learn as a professional
- Including both students and teachers in the learning environment
- Giving students a better learning environment
- Helping students
- Helping colleagues
- The need to change in order to do things differently
- Being a change agent
- Personal strength as a teacher leader
- Personal weakness as a teacher leader
- Struggles of being a teacher leader
- Having persistence
- Importance of one's work as a teacher leader
- Being resilient
- Having courage
- Identity of self being a teacher leader
- Struggles with resentment from staff members
- Struggles with changing colleagues' teaching practices
- Struggles with changing colleagues' perspectives about teacher leadership
- Struggles with how teacher leaders are perceived by colleagues
- Struggles with taking a political stance in leadership work
- Struggles with changing the school environment
- Changing the bureaucracy of the school system
- Changing the bureaucracy by building a collective will
- Enabling open and fair processes
- Making a difference for the students
- Valuing teacher leadership
- Commitment to public education
- Commitment to the school and the community
- Teacher union being an impediment to school initiatives
- Using union involvement to enhance leadership work
- Changing the school structure to accommodate teacher collaboration

- Discrepancy between assumption and reality of teacher leadership
- Coping with different viewpoints
- Lack of care in the profession

Quotes with the same headings were assembled together (see Appendix C). Subsequent analysis involved distributing the data within and across these headings which illuminated some important ideas about teacher leadership. In this chapter, I will introduce these ideas in two categories. The first category is the participants' recounting of their own experiences of teacher leadership – their involvement, capacities, and struggles. After examining the data, I generated six themes that center on the personal, professional, cultural, socio-political, and structural dimensions, as well as the tension, within teacher leadership. I created 8 tables to show the analytical processes that led me to arrive at these themes (see Table 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, and 15). The tables contain a list of interview codes that were used to support the arguments of each theme; this process was done separately for each participant. In addition, in Table 17 (see Table 17), I provide a summary of a complete list of codes and themes that were used to consolidate all the participants' responses for the first research question. The second category deals with the learning the participants have come to associate with their leadership experiences – their understandings, feelings, insights, and personal vision. I created eights tables that list the data codings I used to respond to the second research question. Tables 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, and 16 provide the coding processes I generated for each participant and Table 18 shows this summary for all 8 participants (see Tables 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, and 18). Two categories, lived experiences and leadership & learning, are used to organize the vignettes in addressing the study's two research questions.

4.2. NARRATIVES

Vivien, Odessa, Chaim, Aisha, Trent, Ifrain, Orabel, and Neil (pseudonyms) are high school teacher leaders in a large school district in British Columbia. They work in four different high schools, teaching a wide range of subjects from Math and Science to Philosophy, ESL, English, and Social Studies. The next few sections are a (re)living of

eight teachers' stories as teacher leaders. It is about the participants' retellings of and reflections on their leadership experience. This group of teacher leaders opens up about their lived experience, and speaks to what teacher leadership means to them as leaders. Following each narrative is the data analysis section. I synthesize how various dimensions have shaped these teachers' involvement in school initiatives as well as the tensions inherent in their leadership work. Moreover, by drawing from research data, I elucidate how their leadership experiences shape who they are as leaders. Each vignette is introduced in 4 parts – the story, the lived experience, leadership & learning, and data analysis.

4.2.1.   VIVIEN'S STORY

Vivien is a Chemistry teacher who has spent nine of her ten-year teaching career working at her current school. A few years ago, Vivien noticed that she was more comfortable with her job in the classroom and was getting better at using differentiated instruction to meet diverse needs of her students. She believed that she had reached a point where she could step out of her room and explore her capacity to provide learning opportunities for all students. This desire to do more resulted in her taking up a department head position and becoming actively involved at work. She became a member of the Social Responsibility Committee, Health & Safety Committee, and the School Planning Council.

At her school, the Science department head had always chaired certain committees. When the previous department head left the school, it created opportunities within and beyond the department. Vivien was expected to carry on the tradition and to take over as an informal leader of these committee groups. People counted on her to continue the job, but it was Vivien's devotion to her students that impacted her decision to get involved in various aspects of the school community. As a teacher, she envisioned herself being a strong influence on improving the students' overall learning experience. She worked hard to put fun back into science education by introducing Honors classes and bringing students to Science Fairs and competitions. She put on scholarship nights for grade 12 students and coordinated with teachers from other departments to help students prepare for their province-wide exams. Aside from these institutional and personal factors, her former principal also played a significant role in

51

Vivien's ability to step up as a leader. The principal saw her leadership potential and believed in her ability before any opportunities presented themselves.

4.2.1.1.   VIVIEN – THE LIVED EXPERIENCE

Vivien had a hard time stepping into her role as a Science department head. In this school district, department heads are considered formal leadership roles. These positions are usually given to senior staff members in each subject department. Traditionally, they are responsible for administrative-related duties such as budgeting, managing the inventory and attending district meetings.

As far as Vivien knew, the Science department head at her school had always been a male Caucasian. In the seniority rank, Vivien was one of the more experienced teaching staff at the school, but this did not lessen the difficulties she encountered. Things that were implemented in the past were seen as problems for the first time. For example, obtaining supplies such as scantron sheets from the department head was something the group had always done to ensure resources were replenished before they ran out; Vivien found it strange that this process suddenly became an issue. She did not understand why she was called upon to defend past practices. Vivien believed that gender and race may have been contributing factors to the struggles she faced. As an East Indian Canadian, she became the first female Science department head at her school. When she initiated a number of plans shortly after stepping into her new leadership position, she was seen as too ambitious. Her colleagues questioned her actions. They challenged her authority and questioned her judgment on a number of initiatives, such as offering new courses in the department. The most unsettling part for Vivien was that she could not pinpoint or understand the exact cause or causes for the resentment. She was so stressed out in her first two years as a department head that she lost sleep. Although she was shocked and unprepared by how difficult the execution of her new responsibilities was, she continued to carry out ideas that in her opinion would benefit the department.

Vivien kept on pushing for things that she considered would be good for the students. She did it because that was what she believed in, but also because she saw her principal doing the same. Like her, he had to answer people's questions and ease

their doubts; and like him, she learned how to face judgments without getting upset. Vivien now accepts, and expects, criticisms as part of the package in teacher leadership. Currently, she feels that her department members are seeing beyond her gender and the color of her skin. They are hearing the messages in her words and support the initiatives for what they are worth.

4.2.1.2.   VIVIEN – LEADERSHIP AND LEARNING

> Vivien: At the last Grad dinner, as I sat there and I think about all the things I've done, myself or with others. Um...and I'm thinking, is this what I want? Am I happy with what I've done? And I tell myself, "No." And for a moment, I felt very, very sad. And then the thought came to me, I need to do something else, I need to do something more...The initial thought was that I wanted to make a difference for the students. That thought is still there now, so I'm trying to engage directly with the students. So yeah, that's true, that's true honestly (Interview, June 18, 2010).

Vivien's wish is to see her students being prepared for what comes after high school. Her passion to help students grow into independent, capable individuals grounds many decisions that she makes as a teacher. She began her career teaching students with developmental and intellectual disabilities even though she was trained as a secondary Science teacher. This teaching assignment was an important turning point in her life. She learned a variety of teaching strategies that were useful to her teaching career. She learned to be more patient. Most of all, she learned that she could enhance student learning by improving her students' sense of responsibility, their attitude and behavior. In the new school year, she looks forward to get involved in Grad Council and sees it as a new opportunity to work directly with the students on developing their social skills.

Despite her many accomplishments at the departmental and school level, Vivien feels humble about her role as a leader:

Vivien: I think I was first acknowledged as a teacher leader not because of all the committees that I am involved in, I think it is because of the classroom teaching. I still need to do a little more than what I am doing right now. When I have reached my goal of achieving that complete satisfaction or when I know that I have made a huge difference in the lives of my students, then I think I will say, "Yes, I am a teacher leader." I look at that wall, I look at all those pictures, and I look at the students. I ask myself, "Am I a teacher leader?", and I think about the difference I have made in a number of people's lives. At this stage, I am not a hundred percent confident that I am a teacher leader. I would like to tell you one day confidently, and hopefully that day will come soon, that I am a teacher leader (Interview, June 18, 2010).

Table 1: Vivien - Coding and thematic processes for research question #1

Themes	Personal	Professional	Cultural	Socio-political	Structural	Tension
Codes (the number of statements related to each code)	Personal reasons for initial involvement in teacher leadership (5) Initial understanding and expectation about teacher leadership (3) Struggles on being a teacher leader (4) Personal weakness as a teacher leader (3)	Professional reasons for initial involvement in teacher leadership (2) Struggle with resentment from staff members (5)	Cultural reasons for initial involvement in teacher leadership (1)	Coping with different viewpoints (1) Socio-political support for initial involvement in teacher leadership (1)		Developing an understanding of teacher leadership through successes and struggles (3) Differences in teachers' understanding of teacher leadership (1) Discrepancy between the assumption and reality of teacher leadership (1)
Number of Codes	4	2	1	2	0	3
Number of Statements	15	7	1	2	0	5
Sample Quotes	I would feel really guilty if…and discontent with myself if I cannot take that extra step.	My principal has been very encouraging… I used to share certain things with him. And he would, you know what, in leadership, we look at emotional intelligence and that is something that I eventually acquired.	It's kind of a tradition in the sense that every single time, it was the Science department head who was the chairperson… When he left, I expressed my interest at the same time that another teacher also expressed interest. So then they decided we'll be co-chairs.	You do things; you put your foot down. Maybe it's hard for you to make people understand why you're doing it, and people will resent it. But eventually people understand and see things, they'll eventually come around and understand you.		How do you not show that you're being affected by something that is negative going around you, right? How do you keep that face, that firmness, and continue with your leadership role without taking a step back and without crumbling down, you know?

Table 2: Vivien - Coding and thematic processes for research question #2

Themes	To Learn	To Help	To Change	To Commit	To Persist	To have Self-awareness
Codes (the number of statements related to each code)	Providing better learning experiences for students and teachers (2)	Helping students (3) Helping colleagues (1)	Making a difference for the students (3)	Commitment to public education (2) Commitment to the community (1)	Having persistence (2)	Importance of one's work as a teacher leader (6)
Number of Codes	1	2	1	2	1	1
Number of Statements	2	4	3	3	2	6
Sample Quotes	It's the word; it HAS to do with "Improving student learning". That was my main motivation; my drive to be in this committee was the fact that it was supposed to be for improving student learning.	You have to know whether what you're doing will benefit the students. Your focus is not pleasing other staff members; your focus is on making a difference for your students. My focus is always on the students.	So that was my intention of joining, of being a part of the Improving Student Learning Committee because I want to be able to make a difference for the students in general.	So through the Improving Student Learning Committee, we will look at a number of ways in how we do that, and how we can create a better learning environment for our students. In creating a better learning environment, how do we have students better prepared for work outside or for their education?	I have grown over the last three years myself mentally. Emotionally, I have developed quite a lot. So, in the part of a teacher leader, I think you are bound to encounter problems that if you're not able to cope with, it will definitely come in your way and you wouldn't be able to do anything after that. So, you just have to make sure you understand that you're doing something for the benefit of everyone, for the students.	I think if more and more teachers take up some additional responsibility other than being a classroom teacher, it will take the school to a whole new level. And eventually, if all the schools do that, it will take the entire district to a whole new level. I think it makes a huge difference and you can see how students appreciate it when teachers are involved in their lives.

4.2.1.3. VIVIEN – DATA ANALYSIS

Vivien had both positive and negative circumstances working together to shape her journey of learning to be a leader. With a commitment to take more responsibilities at school, she held herself accountable to a set of professional obligations that were not always understood by her colleagues. Fortunately, her challenge with the school culture was offset by a supportive and understanding principal who mentored and encouraged her leadership role. Teacher leadership, for Vivien, is about carrying out her full responsibility as a teacher. Her opinion of a good teacher is someone who makes a difference in the classroom and shows concern for the students. This belief allowed her step into the school community and get involved in groups to make a bigger difference. Vivien's drive for being a teacher leader comes from a sense of self-awareness and a desire to help students.

4.2.2. ODESSA'S STORY

Like Vivien, Odessa is a Science teacher. With 15 years of teaching experience, she has worked for 12 years at a school that she describes is a family-oriented place. There are 6 teacher couples on site, and during any one year, one can expect anywhere between 10 to 15 students whose parents are staff members at the school. Odessa not only chairs, but brings her whole department to participate in school teams such as the Commencement, Awards, and Technology Committees. She is also a key coordinator for the annual Christmas assembly concert.

Odessa achieved a lot during 5 years as a department head. These achievements she considered huge and transformational. During the interview, she more than once referred to herself as the single initiator and spearhead project leader. In identifying a major event that began this change, she hearkened back 8 years when the school underwent a large staff turnover. At the time, teachers were discontented with the lack of consultation that went into creating the school's mission statement. The Science department took it upon themselves to create one for their own department. Together, they extensively researched the purpose, planning, and writing of mission statements, and eventually identified four key areas that would help them achieve their goals. The four areas focused around literacy, student safety, critical thinking and

57

technology. Technology was a big piece for Odessa because she was part of a brief teacher exchange assignment where she experienced how advanced Australia was with the use of technology in the classroom. Odessa went to workshops to learn how students could use laptops in a creative and responsible manner. She successfully applied and secured thousands of dollars in grant money to purchase real-time data capturing devices and electronic tools that teachers could use to effectively engage students in critical thinking skills. Odessa credits the support that her department gave her through the various projects that she tried to initiate as a department head. Her success as a leader goes beyond the classroom. As a department, they celebrate birthdays and baby-sit each other's kids. On the weekends, the women relax at a spa while the men play in a band.

4.2.2.1.   ODESSA – THE LIVED EXPERIENCE

Unlike Vivien, Odessa's experience as a Science department head has, from the beginning, been a very positive one. Her colleagues support many programs that she tries to implement, and this helps expand her role as an instructional leader. A focus on student learning is something the school district recognizes as one of the most important kinds of work in any leadership position. In the district, Odessa is encouraged as a leader to mobilize her department's capacity around enhancing students' opportunities to learn about Science. To do this, she covered a lot of ground work that she described as dreary and frustrating. Instead of waiting to be helped, she applied and got over $30,000 in funding for technology resources. She relieved her colleagues from the burden of writing grant proposals and getting program license approval for their school. She did this herself because she knew that the piles of paperwork could set her department back from trying out new things. As a result of her forward-thinking in spearheading different initiatives, her colleagues are happy when they come to work and their students perform well on provincial exams. Their success as a team brings them new opportunities such as presenting at overseas conferences and writing for new textbooks. Odessa and her group know that they are the envy of faculty.

Such successes, however, come with great physical and emotional toll. The late nights she spends replying to e-mails, the weekend drop-ins at school to wash beakers, the scale back of her teaching assignment to a 0.86 FTE position, and the lunchtime

sessions she spends assisting students, all come with her leadership work as a department head. Odessa takes on these responsibilities because the work has to be done. However, her workload has begun to feel unmanageable. She is tired of working for free. Recently, she raised this issue with her administrators. She asked them to reconsider the work that is involved in running a Science department and to help her accordingly by assigning two department head positions. Odessa feels mistreated so much as a leader that she is prepared to take her concern to the next stage by stepping down from her department head position, and her colleagues have agreed to support her publicly by not taking on the role. Although she has no intention to cause problems, Odessa feels very strongly that she needs to take a political stance on this issue so that her work as a Science department head is properly supported.

4.2.2.2.   ODESSA – LEADERSHIP AND LEARNING

> Odessa: We have a very competent staff and they don't want to see
> anybody up there pretending...I love to see students getting
> excited about learning. I love to see when teachers are
> competent...Nobody is allowed to fail. Failure is not an option
> as a teacher in our department (Interview, July 26, 2010).

Odessa wishes to motivate others to achieve their best. In her opinion, the best way for students to learn science is to be tactile and work with real data. This desire has prompted her to attend workshops and to search for resources that can allow her to bring the most updated digital equipment to the school. Odessa also believes that teacher competency plays a key role in enriching the learning environment. She sees herself as a role model for her department and does her best to ensure that every teacher is ready for his / her lesson. She puts all the grunt work in the back so that she can be a positive motivator for her students and colleagues; she cares for them like they are her own family. This is how she sees her contribution:

> Odessa: I would call myself an informal leader. I would not choose to
> run a school. I just want to be better at what I am doing. I
> am so happy that I am a better teacher now. Things were
> starting to become routine and mundane. I do not know why,
> but once I started focusing on me as a teacher and what I do

59

as a classroom leader, everything started to change. I felt a surge of excitement; I was a gung hoer (Interview, July 26, 2010).

Table 3: Odessa - Coding and thematic processes for research question #1

Themes	Personal	Professional	Cultural	Socio-political	Structural	Tension
Codes (the number of statements related to each code)	Personal strength as a teacher leader (9)	Professional reasons for initial involvement in teacher leadership (6) Struggle with changing colleagues' teaching practices (1)	Cultural reasons for initial involvement in teacher leadership (5) Struggles with changing the school environment (2)	Socio-political support for initial involvement in teacher leadership (1) Struggle with taking a political stance in leadership work (2)		Developing an understanding of teacher leadership through successes and struggles (3)
Number of Codes	1	2	2	2	0	1
Number of Statements	9	7	7	3	0	3
Sample Quotes	It's just my personality, I'm a go-getter. I love to see, I love to see students get excited about learning. I love when teachers are competent.	I think teacher leadership now is, ah, is when you can go to a professional development, reflect on it, bring it to the classroom right away and then share it with others. And there have been more opportunities for that.	Well, I think the turning point was when we made the mission statement; they thought that was great leadership. For the first time, umm, it turned things around. And so they respected me as a leader when that mission statement was formed. The before and after the mission statement was huge.	So I was starting to get more political and pushing that envelop a bit more because the inequities within department headships are you know are daunting.		That was the day the discussion opened, the windows were opened and we were a very united group…The whole school was attached to a statement that we never developed and we knew we never developed, we never bought into it and it was given to us during very dark days. But we saw the light in that and thought, let's get out of the slump and do something for ourselves.

Table 4: Odessa - Coding and thematic processes for research question #2

Themes	To Learn	To Help	To Change	To Commit	To Persist	To have Self-awareness
Codes (the number of statements related to each code)	Providing better learning experiences for students and teachers (3)	Helping colleagues (5)	Making a difference for the students (2) Changing the bureaucracy of school system (1)	Commitment to public education(2) Commitment to the community (3)	Having persistence (1)	Importance of one's work as a teacher leader (7)
Number of Codes	1	1	2	2	1	1
Number of Statements	3	5	3	5	1	7
Sample Quotes	I just envisioned there was going to be enrichments for our students and kids were going to take Science and love Science, and teachers were going to enjoy Science again.	A huge challenge I would say as a teacher leader is getting all teachers to think about how they teach, meaningful integration of technology.	Leadership is about planting the seeds of change and positive excitement and working as a group.	So, I think that's always been my driving force, is ALWAYS teach to the parents. Make sure you know they're all there with watchful eyes and ears on you.	Not everyone jumps on the bandwagon, everyone takes their own sides, but it's listening to that opinion and say, well, the door's open, if you ever want to try, it's there. If you ever want me to model for you, I'll show you how to teach with a smartboard. If you ever want me to watch you, whatever, right. So always leaving that door open for people.	Leadership just comes from within, and if you could exude umm the benefits of what you're doing, people do poke their heads in and they want to know what's going on. So I've noticed that leadership comes from within, it's just doing it, just being positive about it, uhh, having conversations about it, and never let the conversations die.

4.2.2.3.   ODESSA – DATA ANALYSIS

Odessa's teacher leadership experience started with a poorly handled situation at the management level, but it created opportunity for a group of teachers to rebuild relationships and the school culture. From this, Odessa continued to tap into her leadership strength and discovered other impacts that she could make through strengthening teacher capacity and the curriculum offered to students. What began as a small school initiative evolved into some personal and professional breakthroughs. Through professional development, she learned how to use new technology to teach science and engaged her department members to do the same. Teacher leadership, for Odessa, is about having an awareness of being a competent professional and demonstrating commitment to vested members of public education. The structural dimension was not a huge influencing factor in her leadership experience.

4.2.3.   CHAIM'S STORY

When he was a child, Chaim's family moved around a lot. Consequently he lived in many different places. He taught in England and Taiwan before joining the school district. Chaim worked in the same school as Odessa, but having only joined the school three years previously, his experience as a younger teacher was very different from that of Odessa's. Aside from being an English and Social Studies teacher, Chaim knew that he had to make a name for himself at work. His main leadership role was one of chairing the Developing Readers Committee (a district literacy program). He was also a district union representative as well as the chair of the Improving Student Learning (I.S.L.) Committee. Over the years, he mentored a number of student teachers from a local university.

When Chaim came to the new school, there was not much going on with the Developing Readers team. He was involved with the same group at his previous school, and learned teaching strategies that could help students become better at reading, comprehending, and summarizing textual information. Chaim felt that he could use his past experience to assist in running this group. His leadership role came about because there was an opportunity waiting to be seized and Chaim made a decision to step forward while everyone else stepped back. He was fortunate to have worked with a

group of teachers who inspired him to follow in their footsteps. These mentors shaped his thinking around improving one's practice. They showed him that it is possible to have a respectful relationship with administrators and district personnel without being confrontational, and that it is possible to be committed to working with the students while at the same time going through bargaining talks to advocate for better working conditions. The accomplishment that these mentors demonstrated serve as exemplars for what is possible to achieve; more importantly, they were Chaim's motivating force as he searched for his leadership capacity in his current school.

4.2.3.1.   CHAIM - THE LIVED EXPERIENCE

When Chaim joined the new school, the culture was one that made him felt hesitant about taking on extra responsibilities outside the classroom. Staff members who had taught there for many years had developed very close bonds with one another; sadly, their rapport sometimes stymied their working relationship with new teachers. Chaim did not feel particularly welcomed, in fact he felt as though he needed to prove to others that he was worthy of their respect. The way that staff dealt with the assignment of portable classrooms and department head positions implied a structure of hierarchy that favored the senior teaching staff.

Although this environment worked against new teachers who may have been thinking about stepping in and stepping 'up', Chaim had the support of a group of mentor teachers whom he knew previously. These people were his pillar of strength, and he used what he learned from them to fill a void at the new school. His participation in the Developing Readers group quickly turned into a leadership opportunity. Originally, he was in a team of two people, the leadership challenge was to inspire both new and old staff members to work together in a culture that had not been conducive to this form of collaboration. These groups posed very different obstacles for him. Chaim felt that the senior teachers questioned his credibility and dismissed him as a young teacher who simply did not know what he was talking about. They were offended by his suggestion that there are teaching strategies out there that are better than the ones they were using in the classrooms. They told him that he was not a team player and that he would be better off by sticking to the company line. Chaim also found it difficult to motivate beginning teachers to join this group. These teachers felt either overwhelmed by their

classroom responsibilities or were more interested in coaching and supervising school dances.

To him, these challenges offered a place for growth. Chaim was taken aback at first by the staff's disinterest in self-criticism and self-improvement. Instead of reacting to the passivity around him, he used this opportunity to be a better leader. Chaim read a wide selection of literature, from journal articles to published documents from the BC Ministry of Education. He spoke with university professors and became involved in an inquiry project that made him reflect on his own experience as the chair of the Developing Readers group. He was open to having conversations with skeptics at his school to better understand their concerns and to diminish their fears about being critical of their own practice. He became the union representative for his school because he wanted to be a strong voice for teachers. Unknowingly, this role helped him establish a more collaborative relationship with administrators and senior teachers. In the current year, he feels that people are listening to him because he has more street-credit at school. He is being recognized and appreciated for his leadership efforts to revive the school's literacy initiative.

4.2.3.2. CHAIM – LEADERSHIP AND LEARNING

Chaim: I am starting to see my role change. I do not need to lead by lecturing. When I first got into teaching, I thought that was the way I was going to teach too. I was going to be this History teacher who sits in front of the room and lecture for an hour. All the kids would be super engaged and just love what I have to say. I fell back on that one when I first became a teacher leader. Now I know it does not work. Being involved in different types of roles has given me opportunities to set up conversations with teachers across the whole spectrum. I like to talk to the older teachers who do not know me very well. I feel like they are starting to see me, who and what I am about. Like they actually see me and know me as someone who is forward thinking and who puts my own ideas into practice (Interview, November 6, 2010).

Chaim thinks about his job all the time and he knows that his job is an important part of his life. He visualizes himself taking on a much bigger role as a teacher because he sees himself growing in the profession. He likes to talk to people and be open to new ideas that he can try out in the classroom. For Chaim, being a good teacher leader is to engage in an endless adventure, discovering new and better things that may come his way.

> Chaim: When you were talking, I just felt it was like...once I open that door into educating myself as a teacher and going further in my university education, umm, you know, thinking again about the philosophy of education and those sorts of things, it's almost like a snow. That door you just can't close it any more. I don't feel like I could just close the door like that. I've always been interested in the quest for new knowledge, new adventure, like I love to travel. I've traveled you know before I got married...Every weekend, I was doing something new. I wanted to try new things out. And I guess now as part of my job, I want to meet new people and go new places. Now that I've opened that door of trying to better myself and perhaps be a voice for the profession, I feel like I can't let it go. So maybe that's why when we talked about struggles, you think about throwing in the towel, but like you can't. I just wouldn't be able to sleep at night (Interview, November 6, 2010).

Table 5: Chaim - Coding and thematic processes for research question #1

Themes	Personal	Professional	Cultural	Socio-political	Structural	Tension
Codes (the number of statements related to each code)	Personal reasons for initial involvement in teacher leadership (3) Struggles on being a teacher leader (3)	Professional reasons for initial involvement in teacher leadership (8) Struggle with changing colleagues' teaching practices (9) Lack of care in the profession (1)	Cultural reasons for initial involvement in teacher leadership (2) Struggles with changing the school environment (4)	Socio-political support for initial involvement in teacher leadership (2) Using union involvement to enhance one's leadership work (1)	Identifying an absence or a need in having school initiatives (2)	Developing an understanding of teacher leadership through successes and struggles (8) Discrepancy between the assumption and reality of teacher leadership (8)
Number of Codes	2	3	2	2	1	2
Number of Statements	6	18	6	3	2	16
Sample Quotes	I knew that going in…that to make connections in the school that I would have to get involved in different things in the school…staff committees and that sort of thing and that has helped you know.	I was fortunate enough to fall into a community of teachers that were really good people you know. So, and I kind of said, "Wow, if I'm able to change my practice which I recognize was good for kids, then umm, for some reason, I felt like I could help other teachers help their kids, and maybe improve their practice.	The only, the only saving grace that gets to it is that administration and the district filtering ideas down to school are the ideas around the Developing Readers team. The research that is pushing groups like literacy and Developing Readers team is what the district wants to see things go. So there's lots of support from administration at our school.	How can we keep this conversation going? Because we knew we were onto something good but there were a lot of resistance and there still is quite a lot of resistance at school when it came to assessment.	I just kind of think that, you know, if you really want to affect change in a school, we don't just keep on talking down to the next rung on the ladder…finally it gets down to our department meeting. And the department is now disseminating messages that are three or four steps back.	I was shocked to have teachers stand on their principles on the way they teach that clearly the research shows it's not in the best interest of kids, not even in the best interest of teachers I guess at times, but they will stand and defend that so steadfastly…I know I'm younger…but I'm always looking to try something new.

Table 6: Chaim - Coding and thematic processes for research question #2

Themes	To Learn	To Help	To Change	To Commit	To Persist	To have Self-awareness
Codes (the number of statements related to each code)	Providing better learning experiences for students and teachers (5)	Helping students (3) Helping colleagues (4)	Changing the bureaucracy of the school system (4) Being a change agent (2) Changing to do things differently (2)	Commitment to public education (5)	Having persistence (2)	Importance of one's work as a teacher leader (6)
Number of Codes	1	2	3	1	1	1
Number of Statements	5	7	8	5	2	6
Sample Quotes	If you think about all the kids that come to school. It's probably, for many of them, it's the only time in their life that they're going to get opportunities to be challenged, to learn about things, you know, to read good books, to umm, talk about art, to get opportunities to be in bands and teams.	The people that get into this profession, there must be something in them that wants to help or better other people whether it is the kids or you know each other.	I found that, I think that my roles informally have had way more impact on the school than the formal ones.	There are some people who have, you know, have a great love for the job, you know. I don't know, but that chokes me up a bit to be honest (participant crying). It's just a big part of my life. It is my life; it's the professional part of my life.	Well, it's like a chess match. There's got to be a way…I've got a lot more years as a teacher leader. I don't know where that path will take me, so I try to figure this one out, I see it as a bit of a challenge.	I kind of believe that we are on the cusp of good things in the future of teaching, but umm, we've got a lot of ways to go and for some reason feel that I'm playing a role in that.

68

4.2.3.3.   CHAIM – DATA ANALYSIS

Changing the school's professional environment was Chaim's main leadership work. By exploring different ways of teaching literacy, Chaim gained confidence from the improvement he saw in the classroom and began sharing his instructional strategies with his colleagues. He established a higher level of professionalism at the school through his work in the literacy group. His leadership in this initiative was also timely. This focus was supported by many school and district administrators who provided time and development resources for teachers like Chaim. His effort in the literacy initiative gained him respect and credibility as an emergent teacher leader. Aside from these professional and cultural factors, Chaim also showed himself to be a teacher leader by changing the bureaucracy within schools and reshaping the system to encourage leadership at the teaching ranks. He wants to show others that good teaching, and inevitably good leadership, crosses traditional norms of professional autonomy and seniority.

4.2.4.   AISHA'S STORY

While Chaim concentrates on improving students' literacy skills, Aisha puts her energy into supporting grade 8 students at her school. After teaching for five years, she found herself wanting to branch out more. Although she has a Science background in teacher training, she discovered a new interest helping the youngest population in the school, particularly at-risk students. This led to a myriad of roles that Aisha played in the school, among them the coordinator of the Support Services Committee and Grad Council.

Aisha's leadership experience began with her making observations around the school and asking the 'what if' questions. For her, the 'what ifs' turned into a call for action that included giving support to students who were entering high school. This work took her back to the elementary schools where she liaised with grade 7 teachers and administrators in order to identify at-risk students. She worked closely with these students and introduced them to a system of supports that addressed their academic needs, inviting them to participate in a summer preparation program and encouraging them to use the homework den after school. Sometimes the needs were more urgent,

requiring her immediate attention to provide hot lunches for the students or sending fruit baskets for the families to help them get through a difficult phase in their lives. Initially, all of these were done only with the help of the vice-principal but Aisha felt fulfilled knowing that she was doing something to help a vulnerable group of students. This partnership went on for quite some time without a group name. This team of two eventually morphed into the Student Support Services Committee and new members carried on with bigger and more ambitious projects.

4.2.4.1.   AISHA - THE LIVED EXPERIENCE

Like Odessa, Aisha is a very energetic teacher and is involved in many programs at her school. Aisha started her leadership experience without a formal role, being neither a department head nor the chair of any particular group. She felt a sense of duty to help the most desperate group in the school. By doing things one step at a time, a number of programs such as the Summer Transition course, Kick Start Initiative, Grade 8 Welcome Sessions, and Homework Den began to take shape. The task of building the structure, delivery model and vision of these programs was monumental, especially with limited financial and human resources. Yet, she was determined to put these programs in place in order to support at-risk students. The biggest struggle for her was to find time to accomplish all the things that she wanted to do. Although she had her moments of weakness and contemplated giving up, she coped well with her stress. She was good at prioritizing her duties, and allowed herself to take minor breaks when times got too stressful so that she could resume work the next day.

Aisha continues to stay and work at her current school because she wants to see the programs grow and to witness the benefits that she brings to the students. She is committed to this because there is a need; moreover, out of a sense of self-fulfillment knowing that she was contributing positively to her school community. The initiative has grown bigger over the years and people were so consumed by Aisha's energy that they have volunteered to help. This program has taken on a life of its own. The one-person endeavor now has a name, Student Support Services, and is one of the most successful teacher-led initiatives in the school.

4.2.4.2.   AISHA – LEADERSHIP AND LEARNING

Aisha: I didn't really think that, umm, I would feel so passionate about grade 8s and about at-risk youths. I didn't go into counseling, I was in Chemistry education...It's surprising how much I am interested in the well-being of at-risk kids, their emotional and mental needs...I think that's just something, I'm always like that. I am that type of person [who is] concerned for my family and for my friends. Things do affect me emotionally. I went to church with my brother last night, and I saw a man lying on the corner wrapped up in a white, in a white kind of plastic cover, tarp type of thing. And I started crying, you know. But that's just the type of person I am (Interview, July 17, 2010).

Aisha talked about the double meaning behind her school logo. The two paws represent spirit of the school mascot, but they also mean leaving a print in life. Aisha knows that she will leave her mark at the school by helping at-risk students. When she hears stories about some of the challenges that her students go through, she is intrinsically entangled with their personal problems at home or with friends. Her vision as a teacher for at-risk students is to support them through these difficult times and to allow them to blossom as individuals.

Aisha: I am not helping because I want to be recognized; I am helping because I am doing it for the kids and for myself. Being labeled as a "teacher leader" or not is irrespective to what I do. I do not think I need a label to ascribe my work. It just becomes a part of who you are (Interview, July 17, 2010).

Table 7: Aisha - Coding and thematic processes for research question #1

Themes	Personal	Professional	Cultural	Socio-political	Structural	Tension
Codes (the number of statements related to each code)	Personal reasons for initial involvement in teacher leadership (5) Struggles on being a teacher leader (5)	Professional reasons for initial involvement in teacher leadership (3) Struggle with how teacher leaders are perceived by colleagues (2)	Cultural reasons for initial involvement in teacher leadership (1)	Socio-political support for initial involvement in teacher leadership (2)	Identifying an absence or need in having school initiatives (2)	Developing an understanding of teacher leadership through successes and struggles (2)
Number of Codes	2	2	1	1	1	2
Number of Statements	10	5	1	2	2	2
Sample Quotes	And you just start, you take one thing and you start doing it, you know, because I think you get to that point where you have to take the initiative for yourself. You can't just think about it or wonder about it. And if you have some time, then I don't see why you wouldn't.	You put in all of these different ideas and things are running and you've got things now that pop into mind that you now want to also introduce to make this school a better place.	I've always had a good relationship with our administration regardless of who's there at the time. And they have always helped to umm, support different initiatives, and they've been awesome, you know, for working on many of these things together.	There's always a negative connotation with committees and with umm with I guess people who are involved with committees, especially at my school.	It just starts by not identifying with the committee but just doing the stuff and I was very close with the administration and just working with them anyway on many initiatives. And from working on these different projects, we… decided to umm, make it more of a formal thing so that we could invite other teachers or other staff who are interested.	I think in a way it's really got a bad reputation that "Oh, another committee, oh you know, more work." And the teachers who are on committees, I think are considered to be suck-ups.

Table 8: Aisha - Coding and thematic processes for research question #2

Themes	To Learn	To Help	To Change	To Commit	To Persist	To have Self-awareness
Codes (the number of statements related to each code)	Providing better learning experiences for students and teachers (1)	Helping students (6) Helping colleagues (1)	Changing the bureaucracy of the school system (1) Being a change agent (3) Changing to do things differently (3)	Commitment to public education (2) Commitment to the community (2)	Having persistence (2)	Importance of one's work as a teacher leader (4)
Number of Codes	1	2	3	2	1	1
Number of Statements	1	7	7	4	2	4
Sample Quotes	Oh, it's like every day you feel, oh, a lot more satisfied, a lot more fulfilled. There are numerous stories about students who, you know, were really going through some personal problems, who have issues with friends. It is great as a role, as an at-risk teacher role, to see them grow out of that and blossom.	So, it's like I'm not helping because I want to be recognized. I'm helping because I'm doing it for the kids and for myself as I mentioned to you. It's a passion that I have.	I don't think staff who are not involved with the committee know what is happening in the committees. I think that they see committees as stereotypical, they are like, "Oh, you want to go into administration, that's why you're on the committee"…But there are actually teachers who are in there and they're staying there and not go anywhere, and things that are coming out of it are actually quite significant.	So, for me, every year is an exciting year because I get to see you know something that we implemented a few years back and how it's now working. And it's almost as if ok, you put in all these different ideas and things are running and you've got things going, but still, there's so many other things now that pop into mind that you now want to also introduce to make this school a better place.	I now respect the amount of time that is necessary in order to be a teacher leader and I do now realize how much work it is. It's not something that you can just start up and leave and finish. It's something that you see through and it maybe something that you see through over years.	All these extra stuff I think it's not a job because you are not being told to do these in order to receive your paycheck. It's stuff that you're doing for yourself basically because you believe in it. So, I don't associate that part with my job. I associate that part with personal fulfillment, betterment of my school, community.

4.2.4.3.   AISHA – DATA ANALYSIS

The socio-political and structural dimensions were minor factors in influencing Aisha's decision to step into a leadership role. Being a leader is a personal choice for Aisha. She has a positive outlook on schools and sees them as places where students can feel comfortable and safe. When she first exercised her leadership role, the culture was not receptive to the idea that teachers can be prominent figures outside the classroom. The lack of teacher leadership in the school meant that Aisha's personal and professional values became strong factors in shaping her role as a leader. Fortunately, Aisha had strong beliefs that she could do things differently. Her sense of commitment and awareness as an educator allowed her to get involved in many initiatives to help at-risk students at her school.

4.2.5.   TRENT'S STORY

Trent has been with the school district for fourteen years, spending twelve years working in an inner-city school that has a culturally diverse group of students. Some of the students come from a very poor home life. The school has a transient population with many students coming and leaving. It is the opposite of his upbringing. Trent comes from a well-to-do family; his father is a doctor with a Ph.D. Degree in Pharmacology, his sister is a surgeon and his brother is a lawyer. He grew up within a scholarly environment. His family nurtured his love for reading and writing from a young age.   The pursuit of learning was highly regarded in Trent's household. His decision to complete a Master's Degree five years ago was an important milestone in his life.

As part of an action research project for his degree, Trent did extensive reading on professional learning communities. Coincidentally, his school was also among the first in the district that took the notion of team learning and turned it into a school-wide collaboration plan. From the beginning, he has been a member of the Professional Learning Community (P.L.C.) steering committee and participated in discussions that had far-reaching effects on how teams of people work together. Trent commented on how difficult it was to move P.L.C. forward at his school because it had a strong union presence. The union was a big stumbling block because teachers had to negotiate

changes to their working hours and the nature of what their collaboration would look like. As a group, they managed to attain minor successes before the idea of P.L.C. came to a stalemate across the district. Trent, with the support of the new administrative team, made changes to the school's timetable and used this opportunity to reinvigorate their work on P.L.C.. Although discussions at the school level were challenging and frustrating at times, Trent found these conversations exciting.

4.2.5.1.   TRENT - THE LIVED EXPERIENCE

Trent is cognizant of his role as a leader. More than once in the interview, he described himself as a big idea person. He realizes that he comes across as vociferous, particularly on topics where he has a lot of information to share. He likes being challenged intellectually and takes part in conversations where ideas get debated. In fact, throughout his career, he has attended many different school meetings to discover all of the initiatives in progress in the district. The concept of 'learning community' is something that Trent remains heavily involved in, from the time he learned about it in his Master's program to now implementing it locally at his school. For the past few years, this has become the platform on which he explores new school structures and better ways of staff collaboration.

Trent is frustrated by how unrealistic it is to allow everyone to have his / her say, especially when voices are condescending and misguided. He believes that at his school, the P.L.C. implementation failed partly because teachers were exposed to the wrong information. He believes that the school drowned under certain opinions that should not have been out there in the first place. Presently, Trent is putting his effort into leading the school out of the "implementation dip" and getting staff interested again in dialogue about student learning.

4.2.5.2.   TRENT – LEADERSHIP AND LEARNING

Trent: In terms of me personally in leadership, I have always known that I have leadership qualities and skills; it is more about bringing them to fruition. The frustrating part about our profession is that people assume the only way to show your leadership is by doing the next step, which is to become an

administrator, the next step being a vice-principal and then a principal. And I think that is so wrong within our profession because I think there are teacher leaders teaching in the trenches for 30, 35 years and they have more to offer to education than many administrators do. There is no true way to reward those teacher leaders (Interview, July 9, 2010).

Trent is a confident and articulate individual. He is aware of the fact that in a room full of people, he has the charisma to draw people's attention. Trent also understands that his leadership skill is sometimes undermined by his inability to keep track of paperwork and to carry things through. However, he believes that his strengths as a leader lie in his capability to make sound suggestions and to steer productive conversations amongst a group of people.

Trent: Well, for me, I would support and help out on any sort of think tank committee on collaboration and show people what we need to do...I just think it's my duty, not duty, but my role as a teacher to know what's going on at school, talk about kids. I think the biggest issue that any school has is this culture of isolation and I think that's why collaboration is very important (Interview, July 9, 2010).

Table 9: Trent - Coding and thematic processes for research question #1

Themes	Personal	Professional	Cultural	Socio-political	Structural	Tension
Codes (the number of statements related to each code)	Personal reasons for initial involvement in teacher leadership (2) Struggles on being a teacher leader (1) Personal strength as a teacher leader (7) Personal weakness as a teacher leader (2)	Professional reasons for initial involvement in teacher leadership (1) Struggle with changing colleagues' perspectives (3) Lack of care in the profession (1)	School administration support in the initial involvement of teacher leadership (1) Struggle with changing the school environment (1)	Coping with different viewpoints (1) Union being an impediment to school initiatives (2) Using union involvement to enhance leadership work (1)	Identifying an absence or need to have school initiatives (2) Changing the school structure to accommodate teacher collaboration (4)	Developing an understanding of teacher leadership through successes and struggles (5) Discrepancy between assumption and reality of teacher leadership (3)
Number of Codes	4	3	2	3	2	2
Number of Statements	12	5	2	4	6	8
Sample Quotes	When I was in grade 7, we did some role model course and I was the leader appointed by my teacher. I tell that little story because I have a very strong personality. People know when I walk into the room. Umm, I don't want to say strong aura, but I think it is. And uhh, my leadership capacity is what I want to make of it.	I found it really intriguing that people come and really have no idea what they're talking about…and there seems to be an acceptance in education that oh, you know, everyone has input and that we can talk about it, which I agree in but a lot of the information that was given was false.	I was frustrated with that because here I knew a lot of information but people didn't want to hear it. I said earlier how teachers seem to think they have an opinion on everything and their opinion is always the right opinion. I was quite vociferous about what I wanted, but people didn't like it.	The school had a really strong union presence. And that has changed quite dramatically, for the better, but yet we're still conscious of that. And we always try to include the union in any discussions… They are an important part but I personally just don't have a lot of time for union issues.	I called a meeting, and I didn't want to call it a committee because I hate committees. I hate the hierarchy of like department heads and administrations. I just think it's a completely wrong thing to have in high schools. So I called a meeting what I called a think tank.	As our world changes and my world has changed dramatically… and so much has to put into somewhere at some other place. And I think for me, I doubt if I'll be a real driving force behind collaboration in terms of being the committee chair, but I'll certainly go to all meetings and help out and give my input.

Table 10: Trent - Coding and thematic processes for research question #2

Themes	To Learn	To Help	To Change	To Commit	To Persist	To have Self-awareness
Codes (the number of statements related to each code)	Seeking for continuous opportunities to learn as a profession (4)	Helping students (2) Helping colleagues (3)	Changing the bureaucracy of the school system (4) Being a change agent (2) Changing to do things differently (2) Enabling open and fair processes (3) Valuing teacher leadership (2)	Commitment to public education (4)	Having persistence (5)	Importance of one's work as a teacher leader (2)
Number of Codes	1	2	5	1	1	1
Number of Statements	4	5	13	4	5	2
Sample Quotes	The need for continual learning, like I have to be doing that or else I'd go crazy…My involvement with my Master's was big. I really enjoyed that. Umm, yeah, and the whole process was fun…some people would say it wasn't. Umm, but for me, it was great. I'm a reader by nature, and I'm a writer by nature.	I think it's just the right thing to do in terms of education, to allow teachers somehow some way to get together and talk about stuff.	I was pleased on the conversations I had with people. They were dead against it, and after sitting and talking them through my ideas, umm, they were totally for them. So that was really gratifying.	There are people who are teacher leaders who are true teacher leaders and believe in the profession…it has to be completely intrinsic motivation…to do the best that you can at a certain aspect.	I think that's a big weakness in education. We start something but in the world of immediacy that we are living in right now, you don't see immediate results and people drop it. But you've got to wait two, three, four years, in our world, in education, before you see results that I think are positive.	I am a very confident person and sometimes people interpret that confidence as arrogance. Umm, but I think in the last 4 to 5 years, my ability to have good conversations with people has improved dramatically and that's important for any sort of leadership initiative.

4.2.5.3.   TRENT – DATA ANALYSIS

Unlike the previous four participants, the structural dimension was where Trent brought out his leadership skills. His struggle came from dealing with the challenge of bringing teachers, administrators, and support staff together in a professional learning community. His leadership initiative involved changing the rigid school structure in order to allow time to be set aside for teachers to meet and talk about issues happening at school. Trent is open about his strengths as a leader and feels competent about his ability to bring people together. He is also passionate about changing the bureaucracy so that the school system would take teacher leadership more seriously and would value what teachers do for students. For him, teacher leadership is about staging a more flexible and collaborative structure where teachers can work as professionals.

4.2.6.   IFRAIN'S STORY

Ifrain is an ESL teacher. With the exception of taking a three-year leave to do his Master's and Ph.D. Program, he has been with the school district since the late 1990s. He is interested in political philosophy, sociology of education, and policy work. He enjoys making decisions that are informed by research and data. Academic work appeals to him because he likes to ponder big ethical questions and be part of discussions that debate which goods and public policies educators should be striving for and why. The experience that Ifrain accumulated from teaching university classes and being the chair of the Staff Committee enhanced his public speaking skills as well as his ability to play the balancing act between opposing sides in a conflict.

Ifrain recalled a time three years prior when the vice-principals at his school put on a professional development workshop on mission statements. The presentation was funny and engaging. It echoed many ideas that he was learning about at the university, such as the impact that school policies have on the larger purposes of public education. The administrators articulated thoughts that paralleled his own and he concurred with what they said about what educators ought to be doing in the 21st century. When the vice-principals asked for volunteers to form a Mission-Vision-Values committee, he was in. He and the team spent over a year working on the mission statement. From there,

two subcommittees, the Social Responsibility Committee and the I.S.L. Committee, were created to carry out the vision of their goals. As a participant of the district's Leadership Development Program, Ifrain had an opportunity to reflect on these initiatives and to share his job-embedded learning experience with a larger audience. This year, the principal created a grade 8 coordinator position and Ifrain was given the chance to step into this new role as a formal leader.

4.2.6.1.   IFRAIN - THE LIVED EXPERIENCE

Ifrain began his teaching career teaching ESL. It was not something that he envisioned himself doing; however, there was a demand for ESL teachers at the time and he needed a job. Even though he maintained the same assignment, he always thought that he would go back to teaching mainstream English one day. Although it was not considered demeaning to be teaching ESL, to him, it was not the most high-status of teaching jobs. This was one of the reasons why he went back to university to complete two graduate degrees. Ifrain wanted to explore his options of going into school administration or academia. While waiting for these opportunities to come, he took up various positions at school so that he could develop his leadership skills.

By being involved in Staff Committee, as well as other school initiatives such as the Mission-Vision-Values Committee, Social Responsibility Committee and the I.S.L. Committee, Ifrain is constantly reminded about how important "process" is. He believes that there are many people in school who are skeptical of the value of many of the initiatives that teacher leaders promulgate. To him, the challenge as a leader is to allay skepticism, to help teachers overcome their reluctance to get involved in new initiatives and to engage them in constructive dialogues about teaching practices. Ifrain knows that he is a rational individual. In the midst of a conflict, he is able to remain neutral to all sides and to allow different stakeholders to voice their views. He learns to let process takes its natural course. As a leader of the grade 8 team, he recognizes that before any initiatives are implemented, he needs to involve teachers in democratic processes that allow assenting and dissenting voices to be heard.

4.2.6.2.   IFRAIN – LEADERSHIP AND LEARNING

> Ifrain: Five years ago, I don't know if I would have facilitated
> dialogues and considered collaborative processes. I think I
> would be more about efficiency and getting things done. But
> if you try to take short-cuts to doing things like that, it rarely
> works. My role has changed. Before, I was just somebody
> interested in having conversations about what our school
> mission should be and making a few presentations to staff.
> Now, I am sort of the big coordinator of it all, my position has
> evolved from being a member of the committee to being a
> leader of the structure (Interview, July 6, 2010).

Aside from his teaching job, Ifrain has taken on added responsibilities being the chair of the Staff Committee and the coordinator of the Grade 8 Team. These roles involve taking part in a lot of long, difficult discussions. To affect change on a grander scale, it takes someone who is a good communicator, open to hear different points of view, and able to facilitate groups to work together. Ifrain's interest in philosophy and policy, coupled with his strength as a public speaker, allow him to thrive in his role as a leader.

> Ifrain: One way that I can make my contribution is to take on these
> kinds of roles involving communication because I actually am,
> you know, I think I'm good at that...So most of the
> committees that I have joined, whether in a formal
> leadership role or in a committee that is trying to lead the
> staff, I've done it pretty consciously because I believe that
> you need to do extra work when you're a public school
> teacher and I believe this is the way that I'm best able to do
> it (Interview, July 6, 2010).

Table 11: Ifrain - Coding and thematic processes for research question #1

Themes	Personal	Professional	Cultural	Socio-political	Structural	Tension
Codes (the number of statements related to each code)	Personal reasons for initial involvement in teacher leadership (3) Personal strength as a teacher leader (1) Personal weakness as a teacher leader (2)	Professional reasons for initial involvement in teacher leadership (3) Struggle with changing colleagues' perspectives (5)	School administration support in the initial involvement of teacher leadership (1) Struggle with changing the school environment (2)	Coping with different viewpoints (2) Socio-political support in the initial involvement of teacher leadership (1)	Identifying an absence or need to have school initiatives (2)	Developing an understanding of teacher leadership through the successes and struggles (4) Discrepancy between assumption and reality of teacher leadership (3)
Number of Codes	3	2	2	2	1	2
Number of Statements	6	8	3	3	2	7
Sample Quotes	I believe a lot in public education and I think it's really important and I think we should all work hard at it.	So this to me was a way of, well we're going to articulate as much as possible, this sort of collective will or collective rationale from staff so that we have a framework about which path we're going to go. So we'll know which good to choose right.	She and the other VP put together this powerpoint for part of the day which was all about what are we doing here in public education right…I remember her articulating a lot of the same thoughts I had…So I thought, "Wow, that's really interesting. I want to be involved in whatever this presentation is going to morph into."	The ongoing struggle is of course, with any teacher leadership thing, is the large amount of people who think what you are doing is a waste of time right. Like, people are genuinely very busy right. People are genuinely busy and always skeptical of anything that's new.	The rationale for it is we said on the mission statement, we were going to create structures that improve student learning right, so here it is. Here's a structure, it may or may not improve student learning, but we're trying.	Sometimes, I mean I'm not naïve, but sometimes the skepticism about things is surprising and disappointing to me.

Table 12: Ifrain - Coding and thematic processes for research question #2

Themes	To Learn	To Help	To Change	To Commit	To Persist	To have Self-awareness
Codes (the number of statements related to each code)	Seeking for continuous opportunities to learn as a profession (1)	Helping students (2) Helping colleagues (2)	Enabling fair and open process (4) Changing the bureaucracy by building a collective will (2) Changing the bureaucracy of school system (2) Valuing teacher leadership (1) Being a change agent (1) Changing to do things differently (1)	Commitment to public education (4) Commitment to the community, building public trust (2)	Having persistence (3)	Importance of one's work as a teacher leader (3)
Number of Codes	1	2	6	2	1	1
Number of Statements	1	4	11	6	3	3
Sample Quotes	It's not about one charismatic individual standing up there and everybody saying let's follow you. So it's much more, my vision of it is so much more democratic than it used to be I think.	It's about listening to people and empowering them to be able to do what they want to do the best they can.	My idea of teacher leadership is one of collaboration… nothing can happen unless it's coming from the bottom up as well as you know the top might have some kind of vision. The bottom has to sort of grow.	What should public school be doing in a world of competing goods?…What's the best road to go on and why? I like those kinds of discussions so I was interested in getting involved in the committee when that arose.	Why always come up with reasons for why it can't work, why don't we see if it does work? And if it doesn't, nothing is lost. We'll move on.	I believe strongly in public education, it's really important. I would like to be an influential role in public education…would try and evolve into some kind of role in administration where my decisions will have a wider impact.

4.2.6.3. IFRAIN – DATA ANALYSIS

Ifrain's leadership came from his desire to create a professional atmosphere which would allow teachers to work together and, more importantly, to take part in difficult and honest conversations that could shape the future of public education. His leadership role put him in positions where he had responsibility to bring different voices to the table. Ifrain works in a school culture that is divisive between senior and beginning teachers; his effort to move initiatives forward by working democratically with all staff members was a huge leadership challenge. His interest in educational philosophy and his role as a teacher leader made him more cognizant of his experiences. Addressing the discord within school cultures was a main focus of his leadership work. Ifrain's personal vision as a leader is to change the existing school system to enable fairer and more open processes for teachers to work as a collective.

4.2.7. ORABEL'S STORY

Orabel is a young, energetic Social Studies teacher. For somebody who did not have a pleasant experience with school and was close to being expelled from university, she is incredibly thankful to be working in the school district. As a girl, she did not stand out and was passed over by many adults in her life because she was not the prettiest, the smartest, the skinniest, or the most athletic. She is frank with her words and is often mistaken for being blunt and rude. However, Orabel tells it like it is. When she was put on academic probation, she knew that she needed to change her attitude regarding school. She started working harder than before. Although this concept was grasped later in life, she now understands how important work ethic is and she takes the same approach with her teaching career.

Orabel is a member of the School Planning Council and Pro-D Committee, but the most significant leadership role for her is being the co-chair of the I.S.L. Committee. Through this group, she introduced many initiatives at school like organizing learning lunches for teachers so that staff could meet once a month and talk about issues of concern. This project branched into a book club for teachers. The principal displays his support by purchasing summer readings for staff members. At the end of the school year, the group comes together and shares how the book has impacted their

professional lives. Orabel also coordinates with other secondary schools in the district and encourages teachers to work in teams to improve student success grades on provincial exams. She has a tremendous amount of respect for the teacher who previously chaired the I.S.L. Committee and the work that was done through this group. This teacher left the school to pursue an administrative position a few years ago. Orabel is planning to do the same and is seeking new opportunities as a vice-principal.

4.2.7.1.   ORABEL - THE LIVED EXPERIENCE

From the start, Orabel made no secret about her goal to step into a leadership position in the school district. She is confident, poised, hard-working and opinionated. By stepping outside of her classroom, she thinks that she will be able to work with the bigger picture and is prepared to work hard to get there. Orabel has high expectation of herself and of others around her. She is upset by the apathy she sees at her school, and is irritated by the lack of effort that some teachers put into their work. In particular, she expressed a lot of frustration around coordinating learning lunches for teachers. In the past year, this initiative did not generate a high turn-out rate. Teachers were not interested in helping out and leading group discussions during these lunch hour meetings.

Orabel senses that she is perceived by some of her colleagues as being overly ambitious and insensitive with her words, and she knows very well that her attitude had resulted in backlash and people talking behind her back. However, she does not think that leadership is about pleasing people. Orabel does her best to carry out initiatives that she believes will benefit the students and staff members at her school. She is very grateful that she has a circle of friends, colleagues and family members who understand and support her decision to be a formal leader. These people speak highly of her ability and the contribution she makes in the district.

4.2.7.2.   ORABEL – LEADERSHIP AND LEARNING

Orabel: By having enthusiasm and sometimes by blatant reality, and
         just being real with people, even if they don't like you, they
         tend to respect you...I think that part of the reason why I
         select to get involved in everything that I do, the way that I

am, who I am as a professional, all of those things come into play for that, it all becomes important to me...Because no matter what I was doing, I would be the same person. I would work as hard in anything that I did. It wouldn't matter to me, I chose this and I like it. I would do this anywhere because that's who I am (Interview, July 13, 2010).

Orabel's childhood played a big part in shaping the leader that she is today. Her sense of work ethic comes from years of struggles as a child and later as a student. When the university gave her one last chance to change, Orabel decided to turn her life around for the better. From what she shared in the interview, as a child, she felt as though people walked past her without noticing. She felt ignored. Orabel still talks about her experiences with pain and emotion. She wants people to understand that her rough edge and bluntness is not about her being rude but about being real. She wants to be able to tell things the way in which she sees them without fear of holding back the truth. She wants people to know about their own flaws when they are underperforming. As a rising leader who has learned how to make some tough choices about her personal life, Orabel is compelled to give back by educating others about self-worth and work ethic.

Orabel: In leadership, people have to believe you. They have to trust you. The have to believe that what you are doing has purpose. They have to trust you but you have to build that trust, and you build it as far as I am concerned through work ethic. I guess at the essence of it all, I would like to make a difference in somebody's life, not to get their attention, but to allow them to see something that maybe they didn't see before (Interview, July 13, 2010).

Table 13: Orabel - Coding and thematic processes for research question #1

Themes	Personal	Professional	Cultural	Socio-political	Structural	Tension
Codes (the number of statements related to each code)	Personal reasons for initial involvement in teacher leadership (12) Struggles on being a teacher leader (3)	Professional reasons for initial involvement in teacher leadership (3) Struggle with how teacher leaders are perceived by colleagues (3) Lack of care in the profession (6) Struggle with changing colleague's perspectives (2)	Cultural reasons in initial involvement in teacher leadership (1) Struggle with changing the school environment (3)	Socio-political support in initial involvement in teacher leadership (6)		Developing an understanding of teacher leadership through the successes and struggles (9) Discrepancy between assumption and reality of teacher leadership (3)
Number of Codes	2	4	2	1	0	2
Number of Statements	15	14	4	6	0	12
Sample Quotes	I don't know why I have assumed a role as a leader in the school. It wasn't something I decided I would do, but it seemed natural, it just seemed like I could organize things and people were supporting me.	I can't quite understand that. I don't understand why people are who they are and unhappy and don't institute change. I know there are lots of factors why, but it's just perplexing to me to understand.	I've been a part of a few committees that try to institute change in the school and try to bring about change in a holistic fashion and it's pretty much turned down. You know, not seeing, you did not see a wide support. It was an interesting experience…I've seen a little bit of a backlash.	I don't tend to beat around the bush a lot…And so it often can rub people the wrong way, it can often look like you're trying to do things and get involved in things to promote yourself. But I can't control what people think.		If somebody would take the time to get to know you as a professional…they'll see because it's really through work that your genuine approach to a topic is viewed, is seen, is clear as day. Umm and so, umm, I'm not always pleased that people think that about me because that's not who I am, but, it's really lonely sometimes being up at the front.

Table 14: Orabel - Coding and thematic processes for research question #2

Themes	To Learn	To Help	To Change	To Commit	To Persist	To have Self-awareness
Codes (the number of statements related to each code)	Including both students and teachers in the learning environment (2)	Helping students (2) Helping colleagues (3)	Changing to do things differently (4) Being a change agent (4)	Commitment to public education (1) Commitment to the school and community (3)	Having persistence (4)	Importance of one's work as a teacher leader (6)
Number of Codes	1	2	2	2	1	1
Number of Statements	2	5	8	4	4	6
Sample Quotes	I'm interested in taking on a vice-principalship in the district and becoming more involved, not because I think that's what I should do but because of my classroom, I see how my decisions can affect other people in a positive way I hope and that's why I'm here. But I really think that by taking a step out of my room and by looking at how change can be effective on a larger scale, it's exciting to me and that's exciting to me and that's why I do this.	I guess at the essence of it all, I would like to make a difference in somebody's life, not to get their attention, but to allow them to see something that maybe they didn't see before.	When you get into different positions, different opportunities open up where you can be involved in a grander scheme of change, where you can influence greater audience.	It's been interesting to see people who continue to commit. It's been really…I find that most fulfilling to see people engaging in different levels.	Why do I keep forging ahead? Why do I get back on it? Why do I, even amongst all these, I work hard? I don't give up. I don't know. I guess that's the easy way, I guess that's the easy answer in that sense because I see what the end result will be and it will be positive.	What would you go to the wall for, no matter WHAT? What would you not back down for, even if it meant your life, even if it meant your reputation, even if it meant that you would lose anything? What would you never stand down for? That's a very interesting question. If you think about that, it really puts what you do into perspective.

4.2.7.3.   ORABEL – DATA ANALYSIS

Of the eight participants, Orabel was affected the most by the negative experiences she confronted in the socio-political dimension. As a result of dealing with misunderstanding and backlash from colleagues, her personal characters and professional conviction became strong factors in shaping her role as a leader. Orabel enhanced her leadership influence by improving the professional climate. For her, teacher leadership is about changing her colleagues' perspectives by showing personal commitment and persistence in her work. She has learned to become a leader by having the courage to stand up for what she believes in as an educator and by being a change agent affecting bigger changes in the school system.

4.2.8.   NEIL'S STORY

Neil works in an affluent area in the district as an IB Math / Calculus teacher. His school has a lot of history. Teachers have built a culture around working hard and doing well, and their students demonstrate great skills and talent in sports and fine arts. Neil is cognizant of this display of excellence and tries to do his part to continue the tradition. Last year, he was asked to make a short presentation at the new teacher orientation. He started by running a video clip that he made showcasing the pride of the senior teaching staff, then talked about the contribution that he made to the school community. At the end of the presentation, Neil asked this group of new teachers to think about their part in continuing the established traditions and moving the school forward into the future.

Like Trent, Neil enjoys being in conversations that question the way schools are run. However, he is more like Ifrain in that he takes a subtle approach to his leadership style. Three years ago, Neil was in an awkward position trying to implement P.L.C. at his school. It came at a time when the union and other schools in the district were pulling away from this structure. For his Master's project, Neil undertook a study that examined the resistance that teachers have about change. Results from his findings were different from what he had expected. He found that most teachers were not against change; rather, they were waiting to be led. With this understanding, as well as the support from administrators and colleagues who saw value in promoting teacher

collaboration, Neil began pulling teachers together to talk about teaching practices and student assessments. He worked around the union issues by letting teachers take complete control of what they wanted to make of this group. This team now consists of eight teachers going into its third year. In addition to this initiative, Neil's experience with running the Student Council, Grad Council and Dry Grad has helped him look at leadership beyond the school level and he is exploring new opportunities to inspire positive change in the school system.

4.2.8.1.   NEIL - THE LIVED EXPERIENCE

Neil has a lot of respect for the senior teachers at his school. These teachers have been teaching for over twenty-five years and Neil has had the privilege to hear some amazing stories about what they did back when they were about his age. He learns a lot from talking with them, and he is proud to be working at a school that has a long history of academic and athletic excellence.

Neil feels obligated to move the school forward. The school neighborhood and student population have changed dramatically in recent years and he knows that teachers need to stop doing what they have always done and to start looking at new ways to educate students who have very different needs than those who came before. His effort to promote teacher collaboration or a professional learning community is something he feels strongly about. In general, leadership is very frustrating for Neil. He describes himself as an introvert. Whenever he is asked to present in front of staff members, he considers himself to be stepping outside of his comfort zone. However, he feels that the work is too important to pass up and more than once, he has stepped up to take on leadership roles by putting himself out there. Even though it may seem innocent, he has been poked fun of by his colleagues about entering the dark side and his hidden agenda to go into administration. Neil notices that he has become so reactive to these comments that his first response now is to deny any hint of desire to go into the higher ranks. His denial has become a defense mechanism for dealing with his colleagues' passing attacks.

Similar to Vivien, Trent, Ifrain and Orabel's leadership experiences, Neil does not understand why some staff members are reluctant about getting involved in initiatives

that are good for the students. Neil feels angry when good ideas are dismissed by teachers who are supposedly the instructional or formal leaders of the school. He does not take rejection well, and to work around the negativity, Neil has learned not to be presumptuous with his leadership style. Instead, he asks his colleagues to consider new ideas and waits patiently for them until they are ready to take on the initiative.

4.2.8.2.   NEIL – LEADERSHIP AND LEARNING

Neil: I think a lot about teacher leadership; I think a lot about what I am doing. I think a teacher leader is a person who is an active part of the school and is willing to offer something back. I think people see me as a leader because of the things that I have done, it is not a reflection on my ability to lead. It is the things that I have done in school that make me get noticed. But at the same time, people think that it is no big deal to put on a workshop. There are a lot of things involved in doing a workshop, like getting yourself to a position where someone values what you do enough to ask you to present in the first place. I think I am very aware of my role in the school because it does not happen naturally. I am not at the front. I am not a directive leader. I do not like standing up there. People might associate me with this role or that role; but really, I have gone out of my way to fill these spots. I am not a very good leader. I have a lot to work on. I guess by being a teacher leader, you develop those skills by doing it (Interview, July 13, 2010).

Neil speaks about his love for adventure and his overseas traveling experience. He enjoys the challenge of trying new things. Whether it is being a teacher sponsor for the Student Council or being a parent who is trying to get answers about under-building schools, he finds that he is interested in learning about how decisions are made in the bigger world of education.

Neil: I feel really strongly about the school and the culture, and I want it to continue, so I kind of put myself on line a little bit

that way. If that makes any sense, you know, when you start speaking from the heart to a group of people you don't really know, it's challenging, but every time I do it, I feel empowered. I feel like, hey, that was good, I like to do that (Interview, July 13, 2010).

These insights prompt Neil to look for other types of leadership roles in the district because he feels obligated to play a bigger part. In the interview, he shyly admitted his wish to go into administration, but is concerned by how he would be perceived by his colleagues.

Table 15: Neil - Coding and thematic processes for research question #1

Themes	Personal	Professional	Cultural	Socio-political	Structural	Tension
Codes (the number of statements related to each code)	Personal reasons for initial involvement in teacher leadership (4) Struggle on being a teacher leader (5)	Professional reasons for initial involvement in teacher leadership (4) Struggle with how teacher leaders are perceived by colleagues (3) Struggle with changing colleagues' perspectives (3)	Struggle with changing the school environment (2)	Socio-political support for initial involvement in teacher leadership (3)	Identifying an absence or need in having school initiatives (3)	Developing an understanding of teacher leadership through successes and struggles (7) Discrepancy between assumption and reality of teacher leadership (2)
Number of Codes	2	3	1	1	1	2
Number of Statements	9	10	2	3	3	9
Sample Quotes	I guess I didn't see the full picture of education and what my role could be in the school. It just seemed like I was very, you know, I was enjoying teaching. I like the classroom role, but there are so much more out there in the school that you could do. So that's what I'm trying to do more of now.	It's almost like people on staff don't like initiative-takers at times…I get angst sometimes about uhh, you know, the role I'm taking and you know, like teachers' pet type of a thing… it is sometimes tough to deal with, you know, taking on these things like when I'm standing in front of staff at staff meeting.	I feel really strongly about the school and the culture, and I want it to continue, so I kind of put myself on line a little bit that way. If that makes any sense, you know, you start speaking from the heart to a group of people you don't really know, it's challenging, but every time I do it, I feel empowered.	We originally thought we could do a school-wide program; it didn't take long before we realized that there are so many detractors. Although I'm focusing on the positives, that people really wanted to be involved. There are probably just as many people that try to crush it from day one and say, "This is not something I would do."	It's talking about the different roles in the schools and things that have to happen, things that are unpaid that have to happen for the school to operate efficiently. Umm, there's tons of leadership that's required, and nobody gets any recognition for it. It's just things that have to happen in the school.	I don't like to stand up there, like I'll get people together, I'm almost like a coordinator…I think being the head of Student Council, I learned a lot about how school runs and maybe that got me interested in the bigger picture. Umm, but it wasn't, I didn't go into teaching with the mindset that I want to play a larger role.

93

Table 16: Neil - Coding and thematic processes for research question #2

Themes	To Learn	To Help	To Change	To Commit	To Persist	To have Self-awareness
Codes (the number of statements related to each code)	Seeking for continuous opportunities to learn as a profession (1) Including both students and teachers in the learning environment (1)	Helping students (2) Helping colleagues (1)	Changing to do things differently (4) Being a change agent (4) Valuing teacher leadership (1) Changing the bureaucracy of the school system (2)	Commitment to public education (3) Commitment to the school and the community (3)	Having persistence (3)	Importance of one's work as a teacher leader (5)
Number of Codes	2	2	4	2	1	1
Number of Statements	2	3	11	6	3	5
Sample Quotes	I think with the new people coming in, the culture is starting to change, so it kind of opened up to investigating why we are doing things this way, why we are even considering changes…so I think it's a good time to introduce the PLC because we were just going through that transition from kind of the way things have always been to the way things could be.	We did present on several occasions on different Pro-D events, but the stuff we did in our group was just meant for our group to get better at teaching.	Anything that I'm doing right now is not driving towards, you know, administrative job. I just, it's something I'm interested in, it's a new role, I see new challenges.	I don't know if it's just me but uhh, I just felt really positive. How do you say, like just feeling good about the world, like there's people who have similar mindset and they wanted to do these things. It's just re-energizing.	Sometimes you misread the group, and that's what I did. I misread the group. Umm and I put myself out there and got shot down. It happens I guess.	I enjoy what I'm doing, it's just kind of a new chapter where I know that this is the direction I'm going and I've another twenty-two years left to go in that direction. I don't want to get stale… Education won't allow us to do that anyway, it's changing so much. So yeah, I don't know, just makes me a better teacher and makes things new and different every day.

4.2.8.3.   NEIL – DATA ANALYSIS

Neil faced numerous successes and struggles as an emergent leader. His understanding of teacher leadership is that by reaching out to his colleagues and making positive change happen little by little, the school culture will allow more teachers to grow as leaders. Neil believes deeply that public schools have to move forward and teachers have to move in parallel to keep up with current needs of the students. As a leader, he is committed to learn how to meet the demands of his job by challenging himself to do things differently and holding himself accountable as a professional.

Table 17: All participants - Coding and thematic processes for research question #1

Themes	Personal	Professional	Cultural	Socio-political	Structural	Tension
Codes (the number of statements related to each code)	Personal reasons for initial involvement in teacher leadership (34) Struggle on being a teacher leader (21) Personal strength as a teacher leader (17) Personal weakness as a teacher leader (7) Initial understanding and expectation about teacher leadership (3)	Professional reasons for initial involvement in teacher leadership (30) Struggle with how teacher leaders are perceived by colleagues (8) Struggle with changing colleagues' perspectives (13) Struggle with changing colleagues' teaching practices (10) Struggle with resentment from staff members (5) Lack of care in the profession (8)	Cultural reasons for initial involvement in teacher leadership (10) Struggle with changing the school environment (14) School administration support in the initial involvement of teacher leadership (2)	Socio-political support for initial involvement in teacher leadership (16) Coping with different viewpoints (4) Struggle with taking a political stance in leadership work (2) Union being an impediment to school initiatives (2) Using union involvement to enhance one's leadership work (2)	Identifying an absence in school structure or need in having school initiatives (11) Changing the school structure to accommodate teacher collaboration (4)	Developing an understanding of teacher leadership through successes and struggles (41) Discrepancy between assumption and reality of teacher leadership (20) Differences in teachers' understanding of teacher leadership (1)
Number of Codes	5	6	3	6	2	3
Number of Statements	82	74	26	26	15	62
Number of respondents	8	8	8	8	5	8

Table 18: All participants - Coding and thematic processes for research question #2

Themes	To Learn	To Help	To Change	To Commit	To Persist	To have Self-awareness
Codes (the number of statements related to each code)	Providing better learning experiences for students and teachers (11) Seeking for continuous opportunities to learn as a profession (6) Including both students and teachers in the learning environment (3)	Helping students (20) Helping colleagues (20)	Changing to do things differently (16) Being a change agent (16) Changing the bureaucracy of the school system (14) Enabling open and fair processes (7) Making a difference for the students (5) Valuing teacher leadership (4) Changing the bureaucracy by building a collective will (2)	Commitment to public education (23) Commitment to the school and the community (14)	Having persistence (22)	Importance of one's work as a teacher leader (39)
Number of Codes	3	2	7	2	1	1
Number of Statements	20	40	64	37	22	39
Number of respondents	8	8	8	8	8	8

4.2.9.   *ALL PARTICIPANTS – DATA ANALYSIS*

An overview analysis of the study data indicates that of the five dimensions, the cultural and socio-political spaces contain hindering factors that teacher leaders see as barriers to their leadership capacity while the professional and personal spaces consist of many motivating factors in their leadership involvement.

Participants in this district described their leadership challenges coming mainly from the cultural and socio-political school environment. They pointed to a lack of interest and understanding from other teachers. Particularly at the beginning stage, gaining staff support for teacher-led initiatives was a big obstacle. These teachers began their projects on a small scale, usually working alongside one or two other people in the team. Related to this was the lack of understanding that some teachers showed toward teacher-led initiatives. Questions about the purpose, rationale and operations of their leadership projects were rarely asked by their colleagues. To increase collegial support, the participants found that they had to be proactive and seek opportunities to have conversations with other teachers. Resolving the cultural and / or socio-political tension was a barrier that many participants confronted; the ability to overcome these issues was an important step in sustaining their leadership initiative.

Teacher professionalism played a significant role in the participants' leadership experience. It impacted whether or not they took an active role as leaders, as well as the type of leadership work that they chose to pursue. On the whole, the participants held similar views about teacher professionalism; they saw it as an evolving practice that has to be shaped by teachers working together. Therefore, they held strong beliefs about getting involved and contributing positively to the profession. This sense of self-selection, being proactive figures of a large professional group, motivated these teachers to become leaders. For them, this sense of membership implied a responsibility to be the best at their work and to work with one another as a group. As a result, these teacher leaders tended to get involved in two kinds of work, ones that helped them improve their teaching practices in the classroom and ones that allowed them to collaborate with other teachers on school-based issues. For this group of participants, instructional strategies and teacher collaboration were two foci of teacher leadership work.

Finally, the personal dimension had a prominent expression in the participants' leadership experience. With teacher leadership being a voluntary role, the participants' personal characters had strong influences on the long-term success of their leadership work. Because teacher leadership was not confined to certain positions and work, what was experienced was shaped largely by how teacher leaders envisioned it to be.

From the data, the participants exhibited common beliefs about their leadership role: they had a desire to instigate change; they had compassion and a desire to help students and colleagues; they had an awareness of themselves being leaders; they were professionally committed; they were persistent in their work; and they had a passion for learning.

4.3. SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

In this study, the phenomenon of teacher leadership is portrayed in eight vignettes told by high school teachers in an urban school district. The data in this chapter illustrates two major themes discussed in the literature section – the distributed framework and tensions within teacher leadership. Each participant recounted his / her unique experiences with leading school initiatives by drawing upon a distributive set of personal, professional, cultural, socio-political, and structural circumstances. They also made references to the way these dimensions were in tension with one another as they shaped their practice. By sharing what they have learned as leaders, the participants invited us to enter into their lived experiences of teacher leadership.

Chapter 5. DISCUSSION

5.1. INTRODUCTION TO DISCUSSION

In Chapter two, I synthesized the research literature to help define teacher leadership and explored the theoretical and conceptual frameworks through which the teacher leadership model could be examined. This study uses qualitative research as a methodology for gathering data to answer two research questions, where the first part examines different dimensions that teachers draw upon to shape their leadership experiences and the second part identifies the dynamics that reshape these experiences. In this chapter, I will discuss how my research data deepen the distributed framework of teacher leadership. Also, by learning from teachers' experiences, I will discuss how my research data can help redefine the leadership model.

5.2. ANSWERING THE FIRST RESEARCH QUESTION

Research question one asked: how do teachers derive meaning from their lived experiences (e.g., personal, professional, cultural, social, and structural dimension of teacher leadership experiences) to help shape their role as leaders in teacher-led initiatives? In the sub-sections of chapter 5.2, I answer the first research question by bringing to light various dimensions that come to define teacher leadership. According to Spillane et al. (2004), the distributed dimensions are constituted within both micro and macro structures of school leadership. In the following discussion, I will draw upon six themes from my data analysis that address this point.

5.2.1. DISTRIBUTED FRAMEWORK OF TEACHER LEADERSHIP

The teachers in this study held many different leadership positions, from department heads and committee chairs to being organizers of small learning teams. They were involved in various school initiatives that focused on student learning. For some, it meant building a positive school environment by encouraging authentic learning through the use of hands-on, mind-on activities, or by enhancing teacher competency in the classroom. For others, it meant working with a group of colleagues to address some over-arching issues at the school level such as literacy, formative assessment or teacher collaboration. Research data from this study indicated that teachers drew from different dimensions – personal, professional, cultural, socio-political and structural dimensions – in shaping their decision to get involved in leadership work. All of these components influenced the engagement and the type of leadership roles that teachers participated in. Although not every teacher could associate his / her leadership experience with all five dimensions, they agreed that their practice was shaped by some combination of these components.

5.2.1.1. DISCUSSION OF PERSONAL DIMENSION

Vivien and Aisha are compassionate and caring teachers. They feel fulfilled in their work, and see themselves providing a better future for young adults by teaching them about responsibilities and supporting them through their obstacles. Vivien sees her involvement in Student Council and Student Support Services as something that she "really enjoys and achieves a lot in terms of internal satisfaction and the difference she makes in students" (Interview, June 18, 2010). Chaim and Neil are both very active individuals. Moving forward in life is important to them and they keep themselves busy by taking on school-wide learning initiatives. Although they are both young teachers, they are eager to learn and are open to taking risks. Neil commented, "I enjoy what I'm doing, it's a new chapter and I have another twenty-two years left to go in that direction. I don't want to get stale. I don't want to be that teacher who's doing it exactly the same way every day for the last thirty-five years" (Interview, July 13, 2010). Odessa and Orabel have strong personalities. For them, leadership is about working with people and assisting them to improve on what they do. They are not afraid of being challenged, or of challenging people, in order to prove their points. By being fearless and working hard,

they broaden the scope of their leadership capacity and create new initiatives at their schools like the Learning Lunch and a technology-based Science curriculum. Trent and Ifrain love to speak in public. They get excited about bringing new ideas to the forefront and stimulate the workplace with healthy discussions. They like to lead by giving teachers the opportunity to speak about their opinions. On the whole, characteristics such as having compassion, eagerness to learn, taking risks, working with people, and willingness to have conversations are personal qualities that initially influenced these teachers' decision to be involved in leadership work.

5.2.1.2. DISCUSSION OF PROFESSIONAL DIMENSION

The teachers in this study work in a district that heavily supports professional development, and they are encouraged to invest in life-long learning. Chaim and Neil have participated in many district workshops on student literacy and formative assessment. In Odessa's case, the principal developed her interest in 21st century learning by sending her to international conferences around computer technology. Vivien, Chaim, Orabel, and Ifrain attributed their involvement in leadership to mentors who have assisted them in their professional career. Chaim expressed this insight, "I was fortunate enough to fall into a community of teachers that were doing really neat things...and if I'm able to change my practice which I recognize was good for kids, then for some reason, I felt like I could help other teachers help their students and maybe improve their practice" (Interview, November 6, 2010). After their teacher education programs, all eights teachers have gone back to post-secondary institutions to complete their graduate degree. Aisha continues to work with her professor to develop a research group between the school district and the university. Keeping the integrity of the teaching profession is a goal shared by every member in this research group. This sentiment is well articulated by Chaim when he said, "I believe that we are on the cusp of good things in the future of teaching. But we've got a lot of ways to go and for some reason, I feel that I'm playing a role in that" (Interview, November 6, 2010). The teachers seized opportunities to attend development workshops, to build relationships with colleagues, and to advance their knowledge in the field. They used these professional activities to help them grow as leaders at their schools.

5.2.1.3. DISCUSSION OF CULTURAL DIMENSION

For many teachers in the study, the contexts within the district and their school were such that they lent themselves to various leadership initiatives. The importance of literacy and formative assessment were communicated across all levels in the district. Discussions of these topics were robust, and this focus created the impetus for teachers like Chaim and Ifrain to lead as literacy coaches. They used a locally developed resource, Developing Readers, to introduce teaching principles that are now widely implemented across elementary and secondary schools in the district. At Neil's school, a recent change in student demographics compelled new and long-time staff members to re-evaluate their working relationship. Often, identifying holes in the institution resulted in teachers taking on leadership roles. For example, the lack of services for at-risk students provoked Aisha to start her own support group. She rallied a group of teachers around her and used this group as a hub to come up with interesting ideas and programs. For Odessa, the absence of input that went into the school's mission statement motivated her and her team to work together to come up with their own department vision. The teachers in this study were responsive to how the culture of the work environment could help build their leadership work. The beliefs and values that were embedded in their system affected what issues the teachers attended to, the kind of questions they asked, and the type of initiatives they helped instigate.

5.2.1.4. DISCUSSION OF SOCIO-POLITICAL DIMENSION

The politics within schools, whether it is positive or negative, can influence a teacher's desire to step into leadership role. Odessa worked with a group of colleagues who were loyal and committed; their support was a major reason for the successes that she gained as a leader. Similarly, Aisha and Trent had been told by their colleagues that they would make good leaders. For other teachers, the school's social dynamic was weak and they became leaders to rectify a less optimistic situation. Chaim and Neil worked hard to change their working relationship with other teachers; they created a more trusting and friendly environment so that teachers could look beyond their disagreements and collaborate to turn their school into a better place for students. Neil accomplished this by "getting into different positions, different opportunities…where [he] can be involved in a grander scheme of change, where [he] can influence a greater

audience" (Interview, July 13, 2010). As a leader, Odessa believed that "if you could exude the benefits of what you are doing, people would poke their heads in and they want to know what is going on. It is about being positive and having conversations about it" (Interview, July 26, 2010). Ifrain exercised leadership power by promoting democratic processes at his school. The struggle faced by Trent was the politics among the union, school administrators, and the teaching staff, and he was excited about confronting these challenges as a leader. He believed that in leadership, "the ability to have conversations is key, conversations that are non-threatening, non-judgmental…and letting people say their points of view" (Interview, July 9, 2010). On the whole, teacher leaders in this study believed at the outset that they could be most effective by building more inclusive and respectful relationships in their schools.

5.2.1.5. DISCUSSION OF STRUCTURAL DIMENSION

None of the teachers mentioned structure as a big impediment to their leadership work. They accepted the existing bureaucracy as is and found ways to work with the constraints of the school system. Odessa and Trent talked about their role as leaders in changing the rigidness of the structure. Odessa wanted the district to recognize the difference in workload for various leadership positions, and asked her administrators to consider allocating extra resources to support her department. To bring about his goal of having a professional learning community, Trent pushed his colleagues to consider changing the bell schedule at their school to accommodate a more collaborative workplace. The school structure seemed to have minimal influences on teachers' leadership experiences. For the few who were impacted by it, they were assertive in advocating for better working conditions than those allowed by the hierarchy of the current structure.

5.2.1.6. DISCUSSION OF DISTRIBUTED DIMENSIONS

Every teacher has his / her own story about leading teacher-led initiatives. The conditions that shape teachers' lived experiences as leaders are diverse, distributed along several continua of the work environment. The teachers in this study demonstrated that leadership capacity comes from the leaders themselves; as well, it is sustained by the people, beliefs, relationships and structures in the system. This is what

Spillane et al. (2004) refer to as the distributed framework, where the convening of people, events and places puts teachers in a complex positioning where their leadership capacity can thrive. Vivien, Odessa, Chaim, Aisha, Trent, Ifrain, Orabel, and Neil experienced this capacity by responding to what was happening in their personal, professional, cultural, socio-political and structural contexts.

5.2.1.7. DISCUSSION OF TEACHER LEADERSHIP TENSION

In the study, the participants described mixed feelings that pushed and pulled their positions as leaders. Tension in teacher leadership practice seems to be a defining characteristic of these teachers' experiences. In the interviews, the teachers mentioned that they were thankful to mentors who had inspired them to get involved, but they were distraught by colleagues who questioned their motives. They actively pursued initiatives that received a high level of interest and commitment from other staff members, but they also saw themselves as activists trying to address flaws and unpopular demands in the system. When they spoke about their leadership work, they felt excited and motivated, but also frustrated and tired. The teachers were proud of what they have been able to achieve; however, many of them were unsure about calling themselves teacher leaders and felt they stood on a fine line between humility and arrogance. This group of participants expressed tensions that spanned various dimensions of work, adding complexity to the distributed system of teacher leadership phenomena.

As already established from this study, the participants were pushed predominantly by their personal and professional obligations, but as well the cultural, socio-political, and structural landscape, to be the changing force for school improvement (Harris and Muijs, 2005). At the same time, each of them had been pulled to the side because of discouragement from colleagues, apathy in the work environment, and personal frustration (Deal and Peterson, 2009). What differed from one participant to the next was where their respective struggles stemmed from, as well as the impact that the tension had on their leadership experiences. Vivien wanted to develop new Science courses, but she was criticized by her own department members for being too aggressive. For her, the disparity between her students' and her colleagues' needs meant that she had to take a stance on what was important to the long-term growth of the institution. Odessa worked countless hours to advocate for resources to set up a

105

state-of-the-art learning environment, but this work was undervalued by a system that did not compensate her for her efforts. Odessa had to redefine what 'professionalism' meant to her as she struggled with the imbalance between the reality of her work and the policy that defined her work in the teaching profession. Whenever she puts this issue on the table, she had to negotiate with stakeholders who did not necessary agree with her position. Chaim brought new ideas to his school, but his excitement was dampened by his low seniority ranking and a perceived lack of teaching experience. Dealing with these challenges entailed knowing the culture that already existed in the school and finding his own contribution in this space. In response to the resistance he received from staff, he said, "I need to put myself out there…so that maybe at some point people might listen to me, which is kind of sad" (Interview, November 6, 2010). Aisha showed pride through her work with at-risk students but was slightly afraid that her other passion for scientific research would compel her to go back to the university as a graduate student. At some point, she would have to prioritize and make a choice between her job and her personal pursuits. Trent liked to be part of large group discussions that talked about ways to improve student learning, but his family obligations limited the time he could spend on managing the P.L.C. initiative. Similar to Aisha, Trent had to make some tough decisions between his professional obligations at school and personal demands at home. Ifrain had engaged in various leadership roles where he could apply his interest in philosophy and conflict mediation, but he learned from mistakes that democratic processes within a school institution are critical to ensuring open and fair working relationships. For him, in order to accomplish his goals, he had to learn how to work politically within the institution. Orabel wanted to be truthful with her words, but her honesty came under attack by colleagues who saw it as an expression of power and control. She explained, "It often can rub people the wrong way, it can often look like you are trying to do things and get involved in things to promote yourself. But I can't control what people think" (Interview, July 13, 2010). Her leadership capacity depended on her ability to work through her own conviction and the perceptions of her colleagues. Neil was interested in moving the school forward but was often held back because he was not yet seen as a 'veteran' at his school. The history of his school supported certain cultural norms that made it difficult to create change. When Neil tried to organize a school-wide program, "It didn't take long before [he] realized that there were many detractors...although there were people who really wanted to get involved,

there was probably just as many people who tried to crush it from day one" (Interview, July 13, 2010). The idea of doing something new at the school meant that Neil had to break belief systems across different generations of staff members.

In this study, the teachers faced tensions of push and pull in their own context, which occupied the personal as well as the professional, cultural, socio-political and structural spaces of their leadership experience. The dissonance, in combination with the distributed framework that constituted the nature of their work environments, made teacher leadership a complex topic to make sense of (Hargreaves, 1994a; Johnson and Donaldson, 2007; Little, 2003).

5.2.1.8.   SUMMARY FOR THE FIRST RESEARCH QUESTION

This study's first research question examines the space that defines teachers' roles as leaders of teacher-led initiatives. The data indicate that the phenomenon of teacher leadership is shaped by distributed systems, where the personal, professional, cultural, socio-political and structural dimensions create opportunities for teachers to lead. As teachers reflected back on their journey, each story offered a different yet a rich set of experiences with its own beginning, middle and end. They remembered significant moments of their experiences, those that they felt good about and those that created dissonance in their work and relationships. In searching for their own professional capacity, the teachers built their leadership experiences by negotiating both enabling and hindering factors within and across multifaceted dimensions of the work environment.

This study points to the ambiguities inherent in leadership work. While the kind of teacher leadership we strive to achieve has been shown to benefit the professional, cultural, social and structural conditions of schooling, these dimensions also carry entrenched ideas that may result in consequences far different from what are originally intended (Harris and Muijs, 2005). The tensions within teacher leadership are complex. Teachers work amid hope and helplessness, professionalism and professional autonomy, individuality and egalitarianism, empowerment and bureaucracy, collaboration and contrived collegiality, personal values and political power, and relationships and structures.

5.3. STRUGGLES IN TEACHER LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCES

As touched upon in the previous section, all eight teachers mentioned barriers that hindered their ability to lead at school. Vivien's leadership potential became evident when she took on the department head position; however, her drive at one point became a source of conflict in the department. For her, developing a positive and professional relationship with her colleagues was a big challenge. Odessa had to deal with similar issues. Demands on her work stretched her working hours into late nights, weekends, and the summer holidays. Her fight to make sure that she was fairly supported in her departmental work put her in a difficult position with administrators and colleagues. By herself, Aisha took on the task of helping at-risk students, but it was not until after the cultural climate had become receptive to staff collaboration that Student Support Services established itself as one of the biggest teacher-initiated groups at her school. Chaim was shunned by long-time staff members who saw him as 'inexperienced'. Neil faced similar reactions as he coped with teasing comments made by colleagues about his desire to move 'up' the leadership ladder. Moreover, leadership work is time demanding; it competes with many other responsibilities that a teacher has outside of school (Hess, 2008). Trent, Chaim and Neil mentioned the struggle of attaining a balance between their work and personal lives. All three of them were fathers of toddler-age children, and they had shifted much of their energy to raising their families.

As a group, the participants' struggles were wide-ranging in scope. Although their problems were by no means trivial matters, they did not allow them to impact negatively on their work. In the interviews, the teachers were positive and hopeful about their leadership initiatives. Despite the barriers, the eight teachers were similar in how they responded to their challenging circumstances. The following, in particular, will describe some common attributes that compelled these teachers to continue exercise leadership potential, and more importantly, to overcome the struggles that might have deterred others from engaging in leadership work.

5.4. ANSWERING THE SECOND RESEARCH QUESTION

Research question two asked: how do teachers' lived experiences of leading teacher-led initiatives (re)define how they feel, envisage, and enact their future role as teacher leaders, as well as the way they make sense of future leadership practices? Analysis of the second research question illuminates the enduring qualities that teacher leaders exhibit when they engage themselves in leadership work. In contrast to the first research question where I examine the dimensions and tension that shape leadership experience, the second question explores the meaning and beliefs that teachers gained from these experiences to help envision and enact leadership in their contexts. In particular, I want to elucidate how the participants' experiences have helped strengthened their values as teacher leaders and deepened the significance of their role in future leadership practices. Here, it is important to go back to a major premise of the distributed framework, where Spillane suggests the use of a new lens for interpreting school leadership practices by scrutinizing the interdependencies that occur within the system (Spillane et al., 2004). He suggests that a distributed perspective sees the "day-to-work work of leading" as "being defined or taking place in the interactions of school leaders, followers, and aspects of their situation" (Spillane and Coldren, 2011, p. 31). Therefore, it focuses on understanding leadership as contingent on the values that teachers bring forth from their own personal beliefs, their relationships with colleagues, and the situations. Looking at the dynamics behind why teacher leaders do what they do helps to bring out the meanings that teachers take from their lived experiences to transform different dimensions of future leadership practices.

In the interviews, the participants exhibited six attributes, in the form of behaviors and beliefs, which allowed them to reconceptualize their leadership work. Although there were striking differences in the environment and the type of leadership that the eight participants engaged in, there were nevertheless similar qualities within this complex positioning of teacher leadership that helped these teachers (re)defined who they were as leaders. The six attributes were based on having the desire 1) to help; 2) to change; 3) to commit; 4) to learn; 5) to persist; and 6) to have a sense of self-awareness. In the following, I will discuss these in detail.

5.4.1.   TO HELP

The teachers put themselves in teacher leadership roles because they believed they could help all students succeed. They had faith in the impact they could make, and their "focus is always on the students" (Interview, June 18, 2010). They talked about being an inspiration to students, giving them a chance to have memories that they would not have otherwise, providing them with opportunities to be challenged, and getting them involved in music, art and sports. The teachers also talked about helping by being real with the students through instilling in them a love for learning, as well as nurturing their strengths and pointing out their weaknesses. One participant believed that she became a teacher leader by taking "a step forward to make a difference in the lives of ALL the students in the school" (Interview, June 18, 2010). Another participant shared her thought about teaching being a helping profession, "There are a lot of great people in this profession, and almost all of us really want to see success with our kids. We want to make a positive change in their lives. We want to make their experience one that they feel like it's beneficial to them, whatever that looks like" (Interview, July 13, 2010). Having the desire to help students allowed these teacher leaders to overcome, and sometimes to overlook, the difficulties that arose from the relationships and structures in the system.

5.4.2.   TO CHANGE

Participants put themselves in teacher leadership roles because they believed something better could be done; more so, they saw themselves playing an active part in changing the current circumstances. They challenged themselves to do better by "thinking outside the box, be[ing] the instigator of change, tweak[ing] people's minds, drop[ping] ideas and saying what if" (Interview, July 26, 2010). They believed that leadership is about "*making the familiar unfamiliar* – questioning basic assumptions, [and] suggesting several ways to look at particular issue or situation" (Pellicer and Anderson, 1995, p. 209). The teachers asked themselves what they could do to address pressing needs. As one teacher put it, there are "those who will always spend their entire life thinking about it, then there are those lukewarm who may incorporate some ideas, and then there are gung hoers who will go to workshops and bring it into their

classroom the next day, and I am one of those" (Interview, July 26, 2010). These teacher leaders were ambitious and they gravitated towards change for the better.

In addition to seeing themselves as agents of change, a few participants talked about changing the bureaucracy of the school system. Pellicer and Anderson (1995) believe that "assum[ing] major responsibilities for instructional leadership is a tall order for many in the educational establishment, moving away from the factory model of schooling requires no less than a major paradigm shift" (p. 19). In the study, the teachers expressed the belief that formal positions such as department heads and administrators impede people from having open discussions because the hierarchy is such that it makes people "talk down to the next rung on the ladder and the next rung further down" (Interview, November 6, 2010). One teacher was alarmed by how many single department heads were created in recent years, giving certain individuals the power to manage themselves as a group of one because they were the only person who was teaching or managing the subject. She suggested, "I think that [referring to single department head positions] needs to change, we need to look at the needs of the school, where changes are happening and who needs more support" (Interview, July 26, 2010). Other teachers stayed away from using terms like committees and meetings. Instead, one participant called them "think tanks" to be free from being confined to this structure of hierarchy (Interview, July 9, 2010).

The participants also spoke about the need to change how leadership is valued at schools. As stated by Crowther et al. (2002), the practice of teacher leadership should not be taken for granted without establishing some meaning and purpose that are derived through this form of influence. Teachers, especially those who did not have formal leadership roles like Neil and Chaim, sometimes felt unappreciated for the work they had done, particularly when they compared themselves to department heads who only do their job to the extent of calling meetings, producing meeting agendas, disseminating information to department members, counting books, doing the budget, and ordering the stationary. They were "amazed that that type of leadership which [they] don't see as leadership is the one that is the most highly regarded by other teachers in the school" (Interview, November 6, 2010). On the whole, the teachers saw themselves changing what they considered as the ineffectiveness of orthodoxy, autonomy and egalitarianism within the school system.

5.4.3. TO COMMIT

Participants put themselves in leadership roles because they had a moral commitment to education. One teacher said that her viewpoint of teacher leadership had changed and she realized now that "it is quite a significant role and it is quite a commitment" (Interview, July 17, 2010). The teachers talked about how noble their work was, despite not getting paid for the extra time and effort that they put in. To them, their work felt right and important. They believed that they had a responsibility to cultivate a school community that enable all individuals to be the best. According to Fried (2002), a person can demonstrate this commitment by having a "depth and fervour about doing things well and striving for excellence" (Davies and Brighhouse, 2008, p. 13). One teacher emphasized that for him to get involved was "FUNDAMENTALLY the right thing to do" (Interview, July 9, 2010).

Five teachers in this study had worked for more than seven years at their current school because they found their work fulfilling and worthwhile. They invested heavily in their projects and were committed to seeing things through. They wanted to remain at their school to see all the positive impacts of their initiatives and to enjoy the successes that they had worked hard to achieve. One teacher chose to stay in order "to see the progression of supportive structures that [she] has been involved in getting started" and "…to look back on these initiatives and observe how they are working now" (Interview, July 17, 2010).

Teachers talked about making a commitment beyond the classroom to include the school and the wider community. To them, their job not only entailed educating the students, but also the students' parents. For one teacher, she imagined the parents and taxpayers standing at the back of her room when she was teaching. She "taught to them, made them be excited with [her]" (Interview, July 26, 2010). She held herself accountable to the stakeholders because they were her advocates and her cheerleaders. These teachers held themselves accountable to the community and they did their best to show people why they had chosen teaching as their profession.

Each participant expressed a deep belief in serving the public school system. This commitment is observed in schools that are led "by people who believe in

something, care about something, [and] stand for something" (Gardner, 1964, as cited in Pellicer and Anderson, 1995, p. 208). They "believed a lot in public education,...it is really important [that teachers] should all work hard at it" (Interview, July 26, 2010).

5.4.4.   TO LEARN

Teacher leadership is more than a set of skills; it is about acquiring the "mind-set…of a learner" (Hess, 2008, p 72). All eights teachers spoke about the importance of learning in their work. The teachers situated themselves in various leadership positions in order to learn with a team of colleagues and students, building a school community where learning pushed each other's capacity to be a better teacher or a better student. As such, they encouraged students to learn more about math, science and English by joining after-school clubs and taking advanced courses. Through homework club and scholarship nights, they taught students about acquiring a good work ethic and taking responsibility for their own learning. They wanted students to learn about politics, citizenship, and teamwork by getting involved in Student Council. One participant envisioned herself "being a strong factor in changing and improving the learning styles in the classrooms and improving overall student learning" (Interview, June 18, 2010). They encouraged their colleagues to continue learning about their content, pedagogy, and artistry by starting up new initiatives like P.L.C., Literacy Groups, and Learning Lunches. One participant defined teacher leaders as teachers "who take on a new role in their teaching, who learn quickly, and incorporate something in their teaching right away and then bring it back to staff" (Interview, June 26, 2010). The teachers indicated that they demonstrated leadership by supporting different approaches to, and contexts for, learning.

This interdependency between learning and leading has been underscored by Lambert (2003) as a mutual collaboration that is carried out by members of a dynamic community. Authors like Hargreaves and Shirley (2009) and Sergiovanni (2007) agree that principles of learning and leading go hand in hand in shaping a vibrant school culture. In a research project undertaken across ten schools in England, Harris and Muijs (2005) found that teacher leadership is demonstrated through a high level of professional learning and collaborative effort in improving student achievement.

113

5.4.5.   TO PERSIST

The participants put themselves in leadership roles because they believed that good schools have to be nurtured, which requires persistent leadership from staff members. They indicated that leadership in general is frustrating. To varying degrees, they have all gone through very tense periods in their leadership experiences where they felt like having a "nervous breakdown", or not being able to "fight it anymore", or "driving to a point of illness where they were physically getting ill because they cannot take the stress" (Interview, July 13, 2010). These teachers learned to depend on different coping mechanisms. One teacher pulled away from initiatives that he disliked in order to move to other ones that he found more stimulating. Another teacher took stress as an indication that she needed to re-evaluate her priorities and to focus on accomplishing the more important tasks. Amid the setbacks, one teacher expressed her inspiration to remain persistent, "Make sure you understand that you're doing something for the benefit of everyone, for the students...You do it and you don't let anything bother you and get in your way" (Interview, June 18, 2010). Another teacher explained, "It is much easier to just go about your daily activity. There are a hundred things that I do in a day that I don't get recognized for, but I'm not the only one who does it. There are a lot, hundreds, more teachers like me that go beyond what I do, but I do the best I can for who I am" (Interview, July 13, 2010). Teacher leadership is:

> not for the faint of heart or [for] those who want to feign a heart. It is not for those who do not want to be fired up or who are deathly afraid of being fired. Ultimately it requires people who are in it for the long run, who seek not merely to survive, not merely to personally succeed, but sincerely desire to be an important part of a highly valued endeavor (Novak, 2008, p. 36).

Even as teachers "are starved for the opportunity to talk openly with other adults who can really understand what their life is like", they show their persistence in leadership work by continuing to "be allies and guides for each other...through reflection and dialogue" (Boleman and Deal, 1994, p. 82).

5.4.6.   TO HAVE SELF-AWARENESS

Bennis (1992) once wrote:

No leader sets out to be a leader. People set out to live their lives, expressing themselves fully. When that expression is of value they become leaders. The point is to become yourself, to use yourself completely – all your skills, gifts, and energies – in order to make your vision manifest (p. 111).

The participants were very aware of what kind of teachers they wanted to be and their sense of identity guided who they were as professionals. They saw themselves as one of many in a community where "everybody had a certain degree of responsibility to take part in it" (Interview, July 13, 2010). They believed in building a team that empowers individuals to lead in different ways. One participant said, "I don't think there's ever going to be a time in our teaching career where we are all singing from the same song sheet, and I don't even know if we should be. But let's hope that we could be close in our genre of music" (Interview, November 6, 2010). They knew that they were neither the first nor the only teacher leader at their school. They realized that there were many teacher leaders before them who paved the way for them to step up. They acknowledged teachers who helped them turn their vision into a reality and they knew that in the future, there would be many teacher leaders to inspire them to do even better. By attending to their personal strengths, they stood firm to their identity and mobilized their energy around leading in what they did best.

Based on what the participants did as leaders and what they have said to me in the interviews, what became evident was that each one had an internal awareness that guided who they were as leaders. Vivien educated her students about good citizenship; Odessa motivated students and colleagues to reach their potential; Chaim engaged himself in life-long learning; Aisha advocated for at-risk students in the school district; Trent inspired others to think big; Ifrain mediated difficult issues by having open and fair processes; Orabel coached her students to stay true to themselves; and Neil insisted that staff collaboration should be the vision at his school.

5.4.7. IMPACT OF PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL FACTORS ON TEACHER LEADERSHIP

For many participants, this study provided the first opportunity for them to think about and openly articulate their views on teacher leadership. Revealing "who" they were and "how" they saw themselves as teacher leaders represented very personal matters. At the same time, their awareness carries deep and wide implications for future practices. The way in which participants feel and make sense of teacher leadership can shape how this phenomenon is enacted and understood by other teachers at school.

While this study has sought to describe the behaviors and beliefs that undergird the experiences of eight teacher leaders, the concept of teacher leadership occupies a different space and takes up different meanings for each participant. Trent, Odessa, and Orabel lead with grand ideas and see themselves as change agents reforming the school system.   Chaim, Ifrain, and Neil take a more covert approach and try to institute change by empowering their colleagues to get involved in school initiatives. There are also others like Vivien and Aisha who doubt that what they do counts as teacher leadership.

As unique as each participant is, their work is anchored by a set of personal attributes and professional beliefs. They are involved in leadership work because of their desire to help students, to make change for a better way, to be committed to their work, to be life-long learners, to stay persistent amidst obstacles, and to have a sense of self-awareness of who they want to be as teachers. Attributes of wanting to learn, to persist, and to be self-aware are personal behaviors that seem to shape 'who' teacher leaders are; attributes of wanting to help, to commit, and to change are professional values that shape 'why' teachers do what they do. The study participants display six attributes that they have learned from positioning themselves as leaders of school initiatives, giving them the impetus to make a positive impact on student learning through enhancing the personal, professional, cultural, socio-political, and structural dimensions of school. The desire to help students guided Vivien and Aisha to put in place the structures, in the form of courses and programs offered at school, to improve the academic standards and emotional well-being of their students. By getting involved in teacher-led initiatives, all eight teachers made change happen by reframing teacher

116

professionalism. By having commitment, Trent and Ifrain remained patient and they worked slowly with their colleagues to build their initiatives. By being life-long learners, Odessa and Chaim moved their institutions forward by encouraging other professionals to think about teaching in the 21st century. Through persistence, the teachers demonstrated their tenacity to carry out leadership work that was important to their schools. By being aware of their contribution as school leaders, Chaim and Orabel showed that they could change people's perspectives by working hard and believing in their own competence. From what they indicated, involvement in teacher leadership is a conscious positioning. They share common values that engage them in the work of "renewing professionalism, rectifying cultural histories,…and creating democratic educational practices" (Jenlink and Jenlink, 2009, p. 115).

5.4.8.   SUMMARY FOR THE SECOND RESEARCH QUESTION

During the interviews, the eight participants articulated meanings they drew from their leadership experiences. Aside from describing leadership activities they were engaged in, they explained who they are as teachers, why they have taken on school initiatives, and how they have conducted their lives as leaders. The what, who, why and how of teacher leadership come together to illuminate the lived experiences of teacher leaders (Spillane et al., 2004). Although certain experiences are unique for the individuals, there are similarities across who they are as leaders and why they believe in the work that they do. The way the teachers engage themselves in staff-led initiatives speaks to their collective desire to help, to change, to commit, to learn, to persist and to be self-aware, all of which give meaning to the lived experiences of teacher leadership. In this section, I have elaborated on these components. By bringing the facets of who, why and how into the study, I am attempting to build the components that sustain the interactions among leaders, followers and situations. The learning that results from examining the linkages within leadership phenomenon has the capacity to help teachers reshape future thinking and practices around teacher leadership.

117

5.5. A PROPOSED FRAMEWORK

The first part of my study looked at the lived experiences of teacher leaders, and the way they are shaped by multiple dimensions of the work environment. The distributed relationship among the personal, professional, cultural, socio-political, and structural dimensions finds clear expression in the research data. In particular, the accord and discord within various aspects of teachers' experiences illustrate the tension in leadership phenomena. Teacher leadership is multifaceted. Each teacher responds to a unique set of circumstances that influence what type of initiatives he / she is involved in at school. In this study, the complexity of this distributed dynamic is addressed in part by establishing the elements of "leaders, followers, and their situations that give form to leadership practice" (Spillane and Diamond, 2007, p. 7).

In order to fully capture the crux of Spillane's distributed framework, the personal, professional, cultural, socio-political and structural dimensions are treated, not only as influencing factors, but also as factors that are being influenced by the meanings that leaders draw from their experiences. When the understanding of teacher leadership extends to the interactions that run through a system of leaders, followers and situations, it gives a more complete picture about the lived experiences of teacher leadership. Instead of distilling research data down to what teacher leaders do, the what, who, how, and why within the day-to-day practice all contribute to the interactions that run through the complexities of teacher leadership (Spillane and Diamond, 2007). The second part of the study examined the data by drawing out the common threads that weave through the meanings that teachers generate from their leadership experiences. Therefore, this study constructs a powerful and intimate language of teacher leadership by underscoring six enduring components that strengthen teachers' role as leaders: helping, changing, committing, life-long learning, persisting, and having self-awareness. These common attributes help define who teacher leaders are and why they put themselves in positions to reshape current and future practices of leadership.

I would like to use findings from my research to propose a model for understanding teacher leadership, one that may expand on the ideas given by Spillane's distributed framework. My study data concurs with his suggestion about using multiple

elements, and the interactions that arise from these elements, to guide leadership research. This research examines elements of personal, professional, cultural, socio-political and structural dimensions. The interview data suggest that all five dimensions contribute to the lived experiences of teacher leadership, albeit not in an equally weighted or sequential manner. That is, the dimensions do not influence teacher leadership experiences equally, imposing the same type of dynamics in every situation. As well, the dimensions do not operate in a sequential process, leading from one dimension to the next as in a flowchart. I am proposing a new framework in Figure 2 (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Reconceptualization of Teacher Leadership Experiences
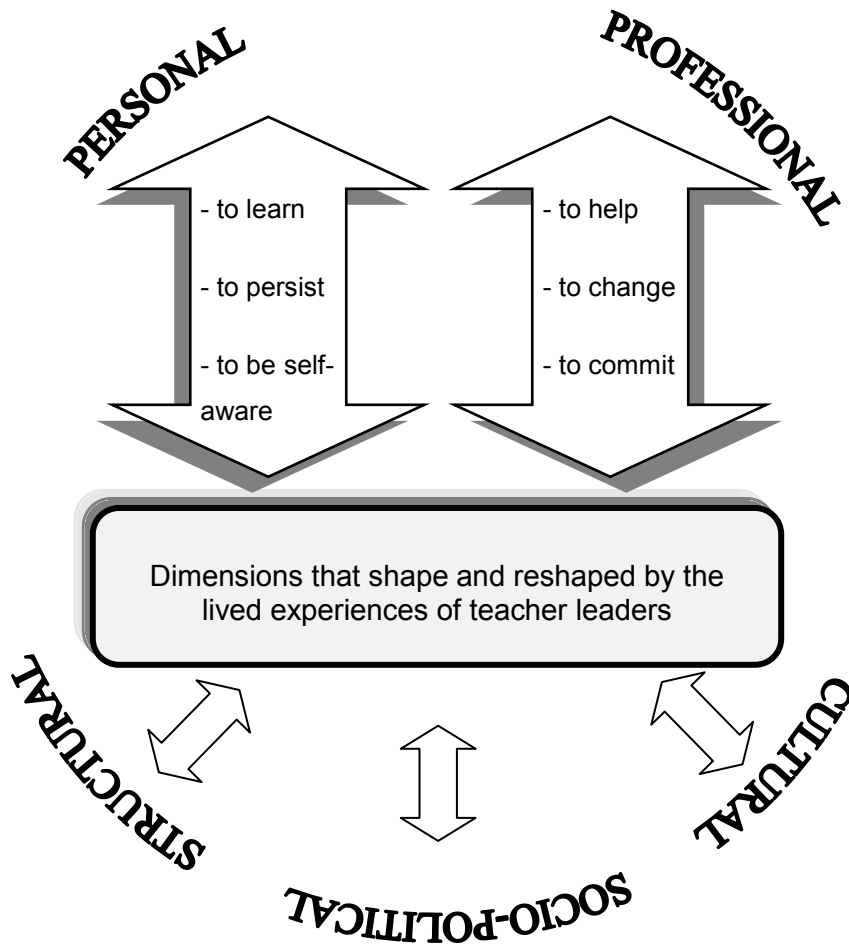
In this framework, the personal, professional, cultural, socio-political and structural dimensions are interconnected. Together, they give expression to the lived experiences of teacher leadership, with each dimension exerting its own push and pull on the system. When teachers confront different facets in the system, they are presented with leadership opportunities and challenges. Their 'leadership position' is influenced by the way they negotiate with various tension and distributed dynamics

within their leadership space. This position is strongly shaped by the teachers' personal desire to learn, to persist, and to have self-awareness of their roles as leaders, as well as by their professional obligation to help, to change, and to commit. Teacher leaders possess personal and professional values that ground their leadership endeavours. These attributes were instrumental to the ability that these teachers have to reshape the personal, professional, cultural, socio-political, and structural dimensions. As such, they envision and enact leadership in ways that could help redefine future leadership experiences. Perhaps, based on the data and this reconceptualization, I could offer my concept of teacher leadership:

> Teacher leadership engages teachers to make persistent, committed changes in education by making positive influences in themselves, the people they work with, and the school communities of which they are a part. Through the learning process of envisioning and enacting teacher leadership practices, teachers strengthen their own awareness as educational leaders.

Granted, each experience will be understood and felt differently because every teacher will tell his / her own story of teacher leadership. Even though these stories "cannot be generalized, it provides one example of the ability to describe pieces of the narrative in more complex ways and through a concept that brings together threads of culture" (Mehta, 2009, p. 308). Amid different contexts, there are fundamental values that weave through the leadership phenomenon. From the interviews, the teachers expressed their obligation to learn, and ultimately to practice leadership, in ways that can advocate better learning opportunities for the students.

5.6. SUMMARY OF RESEARCH DATA

In this study, the participants shared how they envision, feel about, and understand their role as leaders. The conditions that help shape the participants as leaders are distributed and in tension, making each of their experiences unique from one another. Nevertheless, underneath these differences, there are common grounds that define the living practice of teacher leadership. Through what is presented in the

interviews, the participants as a collective communicated a set of personal and professional attributes that help define who teacher leaders are and how they shape their roles through various dimensions of leadership work. The teachers in this study are recognized as leaders at their school because they espouse certain beliefs and behaviors that enable them to lead with conviction and purpose. These insights can reconceptualize future perspectives on teacher leadership as teachers draw from each others' living experiences and "recover the full grandeur, drama, and mystery of what it means to be one human soul educating another" (MacDonald and Shirley, 2009, p. 84).

5.7. RECONCEPTUALIZATION OF TEACHER LEADERSHIP

The phenomenon of teacher leadership is complex. The literature offers substantial arguments for the important work of teacher leadership. To a lesser degree, it documents case studies of leadership activities that have been engaged in by teacher leaders. This research follows the research traditions of authors such as Terence Deal, Parker Palmer, and Kent Peterson who embrace a movement in educational research that seeks to tell more about the person who is doing the leading, the context in which he / she leads from, the people whom he / she leads with, the emotions and passion that drive him / her to be a leader, and the moral obligation he / she has to be a leader of public education. Teacher leadership research becomes meaningful when voices are spoken by teachers who have experienced it, when teachers can elaborate on the work that they do as well as their emotion, beliefs, and understanding as incumbent or future leaders (Munro, 2004).

Teacher leadership then, in practice and research, is about creating a public space where teacher leaders can "challenge both themselves and other social actors within the learning community to read the world, and to read the stories of their own lives in relation to the world" (Jenlink and Jenlink, 2009, p. 121). As we listen to and learn from each other's stories, we come to a place of celebration that values the beliefs and thinking implicit within all kinds of teacher leadership experiences.

I believe that the value of this study comes from hearing eight stories of teacher leadership as a form of "mutual illumination"; therefore, helping us to collectively

understand the unique and similar aspects of teacher leaders (Palmer, 2007, p. 24). Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009) believe that by taking a dialectic and inquiry stance, it "repositions the collective intellectual capacity of practitioners" to conjoin "theory and practice, knowing and doing, conceptualizing and studying, analyzing and acting, researchers and practitioners, and public and local knowledge" (pp. 3 and 4). Treating teacher leadership as a form of discourse provides a space for learning, teaching, and living, as leaders.

5.8. FUTURE DIRECTION – ON RESEARCH

Through this study, I hope to demonstrate and to encourage opportunities in research where teacher leaders can learn from their experiences. We need to have learning, caring communities "where leaders could safely be visible and enrich the organization by engaging in professional development" (Applegate, Earley and Tarule, 2009, p. 158). I believe that the future of teacher leadership research needs to move concurrently in two directions. First, the continued use of a qualitative research methodology to allow for research which explains teacher leadership through and from the teachers' lived experiences. Narratives embrace the external and internal perspectives by interlinking what teacher leaders do (the outside) to why they take on initiatives as leaders (the inside). I believe that the promise of teacher leadership research will lie in its power to animate a more holistic story by bringing out meanings and feelings that are inherent in what is faced by our leaders in practice. Studies that can open our eyes and minds to the inner landscape of teacher leaders and their experiences will be crucial for research in this field in developing a more powerful framework of understanding (Palmer, 2007).

Second, as much as research is used to learn more about a topic, I believe that in the case of teacher leadership research, one should not underestimate the learning that occurs during the narrative interviews. Trent said, "Being a teacher leader has given me the opportunity to reflect upon what I do, and therefore made me a better teacher and a better person" (Interview, July 9, 2010). These interviews give opportunities for teachers to engage in discourse, and they drive significant learning not only for the

researchers but also for the participants. A community of inquiry allows teachers to "construct and reconstruct meaning in the company of colleagues from a range of backgrounds, teaching contexts, and experiences" (Waff, 2009, p. 311). Teacher leadership research can consider using the distributed framework for teachers to learn more about themselves. Through conversation, the participants are involved in reflexive inquiries that deepen the meaning they draw from their work. They are learning more about themselves as leaders as they make their own experiences public, and they are more cognizant about their inner conviction as they garner public support for what they do. Together, we should encourage teacher leaders to get involve in "joint constructions of local knowledge, the questioning of common assumptions, and thoughtful critique of the usefulness of research generated by others both inside and outside contexts of practice" (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 2009, p. 2). All of these build a synergy that could help teachers redefine their future role as leaders in their school community.

5.9. FUTURE DIRECTION – ON PRACTICE

Teacher leadership, in practice, should empower teacher leaders as 'leaders' in driving the direction and meaning of future leadership work. This study indicates that the personal dimension is a strong factor in sustaining teacher-led school initiatives. From what the teachers say and do, I come to three personal attributes (life-long learning, persistence, and self-awareness) that teachers have gained from their leadership experiences. Their beliefs and ways of acting in the workplace illuminate some important values about what it means and feels like to be teacher leaders. I contend that these attributes are essential to the lived experiences of teacher leadership. These personal qualities should be what we espouse and expect from incumbent and emergent teacher leaders. I suggest that teacher education programs, school districts and school administrators could consider helping teachers by nurturing their personal values as leaders – by promoting life-long learning opportunities, by giving them time to stay persistent in their leadership work, and by educating teachers to believe in themselves as leaders.

As well, this study points to the importance of teacher professionalism in building leadership that encourages mutual support, commitment, and change. I urge that teachers' colleges, teacher federations, local teacher unions and school districts work jointly to help teachers establish strong attachment to the profession. Aside from gaining membership to teacher unions or associations and attending annual provincial development events, much more effort has to put into organizing meaningful opportunities for teachers across schools, districts, and provinces to meet and talk. The value of investing in consistent and collaborative professional development for teachers will be immense. I believe that the teaching profession becomes stronger when its members are empowered to help others, are supported in their leadership commitment, and are encouraged to make change happen. Belonging to the same profession is the beginning; however, I think we can do more to empower teachers as leaders in the profession. This study indicates that teacher leadership initiative has a focus on learning, teaching and collaboration. I suggest that stakeholders, across all levels, plan meaningful gatherings and conversations where teachers can engage each other in becoming better teachers or teacher leaders at their workplace. Instead of working in isolation, teachers can unite as a stronger group of professionals if substantial opportunities are available for them to take up shared leadership in teaching and learning.

5.10. COLLECTIVE EMBRACING

This study is a collective project. For the eight teachers who were involved in this research, they all have their own stories to tell and their experiences are different. I am privileged that through this study, I am able to share their ambitions with current and future teacher leaders. I have chosen to use the names Vivien, Odessa, Chaim, Aisha, Trent, Ifrain, Orabel and Neil as pseudonyms because of their meaning: Vivien – full of life; Odessa – a long journey; Chaim – life; Aisha – life; Trent – journey across; Ifrain – productive and furtile; Orabel – as bright as light; and Neil – best or champion.

Teacher leadership, then, is about embracing a collective effort where each individual contributes in the best way he / she can. On the surface, leadership

125

experiences are disjointed; teachers draw and shape their understanding of leadership from various dimensions of their work. However, underneath this chaos, the essence of teacher leadership shines in unity as a form of democratic service. It allows schools to thrive as a "civic space" where people gather "with the purpose of learning together, [and] with a respect for the practices that sustain such learning" (Nixon, 2009, p. 199). In this study, the eight teachers found their own capacity to continue to grow. The convictions they hold for themselves, the profession, and the institution empower them to be leaders beyond the classroom.

5.11. CONTINUATION

I do not foresee an end to this study. I hope that this is the beginning of a lifelong project as more teacher leaders come together to share their experiences. It is important for our teacher leaders to build on this journey and add their own mark to the path. If we care to listen, this journey will give us a better understanding of the work that our leaders accomplish. If we care to look, this journey will make us see the obstacles that our leaders face. If we care to hear, this journey will connect us to the dreams and desire of our leaders. If we care to learn, this journey will give us a narrative definition of what teacher leadership is about. If we care to find out, this journey will help teachers live and lead a purposeful life. Teacher leaders are the "stars in a galaxy that outshine our fears and dwarfs our apprehensions", and each is a "star in the firmament hold[ing] an essential place…without it, a constellation would be diminished" (Reeves, 2009, p. 5). I believe that by attuning to teachers' voices, across multiple dimensions of the lived environment, we come to understand the frames and practices that shape and reshape the phenomenon of teacher leadership.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Applegate, J.H., Earley, P.M. and Tarule, J.M. (2009). Support for Women Leaders: The Visible and the Invisible. In Mullen, C.A. (Ed.). (2009). *The Handbook of Leadership and Professional Learning Communities.* (p 151-160). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Aristotle. (2002). *Nicomachean Ethics.* (Broadie, S. and Rowe, C., Trans). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Barth, R. (1988). Schools: A community of leaders. In Lieberman, A. (Ed.). (1988). Building a Professional Culture in Schools. (p 129-147). New York: Teachers College Press.

Bass, B.M. (1990). From Transactional to Transformational Leadership: Learning to Share the Vision. *Organizational Dynamics*, 18(3), 19-31.

Bennis, W.G. (1992). *On Becoming a Leader.* New York: Addison-Wesley.

Bernard, H.R. and Ryan, R.W. (2010). *Analyzing Qualitative Data: Systematic Approaches*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications Inc.

Boleman, L. and Deal. T. (1994). *Becoming a Teacher Leader from Isolation to Collaboration.* Thousand Oaks: CA: Corwin Press.

Branson, C.M. (2010). Free to Become: The Essence of Learning and Leading. In Normore, A.H. (Ed). (2010). Global Perspectives on Educational Leadership Reform: The Development and Preparation of Leaders of Learning and Learners of Leadership. *Advances in Educational Administration, (11), 85-104.*

Bredeson, P.V. (1995). Role Change for Principals in Restructured Schools: Implications for Teacher Preparation and Teacher Work. In O'Hair, M.J. and Odell, S.J. (Eds.). (1995). *Teacher Education Yearbook III: Educating Teachers for Leadership and Change.* (p 25-45). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Brunner, C.C., Hammel, K., and Miller, M.D. (2010). Transforming Leadership Preparation for Social Justice: Dissatisfaction, Inspiration, and Rebirth – an Exemplar. In Horsford, S.D. (2010). *New Perspectives in Educational Leadership: Exploring Social, Political, and Community Contexts and Meaning.* (p 261-277). New York: Peter Lang.

Burns, J.M. (1978). Transactional and Transforming Leadership. In Wren, J.T. (1995). *The Leader's Companion: Insights on Leadership Through the Ages. (*p 100-101). New York: The Free Press.

Cochran-Smith, M. and Lytle, S.L. (2009). *Inquiry as Stance: Practitioner Research for the Next Generation.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Coldren, A. (2007). Spanning the Boundary Between School Leadership and Classroom Instruction at Hillside Elementary School. In Spillane, J.P. and Diamond, J.H. (2007). *Distributed Leadership in Practice.* (p 16-34). New York: Teachers College Press.

Couto, R.A. (1992). Defining a Citizen Leader. In Wren, J.T. (1995)*. The Leader's Companion: Insights on Leadership Through the Ages. (*p 11-17). New York: The Free Press.

Creighton, T. (1997). *Teachers as Leaders: Is the Principal really needed.* Paper presented at the Annual National Conference on Creating the Quality School. Oklahoma City, OK.

Creswell, J.W. (2003). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches. Second Edition.* Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, Inc.

Cronin, T.E., (1987). Leadership and Democracy. In Wren, J.T. (1995)*. The Leader's Companion: Insights on Leadership Through the Ages. (p 303-309).* New York: The Free Press.

Crowther, F., Ferguson, M., and Hann, L. (2009). *Developing Teacher Leaders: How Teacher Leadership Enhances School Success. Second Edition.* Thousand Oaks: Corwin Press.

Crowther, F., Kaagan, S.S., Ferguson, M., and Hann, L. (2002). *Developing Teacher Leaders: How Teacher Leadership Enhances School Success.* Thousand Oaks: Corwin Press, Inc.

Czarniawska, B. (2004). *Narratives in Social Science Research*. London: Sage Publications.

Dahl, R.A. and Stinebrickner B. (2003). *Modern Political Analysis Sixth Edition.* New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Darling-Hammond, L. (1990). Teacher professionalism: Why and how. In Lieberman, A. (Ed.). (1990). *Schools as Collaborative Cultures: Creating the Future Now.* (p 25-50). Bristol, PA: Falmer.

Darling-Hammond, L. and Bransford, J. (Eds.). (2005). *Preparing Teachers for a Changing World: What Teachers Should Learn and Be Able to Do.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Davies, B. and Brighouse, T. (Eds.). (2008). *Passionate Leadership in Education.* Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications Inc.

Davis, B., Sumara, D., and Luce-Kapler, R. (2000). *Engaging Minds: Learning and Teaching in a Complex World.* Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Deal T. E. and Peterson, K.D. (1994). *The Leadership Paradox. Balancing Logic and Artistry in Schools.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Deal, T.E. and Peterson, K.D. (2009). *Shaping School Culture: Pitfalls, Paradoxes, & Promises, Second Edition.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Donaldson, M.L., Johnson, S. M., Kirkpatrick, C.L., Marinell, W., Steele, J.L., and Szczesiul, S.A. (2008). Angling for Access, Bartering for Change: How Second-Stage Teachers Experience Differentiated Roles in Schools. *Teachers College Record*, 110(5), 1088-1114.

Dunne, J. (1999). Professional Judgment and the Predicaments of Practice. *European Journal of Marketing,* 33 (7/8), 707-719.

Dunne, J. (2005). An Intricate Fabric: Understanding the Rationality of Practice. *Pedagogy, Culture and Society*, 13(3), 367-389.

Ericksen, E. (2004). *Understanding Habermas: Communicative Action and Deliberative Democracy.* London, UK: Continuum.

Fitzgerald, T. (2009). The Tyranny of Bureaucracy: Continuing Challenges of Leading and Managing from the Middle. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 37(1), 51-65.

Fitzgerald, T. and Gunter, H.M. (2008). Contesting the Orthodoxy of Teacher Leadership. *International Journal of Leadership in Education,* 11(4), 331-340.

Flick, Uwe. (2006). *An Introduction to Qualitative Research Third Edition.* London: Sage Publications.

Frost, D. (2008). 'Teacher Leadership': Values and Voice. *School Leadership and Management*, 28(4), 337-352.

Fullan, M. (1993). *Change Forces: Probing the Depths of Educational Reform.* London: Falmer Press.

Fullan, M. (2001). *Leading in a Culture of Change*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Fullan, M. (2007). *The New Meaning of Educational Change, Fourth Edition.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Gardner, H. (1995). *Leading Minds: An Anatomy of Leadership*. New York: Basic Books.

Giddens, A. (1986). *The Constitution of Society.* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Gleick, J. (1987). *Chaos: Making a New Science.* New York: Penguin.

Glickman, C., Lunsford, B., Szuminski, K. (1995). Co-Reforms as an Approach to Change in Education: The Origin of Revolution. In O'Hair, M.J. and Odell, S.J. (Eds.). (1995). *Teacher Education Yearbook III: Educating Teachers for Leadership and Change.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Goodlad, J. (1990). The Occupation of Teaching in Schools. In Goodlad, J. and Soder, R. (Eds). *The Moral Dimensions of Teaching*. (p 33-34). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Greenleaf, R.K. (1977). Servant Leadership. In Wren, J.T. (1995). *The Leader's Companion: Insights on Leadership Through the Ages. (*p 18-23). New York: The Free Press.

Groenewald, T. (2004). A Phenomenological Research Design Illustrated. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 3(1), 1-26.

Hallett, T. (2007). The Leadership Struggle: The Case of Costen Elementary School. In Spillane, J.P. and Diamond, J.H. (2007). *Distributed Leadership in Practice. (p 85-105).* New York: Teachers College Press.

Halverson, R. (2004). Accessing, Documenting, and Communicating Practical Wisdom: The Phronesis of School Leadership Practice. *American Journal of Education,* 111 (November 2004), 90-121.

Hargreaves, A. (1994a). *Changing Teachers, Changing Times: Teachers' Work and Culture in the Postmodern Age.* Toronto, ON: The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.

Hargreaves, A. (1994b). Restructuring Restructuring: Postmodernity and the Prospects for Educational Change. In Halsey, A.H., Lauder, H., Brown, P., and Wells, A.S. (Eds.). (1997). *Education: Culture, Economy and Society.* (p 338-353). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hargreaves, A. and Fink D. (2006). *Sustainable Leadership.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Hargreaves, A. and Shirley, D. (2009). *The Fourth Way: The Inspiring Future for Educational Change.* Thousand Oaks: Corwin.

Harris, A. and Muijs, D. (2003). *Teacher Leadership: Principles and Practice.* A paper for The National College for School Leadership. Institute of Education, University of Warwick. p 1-30.

Harris, A. and Muijs, D. (2005). *Improving Schools Through Teacher Leadership.* Maidenhead, UK: Open University Press.

Harris, A. and Spillane, J. (2009). Distributed Leadership through the Looking Glass. *Management in Education,* 22(1), 31-34.

Harris, A. and Townsend, A. (2007). Developing Leaders for Tomorrow: Releasing System Potential. *School Leadership and Management*, 27(2), 167-177.

Heck, R.H. and Hallinger, P. (1999). Next Generation methods for the Study of Leadership and School Improvement. In Murphy, J. and Louis, K.S. (Eds.). *Handbook of Research on Educational Administration: A Project of the American Educational Research Association 2nd Ed.* (p 141-162). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Hess, R.T. (2008). *Follow the Teacher: Making a Difference for School Improvement* Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Education.

Hopkins D., West M., and Ainscow, M. (1996). *Improving the Quality of Education for All.* London: David Fulton Publishers.

Jenlink, P.M. and Jenlink, K.E. (2009). Transforming the Space of Schools into Learning Communities: Teacher Leadership as Pedagogy of Democratic Place. In Mullen, C.A. (Ed.). (2009). *The Handbook of Leadership and Professional Learning Communities.* (p 115-126). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Johnson, S. (2001). *Emergence: The Connected Lives of Ants, Brains, Cities and Software.* New York: Scribner.

Johnson, S.M. and Donaldson, M.L. (2007). Overcoming the Obstacles of Leadership. *Educational Leadership*, September, 8-13.

Katzenmeyer, M. and Moller, G. (2001). *Awakening the Sleeping Giant: Helping Teachers Develop as Leaders.* Thousand Oaks: Corwin Press.

Katzenmeyer, M. and Moller, G. (2009). *Awakening the Sleeping Giant: Helping Teachers Develop as Leaders. Third Edition.* Thousand Oaks: Corwin Press.

Kowalski, T.J. (1995). Preparing Teachers to Be Leaders: Barriers in the Workplace. In O'Hair, M.J. and Odell, S.J. (Eds.). (1995). *Teacher Education Yearbook III: Educating Teachers for Leadership and Change.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Lambert, L. (2003). *Leadership Capacity for Lasting School Improvement.* Alexandria: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Leander, K.M. and Osborne, M.D. (2008). Complex Positioning: Teachers as Agents of Curricular and Pedagogical Reform. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 40(1), 23-46.

Leithwood, K., Jantzi, D. and Steinback, R. (1999). *Changing Leadership for Changing Times.* Buckingham: Open University Press.

Leithwood, K., Mascall, B., Strauss, T., Sacks, R., Memon, N., and Yashkina, A. (2007). Distributing Leadership to Make Schools Smarter: Taking the Ego Out of the System. *Leadership and Policy in Schools,* 6, 37-67.

Lieberman, A. (Ed.). (1992). *The Changing Contexts of Teaching: Ninety-First Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education.* Chicago: The National Society for the Study of Education.

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

Little, J.W. (1988). Assessing the prospects for teacher leadership. In Lieberman, A. (Ed.). (1988). *Building a Professional Culture in Schools.* (p 78-106). New York: Teachers College Press.

Little, J.W. (1995). Contested Ground: The Basis of Teacher Leadership in Two Restructuring High Schools. *The Elementary School Journal,* 96(1), 47-63.

Little, J.W. (2003). Constructions of Teacher Leadership in Three Periods of Policy and Reform Activism. *School Leadership & Management,* 23(4), 401-419.

MacDonald, E. and Shirley, D. (2009). *The Mindful Teacher.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Margolis, J. (2008). When Teachers face Teachers: Listening to the Resources "Right Down the Hall". *Teaching Education*, 19(4), 293-310.

Mehta, S. (2009). Creating a Hybrid Space for Self, Teacher, and Researcher. In Cochran-Smith, M. and Lytle, S.L. (2009). *Inquiry as Stance: Practitioner Researcher for the Next Generation.* (p 293-309). New York: Teachers College Press.

Mihans, R. (2008). Can Teachers Lead Teachers? *Phi Delta Kappan*, 89(10), 762-765.

Miller L. and O'Shea, C. (1992). Learning to Lead: Portraits of Practice. In Lieberman, A. (Ed.) (1992). *The Changing Contexts of Teaching: Ninety-First Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education.* (p 197-211). Chicago: The National Society for the Study of Education.

Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological Research Methods.* Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, Inc.

Munro, T. (2004). The Evolution of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs: Tara's Story. In Armstrong, H.D. (Ed). (2004). *The Praxis of School Administration & Teacher Leadership*. (p 265-274). Calgary: Detselig Enterprises Ltd.

Murphy, J. (2002). Reculturing the Profession of Educational Leadership: New Blueprints. *Educational Administration Quarterly*. 38(2), 176-191.

Nash, R (2002). *"Real World" Ethics: Frameworks for Educators and Human Service Professionals.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Nixon, J. (2009). Education and the Public Good. In Gewirtz, S., Mahony, P., Hextall, I., and Cribb, A. (Eds.). (2009). *Changing Teacher Professionalism: International Trends, Challenges, and Ways Forward.* (p 194-203). New York: Routledge.

Novak, J.M. (2008). Inviting Passionate Educational Leadership. In Davies, B. and Brighouse, T. (Eds.). (2008). *Passionate Leadership in Education.* Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications Inc.

Palmer, P.J. (2007). *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life.* San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons.

Patterson, J.L. (1993). *Leadership for Tomorrow's Schools.* Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Pellicer, L.O. and Anderson, L.W. (1995). *A Handbook for Teacher Leaders.* Thousand Oaks: Corwin Press.

Reeves, D.B. (2009). *Leading Change in Your School: How to Conquer Myths, Build Commitment, and Get Results.* Alexandria: ASCD.

Senge, P.M. (2006). *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization.* New York: Currency.

Sergiovanni, T. (2000). *The Lifeworld of Leadership: Creating Culture, Community, and Personal Meaning in Our Schools.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Sergiovanni, T.J. (2005). The Virtues of Leadership. *Educational Forum*, 69(2), 112-123.

Sergiovanni, T.J. (2007). *Rethinking Leadership: A Collection of Articles.* Thousand Oaks: Corwin Press.

Smylie, M.A., and Denny, J.W. (1990). Teacher Leadership: Tensions and Ambiguities in Organizational Perspectives. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 26, 235-259.

Spillane, J.P. and Coldren, A.F. (2011). *Diagnosis and Design for School Improvement: Using a Distributed Perspective to Lead and Manage Change.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Spillane, J.P. and Diamond, J.B. (2007). *Distributed Leadership in Practice.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Spillane, J.P., Halverson, R. and Diamond, J. (2004). Towards a Theory of Leadership Practice: A Distributed Perspective. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 36(1), 3-34.

Strike, K. (2007). *Ethical Leadership in School.* California: Corwin Press.

Van Manen, M. (1990). *Researching Lived Experience.* London, Ontario: State University of New York Press.

Van Manen, M. (Ed.)(2002). *Writing in the Dark: Phenomenological Studies in Interpretive Inquiry.* London, Ontario: The Althouse Press.

Waff, D. (2009). An Insider Voice: Leading as a Teacher. In Cochran-Smith, M. and Lytle, S.L. (2009). *Inquiry as Stance: Practitioner Researcher for the Next Generation.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Wasley, P. (1992). Teacher Leadership in a Teacher-Run School. In Lieberman, A. (Ed.) (1992). *The Changing Contexts of Teaching: Ninety-First Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education.* (p 212-235). Chicago: The National Society for the Study of Education.

Weaver, W. (1948). *Complexity: The Emerging Science at the Edge of Order and Chaos.* New York: Simon and Schuster.

Wenger, E.C. and Snyder, W.M. (2000). Communities of Practice: The Organizational Frontier. *Harvard Business Review,* January-February 2000, 139-145.

APPENDIX A: SAMPLE OF CONSENT FORM

SFU Simon Fraser University

Faculty of Education

15th Floor, Central City Tower

250 - 13450 102nd Avenue

Surrey, B.C.

V3T 0A3

<div align="center">

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Learning about Teacher Leadership Through the

Lived Experiences of High School Teacher Leaders

</div>

Principal Investigator:

Ms. Sharon Lau, Graduate Student

Faculty of Education, Simon Fraser University

Phone number: ██████████. E-mail: ██████████

Purpose:

This study, as part of a dissertation project completed under the auspices of Simon Fraser University, looks at the lived experiences of high school teachers who have had opportunities to lead teacher-led initiatives. In response to economic, political, and social demands of the 21ˢᵗ century, teachers are encouraged to take a more prominent role in the decision-making and operationalizing of various school matters. Teacher leadership is often presented as a paradigm that can empower teachers to play a more engaging part in education. Nevertheless, the lived experiences of teacher leaders reveal a complex interplay that is often dismissed in the literature of teacher leadership. You are encouraged to share and to describe your thoughts, feelings and understandings of leading a teacher-led initiative. Your personal insight will help others to understand the experience of what it means to be a leader of teachers.

Study Procedures:

This study is conducted by Ms. Sharon Lau, a graduate student from Simon Fraser University. I would like to examine various factors that are shaped by and help shape teachers' experience of leading teacher-led initiatives. In order to understand how teachers come to form their own meanings and purposes of teacher leadership, you are asked to participate in a narrative interview with me at a scheduled time between May and November of 2010. You will need to agree to being audiotaped in a 2-hour face-to-face interview. All data collection procedures will proceed with minimal harm to your physical well-being;

nevertheless, you may feel a degree of emotional discomfort from remembering an unpleasant past experience. Precautions will be taken to ensure your anonymity. However, due to a restricted sample size, it is possible for someone reading the publication of this study to make inferences regarding the school and/or the teachers who are involved in the research. In such cases, your confidentiality could be compromised by the description or some unique aspects of your group initiative.

Ethical Concern:

Participation in this study is voluntary and you may decide to withdraw from it at any time. Data will only be collected and used from those who have given informed consent to participate in this study. Regardless of your decision to participate in or to withdraw from this study, your decision will not be shared with third party members and will not affect your teaching assignment or employment status with the Surrey School District. I do not intend to approach you again after the interview. If subsequent interviews are needed, you will have the option to consent to or to decline from any future re-contacts.

Confidentiality:

You will have access to your own data should you feel a need to review and/or to refuse the use of any personal information. Research data will be used, shared, and presented among members of this project team, educators and graduate students. This study is important as I believe it could be used to improve practices in the education community and the working conditions in which we ask teachers to lead. Results from this project may lead to a published document; however, data will be kept confidential. Teacher responses from the interview will be identified using pseudonyms and actual names of individual teachers and schools will not be used. All memory sticks and written and audio documents containing research data to this study will be safely stored in a locked cabinet. This information will be stored for 5 years, after which time they will be destroyed.

Permission to conduct this study:

This study will only proceed upon obtaining research permission from the Office of Research Ethics at Simon Fraser University and the Research & Evaluation Department in Surrey School District.

Contact for information about the study procedures and research results:

If you have any questions about the research procedures or research results of this study, you may contact Sharon Lau at ▮▮▮▮▮▮ or ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ .

Contact for information about the rights of research subjects:

If you have any concerns or complaints about your rights as a research participant, you may contact:

Dr. Hal Weinberg, Director

Office of Research Ethics, Simon Fraser University

Burnaby, B.C. Canada V5A 1S6

▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮

--------------------------------Please keep for your files-------------------------------------

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Learning about Teacher Leadership

Through the Lived Experiences of

High School Teacher Leaders

Your participation in the study is entirely voluntary and you may withdraw from the study at any time.

Your signature below indicates that you consent to participate in this study and that you have received a copy of this consent form for your records.

_____

Participant's Signature

_____

Printed Name of the Participant signing above

_____

Date

--------------Please detach consent form and return this to Sharon Lau ----------

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Learning about Teacher Leadership

Through the Lived Experiences of

High School Teacher Leaders

Your participation in the study is entirely voluntary and you may withdraw from the study at any time.

Your signature below indicates that you consent to participate in this study and that you have received a copy of this consent form for your records.

_____

Participant's Signature

_____

Printed Name of the Participant signing above

_____

Date

APPENDIX B: SAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR NARRATIVE INTERVIEWS

(Note: format and interview questions are adapted from Bernard and Ryan, 2010; Flick, 2006)

1) Every teacher has a story about how he/she got into leadership. I want you to tell your story of your leadership experience. Let us start from the beginning and you can tell me how you became involved in (name of initiative). Please take your time in doing this and feel free to provide as many examples and details as you wish. I am interested to hear anything that you feel is important to you.

1a) How would you describe your personal beliefs about teacher leadership when you first started getting involved in leadership roles?

1b) Describe how you envisioned your role as a teacher leader when this group first formed.

1c) When the group first formed, what did you believe could be accomplished as a result of your leadership in (name of initiative)?

1d) Describe any critical incidents / encounters that have influenced your activism in (name of initiative).

1c) Describe any individual(s) who have played an important role in your interest and engagement in teacher-led initiatives.

2) I am interested in what it is like for teachers to lead an initiative at their school. Can you tell me what your experiences have been like as a teacher leader in (name of the initiative)? Take me back to how things have developed during the course of your leadership experience.

2a) How do your colleagues view you taking a more proactive role in (name of initiative)? Do these perceptions in any way change the way you feel about yourself as a teacher leader? How has your relationship with your colleagues changed since you began your role as a teacher leader?

2b) How does your administrator react / respond to your leadership role in (name of initiative)? How has your relationship with school administrators changed since your began your role as a teacher leader?

2c) In your view, do school norms / school structures / school vision / school goals influence the leadership work that you do? How so?

2d) Describe examples of school structures / arrangements that have contributed to or impeded your involvement in (name of initiative).

2e) How do you see your leadership role shaped, positively and/or negatively, by the teachers union?
2f) How do you see your leadership role shaped, positively and/or negatively, by norms within the teaching profession?

2g) Give examples of how you have leveraged influence/support from your professional network to carry out your leadership role in (name of initiative).

2h) Were there incidents where you felt your professional network did not support what you had done as a teacher leader? Please provide specific examples.

3) What is the current state of your teacher-led group? Based on what you have experienced, tell me how you feel and what you know now about teacher leadership. I would like you to consider the changes, struggles, and growth that have occurred as a result of your involvement in leadership work.

3a) How has this leadership experience changed the way you view the purpose of your role in education?

3b) Has your leadership role / responsibilities changed over time? How so? What do you think caused this change to occur?

3c) Why are you (dis)continuing your role as a teacher leader?

3d) Describe moments of personal challenges and drawbacks that you have experienced throughout this involvement.

3e) Describe moments of fulfillments and benefits that you have experienced throughout this involvement.

4) Balancing phase

4a) How would you define teacher leadership now?

4b) What does teacher leadership mean to you now as an educator?

4c) Would you describe yourself as a teacher leader?

4d) How important is leadership work for you now? At this moment, what aspects of leadership work do you feel like you need to focus on, and why?

4e) Do you think your perception of teacher leader(ship) is different from the general understanding that your colleagues and administrators have? Can you give specific examples of this contradiction? Have you tried (or feel a need) to change people's perceptions about teacher leadership?

4f) Have your own perceptions and understandings about teacher leadership changed throughout your leadership experience in (name of initiative)? Can you use specific incidents and examples to illustrate this change?

4g) Have your own emotions and feelings about teacher leadership changed throughout your leadership experience in (name of initiative)? Can you use specific incidents and examples to illustrate this change?

4h) Describe what this leadership experience has taught you about your role as a teacher leader.

4i) Describe what this leadership experience has taught you about the bigger goals and purposes of teacher leadership. How do these goals and purposes play out in practice and make an impact on the professional, institutional, social and structural dimensions of your work?

4j) Describe something that you are surprised to learn about because of your past/current involvement as a teacher-leader.

APPENDIX C: EXPLICITATION OF RESEARCH DATA